

The WHEEL & The CROSS



An anthology by
Jesuits & Friends on Buddhism and Dialogue



Edited by
Cyril Veliath S.J.

2021

A Publication of the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific (JCAP)

THE WHEEL & THE CROSS

An Anthology by Jesuits & Friends on Buddhism and Dialogue

Edited by
Cyril Veliath, SJ

Published on behalf of the JCAP Buddhist Studies & Dialogue Group by

MAGGA Jesuit Research Center

Phnom Penh & Manila

2021

THE WHEEL & THE CROSS: An Anthology by Jesuits & Friends on
Buddhism and Dialogue

© 2021 by JCAP Buddhist Studies & Dialogue Group

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form by any means without the prior permission of the copyright owner. Enquiries should be made to the publisher.

Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific Buddhist Studies & Dialogue Group
Email: jcapbuddhist@gmail.com

ISBN: 978-9924-35-034-7

Published on behalf of the JCAP Buddhist Studies & Dialogue Group by:
MAGGA Jesuit Research Center,
Address: #376, Kouk Khleang, Sen Sok, Phnom Penh, Cambodia
Email: magga.press@gmail.com

CONTENTS

FOREWORD	v
PREFACE	vii
EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION	ix
CONTRIBUTORS' PROFILES	xi

Part I Zen Buddhism and Ignatian Spirituality

1 Zen-Ignatian Training Program in Japan: A Personal Experience	1
<i>Jaroslav Duraj, S.J.</i>	
2 Chinul's Empty and Quiescent Spiritual Knowing (<i>kongjök yōngji</i> 空寂靈知) and Ignatius of Loyola's Indifference and Discernment of Spirits	25
<i>Yon-dahm Kwon</i>	
3 Zen and Religion	55
<i>Ama Samy, S.J.</i>	
4 My Journey towards Zen	63
<i>Mathew Cyril, S.J.</i>	
5 Moving beyond the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556)	73
<i>Bernard Senécal, S.J.</i>	
6 Insights from Zen: <i>The Authentic Gate</i> (2015) by Zen Master Koun Yamada	81
<i>Jerry Cusumano, S.J.</i>	
7 My Journey in Vipassana and the Spiritual Exercises	89
<i>Dunstan Vinny Joseph, S.J.</i>	

Part II Buddhist Traditions

8 From an Indian <i>Bodhisattva</i> to an East Asian Goddess: The Transformation of <i>Guanyin</i> in Chinese Buddhism	101
<i>Anh Q. Tran, S.J.</i>	
9 An Introduction to Ciji's Ideological Characteristics of Humanistic Buddhism	125
<i>Ven. Suah Kim</i>	

10 The Relationship between the Finite and Infinite in the Two Gates of Religion: Kiyozawa Manshi's View of Buddhist Traditions	137
<i>Yuichi Tsunoda, S.J.</i>	
11 Dhamma in "The Two Extremes and The Middle Way"	145
<i>Ohn Mar Thant</i>	
12 The Third Turning of the Wheel of Buddha's Dharma on the <i>Tathāgatagarbha</i> and the Shengtong-Rangton Conflict of Interpretations	157
<i>Joseph NG Swee-Chun, S.J.</i>	
13 The Shentong View on the <i>Tathāgatagarbha</i> Teaching and its Pragmatic Implications	165
<i>Joseph NG Swee-Chun, S.J.</i>	
14 The Metaxological Philosophy of Dialogue with Buddhism	177
<i>Jarostaw Duraj, S.J.</i>	

Part III Buddhist-Christian Dialogue

15 Jesuit-Buddhist Dialogue in Sri Lanka: From its Origins to the Present Times	201
<i>Aloysius Pieris, S.J.</i>	
16 Buddhist Catholics in the Philippines: Chinese Buddhism Encounters Filipino Catholicism	215
<i>Aristotle Dy, S.J.</i>	
17 Christian and Buddhist Altruistic Love	243
<i>Noel Sheth, S.J.</i>	
18 The Jesuit Image of East Asian Buddhism in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries	259
<i>Thierry Meynard, S.J.</i>	
19 Dialogue as Conflict Resolution: Creative Praxis	281
<i>Michael Amaladoss, S.J.</i>	
20 Buddhism and I	295
<i>Chong-hwan Pak, S.J.</i>	
21 Korean Protestantism in the Age of "Surplus of Positivity": A Socio-Cultural Analysis of Church Defaults in South Korea	301
<i>Rev. Yong Un Choe</i>	

Part IV
Socially Engaged Buddhism and Universal Spirituality

22 The Peace Walk (<i>Dhammayietra</i>) in Cambodia: People Met in a “Spiritual Space”	325
<i>In-gun Kang, S.J.</i>	
23 Buddhism in a New Key: The Roots and Growth of Engaged Buddhism	347
<i>Gregory Sharkey, S.J.</i>	
24 Violence and Non-Violence in Buddhism	357
<i>Noel Sheth, S.J.</i>	
25 Maha Ghosananda & Thich Nhat Hanh, Two Modern <i>Bhanakas</i>: Constructing a Culture of Compassion and Fraternity	381
<i>Ven. Vy Sovechea</i>	
26 Insights from Asian Indigenous Peoples in Light of <i>Fratelli Tutti</i>	389
<i>Jojo M. Fung, S.J.</i>	
27 Religious Fundamentalism, Tolerance, and the Buddha	403
<i>S. Eucharist Lawrence, S.J.</i>	
28 A Universal Spirituality–The Need of The Hour!	413
<i>S. Eucharist Lawrence, S.J.</i>	
EDITOR’S CONCLUSION	423

FOREWORD

We live in a divided world thriving in odium and disunion. Ethnic-based tensions, socio-economic disparities, and populist leaderships spark conflicts, and there is an increasing resurgence of religious fundamentalism based on nationalist agendas, that breed intolerance, hostility, and hate. People suffer discrimination, marginalization, and oppression, solely on account of their religious beliefs and practices. The heroic visit of His Holiness Pope Francis to Iraq in March 2021 was a daring move to promote goodwill, dialogue, and peace in a deeply troubled nation, for despite the risks involved he resolved to go to Iraq, since the nation's people had suffered much and the visit could no longer be deferred. It was in truth an urgent and crucial mission.

Interreligious dialogue is likewise essential for peace and mutual accord, among advocates of diverse religions. It cannot wait and cannot take a backseat. This anthology entitled "The Wheel and the Cross: Jesuits and Friends on Buddhism and Dialogue" is a modest effort to promote a culture of religious interchange. It does not profess to resolve key issues, but rather invites readers to create spaces for continued conversation and greater harmony among Buddhists and Christians. It celebrates the dissimilarities in religious beliefs and practices while noting similar paths in religious experiences, particularly in contemporary Asia. The authors are mostly Jesuits, scholars of Buddhism and Christianity and practitioners of interreligious dialogue, but I am happy to note among them some non-Jesuits and laypeople as well, both Buddhist and Christian. For well over a decade they have had periodic discussions on vital dialogue issues, while seeking prospects for inter-faith exchange and understanding. Their conclusions, whether in Buddhism or Christianity, engender richness of life and freedom, and promote rapport, selflessness, detachment from worldly enticements, spiritual depth, and mutual responsibility for humankind and creation.

My warmest felicitations and gratitude to all involved in making possible this significant contribution, towards the enrichment of our continuing reflection on Buddhist-Christian dialogue. Scholars, friends, and keen observers of the interreligious dialogue movement will profit much from these essays. May dialogue prevail over division and hatred.

Tony Moreno, SJ
President
Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific

PREFACE

I am happy and grateful for the publication of the second anthology of the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific Buddhist Studies & Dialogue Group. Our first book was published in 2015, and entitled *The Buddha & Jesus*, a collection of articles presented in our annual workshops over the first five years. Responding to the ever-increasing need for interreligious dialogue, and especially Buddhist-Christian dialogue and collaboration in Asia, our group conducted its first workshop in Chiangmai, Thailand, in April 2010. The participants included Jesuit Buddhist scholars hailing from both East and South Asia, and since then yearly conferences have been held in different parts of Asia. Membership has also been extended to the current sixty-five individuals in the mailing list, who include Jesuits, Buddhist monks and nuns, non-Jesuit priests, a Protestant Pastor, and the lay practitioners. Our approach has been holistic, maintaining a balance between academic discussion, spiritual sharing, and practical engagement. Through annual meetings we became aware of the importance of mutual understanding among different religions and denominations, and we have also realized that 'loving friendship' is the most vital base for interreligious dialogue and collaboration.

This new publication which is entitled *The Wheel & the Cross* includes a total of twenty-eight articles, some of which were presented in our yearly workshops over the past six years. These papers, which comprise both academic as well as personally reflective issues, reveal the spirit that inspires our Buddhist studies and dialogue, namely a quest for genuine understanding of and sincere respect for the other. By so doing, we come to realize that our unique features spring from differing world views and practices, embedded in diverse religious traditions. As the title of the book indicates, the articles directly or indirectly show how the Buddhist 'wheel' of profound wisdom meets the Christian 'cross' of selfless love, to enhance each other along the same spiritual journey towards a world wherein humans as well as other beings live harmoniously together. As for Jesuits and colleagues who are celebrating the Ignatian Year from 20th May 2021 to 31st July 2022, this book may encourage and inspire them to open their eyes and hearts, thereby experiencing a deeper conversion to *God in all things*, including other religions. For Buddhist readers, it may be an invitation to join our pilgrimage to the realm of interreligious dialogue and collaboration, for deeper *human solidarity* against all forms of fundamentalist division and violent conflicts.

As group coordinator, I owe thanks to Fr. Cyril Veliath SJ for his excellent service as an editor, working hard to check and correct each

article with patience. I also owe thanks to Mr. Makara Pong of the MAGGA Jesuit Research Center for his enduring work for InDesign and other administrative works for our publication. My sincere gratitude must also be offered to all who contributed to this book with their precious articles, especially our beloved Buddhist friends. Finally, I thank my consultants, Fr. Ari Dy SJ and Fr. Petrus Puspobinatmo SJ, for always giving me wise advice as a core group. Fr. Noel Seth SJ, another consultant who passed away in 2017, would be happy to see that his articles are also included in this book. His prayers and blessings from Heaven will make this publication more successful.

In-gun Kang, SJ

Coordinator of the JCAP Buddhist Studies & Dialogue Group
Director of the East Asia Theological Encounter Program

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the Jesuit Conference of Asia Pacific published a book entitled *The Buddha and Jesus*. It was an anthology of articles by Jesuits engaged in Buddhist studies and Inter-religious dialogue, and the publication and printing were carried out by the Tulana Research Centre for Encounter and Dialogue, located in the suburb of Kelaniya of the city of Colombo, in Sri Lanka. Due to the fact that not only was the publication endorsed by the Christian populace worldwide, but it also served to fortify links with our Buddhist Brethren, it was decided after a lapse of six years to bring out a second publication centered on a similar theme.

The articles that comprise this current publication entitled *the Wheel and the Cross*, embrace a comprehensive range of Buddhist teachings inclusive of Mahayana, Theravada, and Vajrayana, as also their links to Christianity, and in particular Ignatian Spirituality. Also included herein are subjects related to Buddhist engagement in social and ecological issues. Hence the twenty-eight articles constituting this publication have been split equally into four thematic sections, each consisting of seven articles, and the sections are as follows: **(I) Zen Buddhism and Ignatian Spirituality**. This is an elucidation as to how those engaged in Jesuit and Ignatian spirituality may encounter Buddhist core experiences, along their meditative-academic journey. **(II) Buddhist Traditions**. This comprises articles related to a diversity of Buddhist issues, linked to various schools. **(III) Buddhist-Christian Dialogue**. Here are presented critical reflections pertaining to the history of dialogue between these two traditions, in diverse parts of Asia. **(IV) Socially Engaged Buddhism and Universal Spirituality**. This comprises issues focusing on Buddhist spirituality, involvement in social activities, and the quest for a shared holiness, so as to adopt a united stand in confronting universal challenges.

These articles are the upshot of devoted efforts by both Jesuits and friends of the JCAP Buddhist Studies and Dialogue Group, comprising Buddhist monks and nuns, a Christian pastor, and lay people of both religious traditions. Some articles are academic in quality with footnotes and bibliographies, while others are profound and thought-provoking reflections based on personal experiences. As editor, I had sought to adopt a consistency in format and style, either via the "Notes-Bibliography Style" or "Author-Date Style," in keeping with *A Manual for Writers: Chicago Style for Students & Researchers*, by Kate L. Turabian, 8th edition (2013). While reading and editing these articles, I was inspired equally by their philosophical and mystical quest. Yet, as one might expect, we cannot by any means deny that all articles presented here have certain mystical aspects to them. It

is our hope that they provide our readers with insights into Buddhism and Christianity, that are both experiential and spiritual.

I was honored to have been entrusted with the job of editing our earlier anthology in 2015, and now this second anthology as well. I wish to express my deepest gratitude to Fr. Ingun Kang, S.J., our coordinator, and all our group members, for having inspired me to undertake this vital task. The primary motive behind our publication was to fortify ties of amity and fellowship among Buddhist and Christian intellectuals, and enthuse our Christian youth into displaying a keener interest in Buddhism. It is my hope that in years to come, more and more of our youth feel drawn towards extending signs of goodwill and harmony towards their non-Christian brethren. I conclude by expressing my sincere appreciation to one and all, who in any way assisted us in this crucial undertaking.

Cyril Veliath, SJ

Professor Emeritus of Indian Philosophy and Religion
Sophia University, Tokyo, Japan

CONTRIBUTORS' PROFILES



Aloysius Pieris, SJ is a Sri Lankan Jesuit, theologian, intellectual, and founding director of the Tulana Research Centre for Encounter and Dialogue. He took his vows as a Jesuit in 1953, and has three theological degrees: An L.Ph. from Sacred Heart College in Shembaganur, India (1959), an STL from the Pontifical Theological Faculty in Naples (1966), and a Th.D. from Tilburg University (1987). He also earned a BA in Pali and Sanskrit from the University of London (1961), and a Ph.D. in Buddhist Philosophy from the University of Sri Lanka (1971). He has held academic appointments such as the Franciscan Chair in Mission Studies at the Washington Theological Union, the Henry Luce Chair of World Christianity at the Union Theological Seminary located in New York, USA, and the A. P. Wilson Distinguished Visiting Chair of Theology, at Vanderbilt Divinity School. His well-known works include, *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (1988), where he attempts to move beyond the limitations of Latin American liberation theology, and engage an Asia that is wrecked by severe poverty and shaped by deep religiosity.



Ama Samy, SJ (Arul Maria Arokiasamy) is an Indian Zen master and Jesuit priest, who was born in 1936. He was born to Christian parents in Burma and raised in India, and after becoming a Jesuit priest of the Madurai Province in 1972, he visited Hindu ashrams and Buddhist meditation centers. He was introduced to the teachings of the Hindu mystic Ramana Maharshi by Swami Abhishiktananda, and his quest for a time drew him into leading the life of a wandering mendicant, and settling down as a hermit. With the support of the German Jesuit and Zen Master Fr. Hugo Enomiya-Lassalle he visited Japan, and pursued Zen training under Yamada Koun Roshi of Sanbo Kyodan. In 1982, Yamada Roshi authorized him to teach Zen. He received the Japanese Dharma name Gen'un-ken (Gen: dark, obscure, mystery; Un: cloud). In 1986 Ama Samy founded the Bodhi Sangha, a community of his disciples, which became an independent Zen school when he left Sanbo Kyodan in 2002. Ama Samy's method of teaching embraces both Soto and Rinzai Zen traditions, and draws on the resources of Christianity and other religions. He lives and teaches at the Bodhi Zendo Zen Center near the city of Kodaikanal in South India (which opened in 1996). Ever since he was first invited by Fr. Lassalle to accompany him on a tour to Europe in 1985, Ama Samy spends several months each year conducting retreats in Europe, Australia, and the USA. With the help of his students he also runs Little Flower, a non-profit organization

supporting women, children and landless people in South India. He has authored numerous books in a variety of languages.



Anh Q. Tran, SJ is currently Associate Professor of Theology at the Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University in the USA, and a member of the Core Doctoral Faculty of the Graduate Theological Union (Berkeley, California). Specializing in comparative theology/religious studies and Asian Christianity, he is the author of *Gods, Heroes, and Ancestors* (Oxford University Press, 2018), and co-editor of *World Christianity: Perspectives and Insights* (Orbis Books, 2016). He has contributed two dozen book chapters and articles in areas of Asian Christian history and theology, inter-religious dialogue, and Vietnamese Catholicism, both in English and in Vietnamese. He currently pursues research on East Asian Catholic martyrs and the history of the Jesuits in Vietnam.



Aristotle Dy, SJ known to all simply as Ari, is a Chinese Filipino who belongs to the Jesuit Philippine Province. He was educated at Xavier School and Ateneo de Manila University in Manila, graduating with a bachelor's degree in business. He entered the Jesuit novitiate after university. As a regent, he taught Conversational Mandarin and began getting involved with his Province's Chinese-Filipino Apostolate. After ordination in 2004 (by which time he had earned Master's degrees in philosophy and theology), he became Director of Jesuit Communications in Manila and also served on the faculty of the Ateneo's Chinese Studies Program/Confucius Institute. It was in the latter context that he began specialized studies in Buddhism, earning a Master's in Buddhist Studies at the University of Hong Kong (2009), and a Ph.D. in Contemporary Chinese Buddhism at London's School of Oriental and African Studies (2013). His research is on the Chinese Buddhism transmitted to the Philippines by way of Fujian, its adaptation in a Catholic setting, and its links to issues of Chinese culture and identity. His Ph.D. research was published by Anvil Publishing in Manila in 2015. At present, Ari is the President of his alma mater, Xavier School in Manila.



Bernard Senécal, SJ (SEO Myeongweon 徐明源) is a Jesuit priest and a meditation master in the Korean Seon Way Association (Seondohoe 禪道會). After specializing in Korean Buddhism, he served as a professor at the Department of Religious Studies of Sogang University in Seoul (2014-2019). Currently he is the chairman of the Board of the Way's End Stone Field Community, an ecumenical, inter-religious and international non-profit incorporated religious association specialized in Buddhist-Christian encounter, and practices organic farming in the foothills of the Korean Taebaek Mountains (太白山).



Chong-hwan Pak, SJ is a Korean Jesuit Priest, who currently serves in Taiwan. After having graduated from university with Law as his major he entered the Society of Jesus, and later applied to work in the Chinese Province of the Society, where he did his theological studies. Aside from his interest in Buddhism he has worked a great deal for youth. He spent four years in Japan, where he studied the Japanese language and obtained an STL at Sophia University in Tokyo. He has served as Chairman of the Province Commission for Youth Ministry, as the Province Vocation Director, as National Chaplain for the University Chinese Catholic Students Association (UCCSA), and as Formator of Jesuit Scholastics involved in Chinese Language Study.



Cyril Veliath, SJ is an Indian Jesuit and child of a Catholic father and Hindu mother, who has lived and served in Japan since 1974. On joining the Society of Jesus in 1968 he was ordained a priest in 1982, and after earning a doctorate in Hinduism under the guidance of late Fr. Richard De Smet SJ at the Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth Pontifical Institute of Philosophy and Religion in Pune, India, he returned to Japan in 1987 and entered the Faculty of Foreign Studies of Sophia University in Tokyo, as a tenured member of the teaching staff. In 2014 he shifted to the Faculty of Global Studies, where he served as a tenured Professor until 2018. He is now a Professor Emeritus at Sophia University. Although his research was mainly on Hinduism, yet with Buddhism being a religion of South Asia, Fr. Adolfo Nicolas, SJ, the former Superior General of the Jesuits (who at the time was head of the Jesuit Conference of East Asia and Oceania), appointed him director of Buddhist Christian dialogue in the Jesuit Provinces of East and Southeast Asia, a post he occupied until 2016. During the past many years, he has been involved in dialogue with Hinduism through the Nippon Vedanta Kyokai, a branch of the Ramakrishna Mission in Japan, and since 2010 he has been a member of the Committee for Inter-religious Dialogue, of the Catholic Bishops Conference of Japan. His key publications are, *The Mysticism of Ramanuja*, published by Munshiram Manoharlal in 1993; *The Love Song*, published by Minerva Press, 1998; and *The Life and Work of Blessed Mother Teresa*, (Co-authored with Dr. Hiromi Josepha Kudo), Sophia University Press, 2007.



Dunstan Vinny Joseph, SJ hails from the Madurai Jesuit province. He joined the Jesuit novitiate in 1980, completed his regency in Zambia and was ordained a priest in 1990, and took his final vows in 1997. Prior to joining the JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service) in 1997 he served as Parish priest in Mandapam Camp [where Sri Lankan refugees resided], and at the John de Britto Shrine in Oriyoor in the state of Tamil Nadu. From 1997 to 2007 he was

Country Director of the JRS in India and Sri Lanka, and on returning to India he served as the Superior of St. Mary's Dindigul, and Sacred Heart College in the city of Shembaganur. From June 2013, he served in the Myanmar Jesuit mission as Socius to the Mission Superior, Formation Delegate, Community Superior, and Director of the Yangon Loyola Community College. Currently he is Superior of the Faber Community and Director of the College of St. Aloysius Gonzaga in Taunggyi. Despite engaging in diverse apostolates he always felt his true vocation lay in spirituality, namely guiding people via Ignatian retreats. He is keen on conducting Ignatian retreats of 30 days and 8 days, blending them with Vipassana. This is the path he has pursued so far, but as regards the issue, "who I am," he is still searching.



Gregory Sharkey, SJ is an American who has worked in Nepal for most of his life as a Jesuit and has also lived in Tibet and Darjeeling. He is currently professor of Nepalese religions, and director of the doctoral program, at the Kathmandu University Centre for Buddhist Studies in Kathmandu, and director of the Boston College Nepal Program. After completing his MDiv at Weston School of Theology and his STL studies at Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, he did an MPhil in Sanskrit and a DPhil in Buddhism at Oxford. For several years he was director of the Jesuit research centre in Kathmandu. As an anthropologist and ethnographer he has focused his research on Himalayan Buddhist communities, especially the Tamang people, and the Newars of Kathmandu Valley. In 2012 he founded Desideri House, a center for intercultural learning and interreligious dialogue. He is a member of the Jesuits' Ecumenism and Interreligious Relations Council, as well as the Superior General's advisor for Buddhist affairs.



In-gun Kang, SJ is a Korean Jesuit who has been working in Cambodia since 1997. He is the director of the MAGGA Jesuit Research Center, teaching philosophy and religion at the Royal University of Phnom Penh and the Buddhist University in Battambang. He is also the current coordinator of the JCAP Buddhist Studies & Dialogue group, as well as the director of the East Asia Theological Encounter Program. In October 2020, Fr. Kang was appointed as a consultor for the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue, by His Holiness Pope Francis. In 1989 he obtained a bachelor's degree in Philosophy and Theology at the Catholic University in Seoul, Korea; in 1995 he obtained a diploma in Philosophy at Sogang University in Seoul; in 2002 he obtained an STL (Advanced MA) in Christian Theology at JSTB, Santa Clara University, in the USA; in 2008 he obtained a Master's degree in Pali Buddhism at the University of Kelaniya in Sri Lanka; and in 2012 he obtained a Ph.D. in Buddhist-Christian Relations from the University of London. His doctoral thesis is printed in a book form entitled *Buddhist-Christian Dialogue and Action in the Theravada Countries of Modern*

Asia: A Comparative Analysis of the Radical Orthopraxis of Bhikkhu Buddhādāsa and Aloysius Pieris.



Jaroslaw Marek Duraj, SJ (杜哲磊) is a Polish Jesuit priest. He acquired degrees in philosophy, theology, missiology, and Buddhist Studies (*with distinction*), and furthermore he has pursued research on Chinese Buddhism at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London. He earned his Ph.D. in political philosophy from the Pontifical Gregorian University (PUG) in Rome. He has practiced Zen under the guidance of the Roshi Fr. Kakichi Kadowaki SJ in the tradition of Japanese Rinzai Zen Buddhism. He also practiced meditation in the tradition of Vietnamese Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, the founder of the Order of Interbeing. Currently based in Macau, he serves as Vice-Director of the Macau Ricci Institute (MRI), and Adjunct Assistant Professor at the University of Saint Joseph (USJ), Macau, S.A.R., China. His research interests focus on political philosophy, intercultural philosophy, interreligious dialogue, sinology, and Buddhist Studies. He is the author of *The Role of Metaxy in the Political Philosophy of Eric Voegelin* (New York: Peter Lang, 2021).



Jerry Cusumano, SJ is a Jesuit who obtained his Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology at Arizona State University in 1990, and taught counseling until 2015 as a Professor in the Psychology Department of Sophia University. He also served as Director of the Student Counseling Center from 1991 to 2008. He is licensed as a Clinical Psychologist (Rinsho Shinri Shi) and Industrial Counselor (Sangyo Counselor) in Japan. He has practiced Zen since 1977, under the guidance of the Roshi (Yamada Koun, Kubota Ji'un, Yamada Ryouin) of the Sanbō Kyōdan (re-named Sanbo-Zen in 2015). He has directed the Zen group of the Arirang Free Institute in Korea once a year since 1995, and has also practiced Tai Chi daily for over 40 years.



Jojo M. Fung, SJ is a Malaysian Jesuit hailing from the northern part of Borneo Island, called Sabah. He completed a year as Academic Visitor at Oxford University, while residing at Champion Hall as a Visiting Fellow. He is an Assistant Professor at Loyola School of Theology (LST) in the Theology and Ministry Program of Ateneo de Manila University in the Philippines, and belongs to the Jesuit Companions in Indigenous Ministry and the Sacred Springs: Dialogue Institute of Spirituality and Sustainability, LST. His upcoming books are: *A Sacred Sojourn In An Age of Pneumatocene*, and *Cosmicism, Creational Pneumatology and Enspirited Leadership*.



Joseph NG Swee-Chun, SJ is a Malaysian Jesuit whose faith conviction may be described as “being religious inter-religiously.” He finished a year’s research in the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies at the University of Kelaniya in Sri Lanka, and his thesis for his Licentiate in Sacred Theology (STL) was entitled: “Aloysius Pieris’ Two-edged Liberative Theology of En-religionization: A Contribution to Asian Theology and a Mystico-Prophetic Theology Today.” Although his chief interest lies in the psycho-spiritual and mystico-prophetic dimensions of all religions, yet as a Chinese he sensed within himself a natural affinity for Zen Buddhism, and he hopes to see the creation of a Chinese-inculturated Spiritual Exercises, inspired by the gifts of the Spirit as witnessed in the depths of Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism. He earned a Postgraduate Diploma in Buddhist Studies in Sri Lanka (2009), a Master’s degree in Buddhism at the Centre of Buddhist Studies of the University of Hong Kong (2011), and currently pursues a Ph.D. with a focus on the concept of the Buddha-Nature: Contribution of Chinese Buddhism to Positive Anthropology, Universal Soteriology and Engaged Spirituality. The topic of his research is entitled: The Twofold “Surplus of Meaning” of the Polyvalent Concept of the Buddha-nature: Its Optimal Development in Chinese Buddhism and Its Ethico-Soteriological Efficacy in Contemporary Exigencies for a Transformative Spirituality.



Mathew Cyril, SJ (Mathew Cyril Antony) is an Indian Jesuit belonging to the Madurai Jesuit Province in South India. He developed an interest in Zen and became a disciple of Zen master Ama Samy in the year 2000, and commenced his Zen training under him at Bodhi Zendo, a Zen Meditation center founded by Ama Samy in the hills of Kodaikanal in South India. In 2018 he was authorized as a Zen Master by Ama Samy and functioned as an associate Zen master in Bodhi Sangha, but in 2019 he became an independent Zen master. He currently resides at Bodhi Zendo and teaches Zen along with Fr. Ama Samy.



Michael Amaladoss, SJ is a well-known Jesuit and author of numerous books and articles. He grew up in an Indian Christian family in South India and joined the Jesuits in 1953. In addition to the regular course of Jesuit formation and education, he studied South Indian classical music, art, and culture. He wrote a doctoral dissertation at the Institut Catholique in Paris, on the variable and invariable elements in sacramental rites. On returning to India, he founded an interreligious dialogue group with the creative British Benedictine Bede Griffiths, and taught at the Jesuit theological faculty in Delhi with his former teacher, Fr. Jacques Dupuis. He spent 12 years as counselor to Fr. Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, the Jesuit Superior

General, with special responsibility for Jesuit missions. He is an Indian theologian who is also interested in mission and dialogue, inculturation and liberation. Among his well-known publications we have: *The Asian Jesus*; *Life in Freedom: Liberation Theologies from Asia*; *Quest for God: Doing Theology in India*; *Interreligious Encounters: Opportunities and Challenges*; and many others.



Noel Sheth, SJ is no longer with us. He tragically passed away on July 8, 2017, while attending a conference in Bogota, Columbia. He was a Jesuit priest and former President (also termed Rector or Principal) of the Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth Pontifical Institute of Philosophy and Religion in the city of Pune in India, where he taught for over 35 years. He acquired a doctorate from Harvard University and was a reputed scholar in both Sanskrit and Pali, with his name appearing in the *Who's Who of Sanskrit Scholars of India*. He convened the History of Religion Section of the 14th World Sanskrit Conference in Kyoto, Japan, and was a recipient of several awards and scholarships. A significant award of his was the "Dr. Sam Higginbottom Award for the Best Principals [Presidents/Rectors] of India, 2004-2005." He had published widely both in India and abroad on Sanskrit and Pali exegesis as well as comparative philosophy and theology, and lectured on different Indian religions and philosophies in a variety of universities in diverse parts of the world. He was a member of numerous national and international learned groups and international administrative bodies, and was on the Board of Editors of various global journals. He served as adviser to the Jesuit Superior General for issues related to interreligious dialogue with Hinduism, and was also a member of the international Secretariat for Ecumenical and Inter-religious Relations for the global Society of Jesus.



Ohn Mar Thant is a practicing Buddhist from Myanmar who has been a resident of Singapore since 2006. She was born in Rangoon, Burma, but spent her middle and high school years in Tokyo, Japan, at the ISSH, International School of the Sacred Heart. She graduated from Rangoon Arts and Science University with a bachelor's degree in English, a diploma in food science and technology from the Regional College, and a diploma in Japanese language from the University of Foreign Languages. She served as part-time tutor at the Regional College before moving to Rome, Italy, to live with her parents. She then joined the Ministry of Construction, where she worked for ten years until resigning as assistant director, from the Administration Department. She had studied Buddhism at the International Theravāda Buddhist Missionary University in Yangon for a year after resigning from the Ministry of Construction, but was unable to continue due to the launch of a new tourism venture. Since returning from Japan

and experiencing a variety of lifestyles she has not stopped meditating, and has joined retreats whenever available. She started practicing it after her first year of college, and has worked diligently to discover true peace. Since 1979 she has been a practitioner of Mahasi Sayadaw, followed by Chan Myae Sayadaw and other venerable monks, from branches of the Mahasi Meditation center and Sayar Thetgyi's meditation retreats. After joining the Ministry of Public Works she was introduced to Sayadaw U Jottika and then Theinngu's branches, and began practicing with Aung Lan Sayadaw and U Thiridhamma, Pyi Sayadaw and U ponnya Thethetha. She has participated in Dr. Soe Lwin's Dhamma Lan discussion forums and lectures, and she has been added to the panel discussion as a panelist. She was very fortunate to be able to train under some of the venerable senior monks who came to Singapore to give retreats. To pass the time she works as an Office Administrator for Yaskawa Asia Pacific Pte. Ltd.'s human resource department.



S. Eucharist Lawrence, SJ is an Indian Jesuit, supervising Inter-religious Peace Mission work in the city of Bodhgaya in the state of Bihar in India. After gaining an M.Sc. in Anthropology from the University of Pune, he subsequently obtained an M.A. in Buddhist Studies from the University of Kelaniya in Colombo and a Ph.D. in Buddhist Studies from the University of Peradeniya in Kandy, both in Sri Lanka. His publications in national and worldwide journals are many, and since 2011 he has organized, presented papers, and shared in national and global forums, in India, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Taiwan, Cambodia, and Japan. He has also organized peace education workshops for students and staff of the departments of education of Magadh University in Bodhgaya, and St. Xavier's College in Kolkata. He currently conducts youth workshops in schools and colleges on a variety of themes, his aim being to include meditational and inner engineering practices in academic bodies worldwide, so as to promote the moral and spiritual progress of humanity as well as the preservation and sustainability of our mother earth in ecology.



Ven. Suah Kim was born in Busan, Korea, and has been a Korean Buddhist nun since 1980. When she was a high school student she joined the Korean Buddhist Sangha, since she was eager to attain enlightenment like Sakyamuni Buddha. Her Dharma name is So Un, which means 'white cloud.' She later undertook her journey of studying Buddhism. She studied Buddhism at Dongguk University in South Korea, and later studied Chinese Buddhism at Tokyo University in Japan, and then studied Tibetan and Tibetan Buddhism at Harvard University, until 2002. She now teaches at Tongmyong University in Busan, South Korea.



Thierry Meynard, SJ was born in France in 1963, and currently serves as professor and Ph.D. director at the philosophy department of Sun Yat-Sen University in the city of Guangzhou of the People's Republic of China, teaching Western Philosophy and Latin Classics. He is the Director of the Archives for the Introduction of Western Knowledge at Sun Yat-Sen University, and from 2012 to 2014 he was Director of the Beijing Center for Chinese Studies, a study program launched by the Jesuits in 1998. In 2003, he obtained his Ph.D. in Philosophy from Peking University, after presenting a thesis on Liang Shuming. From 2003 to 2006 he taught philosophy at Fordham University in New York, and since 2006 he has been a member of the Macau Ricci Institute. His publications in English include: *The Jesuit Reading of Confucius* (Boston: Brill, 2015), *The Religious Philosophy of Liang Shuming* (Boston: Brill, 2011), and *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* (Rome: IHSI, 2011). He has also co-authored with Pan Dawei, *A Brief Introduction to the Study of Human Nature by Giulio Aleni* (Boston: Brill, 2020), and with Sher-shiueh Li, *Jesuit Chreia in Late Ming China* (Bern: Peter Lang: 2014).



Ven. Vy Sovechea, who is the third of eight children in a rice farming family, was born in 1979. Growing up in a nation that was at war, he became a Buddhist monk when he was 14 years old. He was influenced early on by the Dhammayietra Peace Movement, led by Venerable Maha Ghosananda. Venerable Vy Sovechea has extensive experience in interfaith dialogue. He is an Executive Member of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists, as well as a Board Member of Karuna Battambang Organization, a Catholic NGO in Cambodia. With Religions for Peace, he had been actively engaged in the International Campaigns to Ban Landmines and Cluster Munitions, and he has been a regular participant in the activities of the Global Peace Initiative of Women since 2008. Currently he is President of the Preah Sihanouk Raja Buddhist University in Battambang, Cambodia.



Yon-dahm Kwon 權蓮潭 studied musicology and anthropology (B.A. at Seoul National University, and M.A. Music in Development at SOAS, University of London). Since visiting Palestine and Israel in 2012 for fieldwork, she has developed a strong interest in religious studies, especially interreligious dialogue and practical paths of cultivation to achieve awakening. Currently she is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Religious Studies at Sogang University in Korea, specializing in comparative studies between Christianity, Korean Buddhism, and Korean Confucianism. She is one of the founding and active members of the Way's End Stone Field Community, at Yeosu in South Korea.



Rev. Yong Un Choe is a Korean Christian clergyman and close associate of the Jesuits of the Asia Pacific Conference. He initially studied Christianity at Yonsei University in Seoul, and then went on to conduct further research on Christianity, Confucianism, and Buddhism at Boston University in the USA. He received his Ph.D. from Sogang University in Korea in 2013, with a dissertation on Zen Master Seung Sahn and Ganhwa Seon. Dr. Choe is a person whom Jesuit Buddhist scholars of the Asia Pacific Conference have been closely associated with for the past ten years. He was an active participant at several workshops organized by the conference in Sri Lanka, Japan etc., and besides, he has been the recipient of numerous research grants from the National Research Foundation of South Korea. He currently teaches courses on religious studies at Sogang University. He has authored ten academic articles and a couple of essays, and has also authored, *The Life and Thought of Zen Master Seung Sahn* (Seoul: Unju Books, 2015).



Yuichi Tsunoda, SJ was born in Japan on December, 1979. He is a Jesuit priest and assistant professor at Sophia University in Tokyo, Japan. His major is dogmatic theology (Christology, Trinitarian theology, and Ecumenism), as well as Japanese modern Shin-Buddhist thought. He received his doctorate at the Jesuit School of Theology at Santa Clara University in the USA.

Part I

Zen Buddhism and Ignatian Spirituality

1

Zen-Ignatian Training Program in Japan: A Personal Experience

Jaroslav Duraj, S.J.

Abstract

In this article, the author desires to share his personal experience of a Zen-Ignatian training program for Catholic religious leaders, which he undertook in two stages in August of 2006 and 2007, in Japan. The program was offered by the late Japanese Jesuit and Zen Master, Fr. Kakichi Kadowaki. This paper not only presents reflections pertaining to the structure and dynamism of the training, but also reviews certain critical doctrinal elements of Buddhism and Christianity, that constituted an integral and inalienable foundation for this training. The author offers his personal musings based on his experience of receiving guidance from a demanding though highly skilled and competent master, revered not just in Christian circles but among many Buddhists as well. Finally, the paper seeks to disclose similarities between Buddhism and Christianity, and to show how Zen practice can constitute a stimulus and help for the Christian practice of meditation, especially in the context of Ignatian spirituality.

Keywords: Ignatian spirituality, Zazen, Meditation, Koan, Breathing, Body, Dust, Breath of Life, Kenosis, Realization.

Introduction

My first real experience of Zen meditation practice combined with immersion in dialogue with Buddhism occurred in Taiwan, where I arrived shortly after my missiological studies in Rome. After an intensive period of study and research on Buddhism and interreligious dialogue, I searched around for a situation that would enable me to undertake some meditative practice. My intent in doing so was not just to resolve the spiritual, existential, and philosophical dilemmas I was currently faced with, but also to gain a degree of spiritual synthesis regarding the wisdom traditions of the East and West. Since arriving in Taiwan I had only acquired a brief experience concerning the tradition of Chinese Humanistic Buddhism, as well as the charismatic leader Master Shengyan (聖嚴法師 1931-2009). Master Shengyan founded

the Dharma Drum Mountain monastery and Dharma Drum University, thereby offering a great input towards the promotion of Buddhist education in Taiwan and beyond. He was a person highly educated and open to interreligious exchange, to the extent that he even authored a book on Christianity, and besides, he was a friend of the late French Jesuit, Albert Poulet-Mathis, S.J. (馬天賜神父 1927–2010). As a Jesuit pioneer endorsing interreligious dialogue Fr. Poulet-Mathis made a vital impact on Christian-Buddhist dialogue in Taiwan, and I personally am honored to have had the privilege of having met these two extraordinary men.

Although I had undergone some short-term experiences of Zen practice in Taiwan, I realized they could not give me the desired insight into the nature of the affiliation between Christianity and Buddhism. Soon after though, aid in this regard arrived unexpectedly from Japan, a nation famous for its long tradition of dialogue between Christianity and Zen. In the 20th century, several Zen monasteries opened their halls to Christian and non-Christian practitioners from the west, irrespective of whether they were priests, monks, or lay people, permitting their practice of the Zen style of meditation within the monastery halls. Some even became highly recognized Zen teachers and Zen masters (*sensei* 先生 or *roshi* 老師) who commenced offering these spiritual meditational practices to seekers in Japan and elsewhere, especially in the USA and Europe. Daisetsu Teitaro Suzuki (鈴木 大拙 貞太郎 1870–1966) was the first to promote Zen Buddhism in the USA. One of the first to promote the so-called “Christian Zen” in the West was the German Jesuit Hugo Makibi Enomiya-Lassalle, S.J. (愛雲軒 1898–1990), and many others succeeded him. Among those promoting such dialogue was Fr. Kakichi Kadowaki, S.J. (門脇 佳吉 1926–2017), a celebrated Japanese Jesuit who had dedicated himself to seriously bridging Zen Buddhism and Ignatian spirituality, and to advancing this new approach of synthesis as a way of dialogue with Zen. After years of study, teaching, and practice Kadowaki initiated the “Zen-Ignatian Training Program,” in response to the needs of Christians and Buddhists who not only wished to deepen their personal experience of their own tradition, but also to enter into dialogue with other religions.

Fr. Kadowaki is the author of the celebrated book “Zen and the Bible,” but he has many other publications to his credit as well, mostly in Japanese. He was a Jesuit priest and professor of philosophy at Sophia University in Tokyo, though also a Zen master officially recognized by Zen Master Oomori Sogen (大森 曹玄, 1904–1994), the former President of Hanazono University (Rinzai school of Zen) in Kyoto. Kadowaki was raised in a Buddhist family and had a brother who desired to become a priest, but who tragically died in the Pacific War. Inspired by his brother’s deep faith he began to explore Christianity as he sought a solution to his existential crisis, and in time converted to Catholicism. He was baptized by Fr. Heinrich Dumoulin, S.J. (1905–1995), an eminent Buddhist scholar. When Fr. Kadowaki joined the

Jesuit religious order he underwent two years of training and formation under Fr. Pedro Arrupe, S.J. (1907–1991), who from 1965 to 1983 served as the 28th Superior General of the Society of Jesus. This eminent Jesuit had a deep impact on his life, for he considered Arrupe an authentic “soldier of Christ” and “caballero” in the spirit of St. Ignatius of Loyola.

Over the course of many years Fr. Kadowaki deepened his practice and grasp of the spiritual encounter between Zen and Christianity, by integrating the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius with the Zen practice of meditation particularly developed in the Rinzaï tradition of Buddhism (臨濟宗). The outcome of these experiences became the subject of his many publications in Japanese. To my knowledge, there are only a few books that were translated into western languages, namely *Zen and the Bible: A Priest's Experience* (1979), *Invito alla meditazione. Sintesi fra cultura orientale e occidentale* (1992) or *Por el camino del Oriente: posibilidades de una teología cristiana japonesa* (2000). He also translated the Spiritual Exercises from Spanish to Japanese, and composed theatrical plays that were presented in theatres of Japan and Europe.

The Goal and the Structure of Program

On one occasion, during my Chinese language studies in Taipei, I heard about the Zen-Ignatian program organized by Fr. Kadowaki. Hence I contacted him expressing my desire to participate in the training, whereupon he not only accepted me but provided me a scholarship to make this participation possible. On receiving the necessary sanction from my Chinese Provincial Superior, I set out for Japan to this spiritual adventure in a mood of great enthusiasm, though also with a degree of perplexity and uncertainty.

The Zen-Ignatian training program for Catholic religious leaders comprised two phases, which were realized in the month of August of 2006 and 2007 within a picturesque locality of Kita-karuzawa, located in the Gunma prefecture of Japan. The course was entitled, “International Zen-Ignatian training program for selected Catholic Spiritual Leaders to deepen Christian Spirituality (especially the Spiritual Exercises).” The training was conducted in the Zen center founded by Fr. Kadowaki at a location close to Mt. Asama (altitude 1050m), which had a climate that was dry, healthy, and cool in summer. The location of a hot spring facility and swimming pool nearby provided us with occasions to relax during the program, and activities such as physical exercises, swimming, walking, as well as tasks such as cooking and cleaning all constituted parts of the program, and all of which were integrated into the Zen spirit of daily practice as in the case of any authentic Buddhist Zen or Christian monastery.

The goal of this program was to deepen the experience of the Christian (Ignatian) mode of prayer with the aid of the Zen method of meditation, through focusing on breathing. This proved helpful especially in going back

to the origin of creation as narrated in the Book of Genesis of the Bible, which describes the creation of man from breath (רוּחַ *ruah*), which is the life of God or the Holy Spirit, giving life to everything. The trace and mark of this Spirit given in creation, is our human act of breathing. This way, through the Zen skill of “*tanden kokyu* (丹田呼吸),” which is “breathing with guts,” a practitioner experiences a very intimate relationship between the act of breathing and the presence of the Holy Spirit. This experience can open the Christian “spiritual eye” which is the equivalent of *satori* (悟り) in Zen, and it can lead to the realization of what Ignatius intended by the “Principle and Foundation” (Spiritual Exercises, 23). This spiritual foundation laid a basis for further Ignatian realization, by the practice of Christian Koans.¹

The initiation period of the first part of the training was dedicated to an intense practice of the method of breathing, physical exercises, and the practice of Zazen. This was followed by a first *sesshin* (接心)² and its target was the “body-reading” of the Book of Genesis (“the creation of a man”), and this was related to the First Week of the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius. After the intensive *sesshin* we continued a daily program of 5 hours of Zen practice complemented by the *teisho* (提唱), that is, a spiritual lecture by the Zen master or mutual study of the Spiritual Exercises, and daily celebration of the Eucharist along with the Examination of Conscience. Finally, this part of the training ended with another *sesshin* dedicated to the process of realization (spiritual awakening) of the contingency of being and dust, resulting in the reality of the Breath of Life (Gen. 2:7). There were 3 main topics in this part of the training: (1) The experience of the creation of man (Gen. 1 and 2:7) through the practice of the breathing method as found in Zen. (2) The experience of Christian emptiness, exemplified in the *Kenosis* (κένωσις) of Christ through the realization of *Mu* (無).³ This practice was based on Phil. 2:1-10, which deals with Christ’s humility or *Kenosis* and the overall view of Christ’s living experience, as presented in the Gospels. (3) The experience of the Father God-Creator, of the Holy Spirit, and of our sonship given by Christ, through crying “Abba, Father.” This use of the prayer “Abba, Father” replaced the use of *Mu* in the Zen tradition. The texts used for this theme were Rom. 8:14-18 and Gal. 4:4-7.

The second part of the training was based on deepening our earlier intensive practice of Zazen, the Koan *Mu*, as well as the Christian experience of dust and the Breath of Life (as the Principle and Foundation). In this way

¹ In Buddhist terminology Koan (公案 Chn. *gongan*, lit. “public case”) means a meditative method consisting of a question-problem that defies solution by means of rational thinking. It is a puzzle given to the practitioner by the master who helps him to reach the realization.

² *Sesshin* means here a period of seven days Zen-Christian retreats. Literally *sesshin* is a Zen term for retreats and means “encounter of the heart” or “recollection of mind.”

³ The term *Mu* is difficult to translate. Basically, it means “nothingness.” In Buddhist contexts it may mean negation of the conceptual knowledge, contradiction of something commonly agreed upon in order to show that the answer is beyond what one may think spontaneously and in rational terms.

we were invited to build up a firm Ignatian Spiritual “Existenz” by using as a Christian Koan the *Kenosis* of Christ. Fr. Kadowaki helped us to realize how each Spiritual Exercise proposed by St. Ignatius of Loyola could be used as a Koan. What was of special value in our practice were the meditations on *The Call of Christ the King*, *The Two Standards*, *The Three Classes of Men*, *The Three Modes of Humility*, and *The Contemplation to attain Love*. This part of the training drew our attention to the “Rules for the discernment of Spirits” as well as to the *Autobiography* of St. Ignatius. Likewise, we also focused on the life and teachings of St. Paul of Tarsus and Zen Master Dogen.

Integrating Zen Practice with Ignatian Spirituality

Our daily training and practice included meditation, sitting, breathing, physical exercises, walking, working, cooking, eating, talking, listening and certain other actions. All such actions had to be performed mindfully. Our practice was especially focused on Zazen (坐禅)⁴ in the form of a sitting meditation, seated in the lotus or semi-lotus position. Zazen is a transliteration of the Sanskrit word “dhyana,” and “it is considered to be the heart of Zen Buddhist practice. The aim of Zazen is just sitting, that is, suspending all judgmental thinking and letting words, ideas, images and thoughts pass by without getting involved in them.”⁵

There are three main forms of Zazen in Buddhism: Concentration (三昧 *sanmai*), Koan Introspection (公案), and *Shikantaza* (只管打座) meaning “just sitting.” We practiced these three in different degrees of intensity. Among them the practice of sitting seemed the most challenging, as each day we had to dedicate several hours for it. The exercise of Zazen, mindfulness, and concentration, together with the puzzling Koans assigned to us by Fr. Kadowaki, became altogether a very challenging endeavor, especially during the first *sesshin*. Nevertheless, it gradually became part of our daily routine, and so problems of physical fatigue and distractions significantly subsided. It was also important to realize that the practice of Zazen should

⁴ Zazen stands for “meditative practice taught in Zen as the most direct way to enlightenment. Zazen is not meditation in the usual sense, since meditation includes, at least initially, the focusing of the mind on a ‘meditation object’ (for example, a mandala or a graphic representation of a bodhisattva) or contemplating abstract properties (for instance, impermanence or compassion). Zazen, however, is intended to free the mind from bondage to any thought-form, vision, thing, or representation, however sublime or holy it might be. [...] In its purest form zazen is dwelling in a state of thought-free, alertly wakeful attention, which, however, is not directed toward any object and clings to no content. If practiced over a long period of time with persistence and devotion, zazen brings the mind of the sitter to a state of totally contentless wakefulness, from which, in a sudden breakthrough of enlightenment, he can realize his own true nature or buddha-nature, which is identical with the nature of the entire universe.” S. Schuhmacher and G. Woerner, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion: Buddhism, Taoism, Zen, Hinduism* (Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1994), 440.

⁵ Chinese Buddhist Encyclopedia Contributors, “Zazen,” *Chinese Buddhist Encyclopedia*, March 16, 2016, accessed March 30, 2021, <http://www.chinabuddhismencyclopedia.com/en/index.php?title=Zazen&oldid=245261>.

not and cannot be reduced merely to “quiet sitting,” something that Master Dogen (道元 1200–1253) diagnosed as the sickness of Zen. Rather, Zen is a practice that should extend to all spheres of our life.

The essential dimension of our Zazen training was the practice of breathing deeply and sitting in the half-lotus position. Our Zen Master liked to continuously repeat, “You have to sit like a rock” (兀坐 *za gatsu*) so that it becomes your daily habit. Sitting on a cushion with determination is so important that Zen masters exhort the practitioners, “At some time you must die on the cushion” and experience the great death (大死 *daishi*). The practice of mindful breathing helped me personally to be more aware of the Breath of Life or the Holy Spirit, through whom we received existence from God in the act of creation. The visible trace of this act of creation is our ability to breathe, for as the Book of Genesis reminds us, “Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being” (Gen. 2:7). In order to deepen our breathing during the practice of Zazen we focused on the central dimension of the human being, identified at a point of the lower abdomen, that is *hara* (腹).⁶ Buddhists speak of *hara* as the “seat of enlightenment.” This is the source of cosmic forces and center of the energy flow, because it is a wellspring of vital spiritual and psychic energies in a human being. We were to focus with our mind’s eye, which stands for an act of attention, at the bottom of the *hara* level, and realize it as the center of the universe, the place of wisdom, and center of the human being. The importance of *hara* in Zen practice has been well described by Philip Kapleau, who stated the following:

Zazen (meditation) has clearly demonstrated that with the mind’s eye centered in the *hara* the proliferation of random ideas is diminished and the attainment of one-pointedness accelerated, since a plethora of blood from the head is drawn down to the abdomen, “cooling” the brain and soothing the autonomic nervous system. This in turn leads to a greater degree of mental and emotional stability. One who functions from his *hara*, therefore, is not easily disturbed. He is, moreover, able to act quickly and decisively in an emergency owing to the fact that his mind, anchored in his *hara*, does not waver. With the mind in the *hara*, narrow and egocentric thinking is superseded by a broadness of outlook and a magnanimity of spirit. This is because thinking from the vital *hara* center, being free of mediation by the limited discursive intellect, is spontaneous and all embracing. Perception from the *hara* tends toward integration and unity rather than division and fragmentation. In short, it is thinking which sees things steadily and whole.⁷

⁶ *Hara* is also called *tanden* (丹田) which is the point where one’s energy (氣 *qi*) resides and it can be found specifically two inches below the navel, that is between the navel and the pelvis.

⁷ P. Kapleau, ed., *The Three Pillars of Zen: Teaching, Practice, Enlightenment* (New York and Tokyo: Beacon Press, 1967), 68-9.

The focus of attention on the point of *hara* is firmly linked to the vital function of breathing. The quality of breathing is the elementary dimension of mindfulness practice, and indeed, the precondition for every mindful way of prayer. Fr. Kadowaki continuously encouraged us to breathe deeply, as he used to remind us that “we have to breathe from the bottom of *hara*, which is related to the creation act (Gen 2:7). *Hara* is one point in the human body, but it includes the whole person, indeed, man can be considered as *hara*. Through *hara* we have to awaken the whole personality. This way Zen becomes the spiritual exercise.” Kadowaki saw in this function of breathing the vital dimension of life, and one of the common aspects of spiritual practice in Zen and Christianity. It is beyond theological and philosophical aporias, because here the shared ground is a natural, human, innate and ordinary human experience. The quality of breathing has its tremendous impact not only on the quality of meditation but also on daily life, with all its current hectic schedule and hyperactive dynamism.

In Buddhist tradition, a practitioner receives the message of truth (法*ho*, skr. *dharma*) through mind and heart deep down at the level of *hara*, where it remains solid and firm. In fact, he realizes and discovers already present within himself the pre-existing seed of Buddhahood that is Tathāgatagarbha, being the Buddha-Matrix or the Buddha-Embryo. This can be considered the spiritual-existential event leading to realization of Buddhahood. Hence every message must be embodied, as otherwise, if it remains only at the level of the intellect (mind) or feelings (heart), it may not have a real impact on the person’s real life. The goal of Zen practice is realization or liberation. So is the Christian practice of meditation or contemplation, though the content and nature of this transformation is different. Considering the goal of Zen practice, Kadowaki during one of our lectures (提唱 *teisho*) described it as follows:

Zen is to make you free. You have to practice, not to make a theory. The centre of your life is *hara*. This is really very important. We have to learn to breathe. It is fundamental for the meditation and for your life. If you breathe deeply your mind is peaceful, your body is more relaxed and your senses are more acute, more open and sensitive for what is outside, for the others. Zen is not introvertism. In Zen we have to look at ourselves, to analyse ourselves (*ad intra*), but what is necessary is that we have to go also *ad extra* to the others, serving them. We have to be free. Zen helps us to be free from – first of all – our egoism.

In this statement, Fr. Kadowaki wanted to challenge us religious people by helping us to realize our egoism, limitations, and self-centredness, even those present or camouflaged under the form of religious (consecrated) life. Meanwhile, it can be noticed that lay people are often more willing to serve others in a very concrete way, because they have to face the challenges and hardships of ordinary life. We were reminded that spiritual practice is not just some kind of navel-gazing self-absorption. On the contrary, it

is something that has to be extended into daily life, and expressed first of all through the spirit of service. We should always be attentive, watchful, and ready to serve. Even the practice of Zazen as a sitting meditation was for Kadowaki a noble and solid posture, symbolizing a readiness for action and service. For him, this is exactly what the Ignatian term *contemplativus in actione* would mean for Christians.

The question of *hara* is related to the act of breathing, which refers to the act of creation, when this ability was given to all sentient beings through the dynamic presence of the Breath of Life (נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים, *nishmat hayyim*). This in Christian terminology would be equivalent to the action of the Holy Spirit. Christian realization (enlightenment) consists in being awakened to the mystery of the Breath of Life, that is, to the presence of the Holy Spirit in the world. In order to enter into this great mystery, a practitioner has to work hard on certain “spiritual puzzles” or riddles, which in Zen are called Koans. We were given several Koans to help us on our spiritual journey. The first one that was mentioned earlier was the Koan on the Breath of Life, and another was the experience of being dust, or what in Zen is often referred to as the Koan *Mu* (無), in order to realize the impermanence, nothingness, and contingency of being. Later we also worked on the Koan of *Kenosis* (κένωσις), which is death with Christ in order to regain new life with him, and to offer ourselves generously for the service of others.

The Breath of Life as a Christian Koan has a profound Biblical significance because breath penetrates our innermost self, and right from the beginning we are full of it, as a sign of divine life in us. It relates even earlier to the act of *creatio ex nihilo* of our being, namely, to the fact of our being created from dust. There is a close linkage between Man (אָדָם *Adam*) and Earth (אֲדָמָה *adamah*), as described in Genesis 2:7. These two terms “Man” and “Earth” have the same Hebraic root as they have the same origin: “The Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being” (Gen 2:7).

Oriental people have a very strong feeling and sense for corporeality and breathing. They view them as integrally interlinked to the spirit and mind. Primitive societies also had this kind of spirituality, which is in close contact with the earth. Modern society however has gradually lost this sense, and this is having a tremendous impact on the way religious spirituality is lived, either by Christians or other believers. Breathing reconnects us to the whole universe. We and the universe are one. We are made of dust and we will turn into dust. God told man after he committed the sin: “For you were made from dust, and to dust you will return” (Gen 3:19). Since man is made of dust, he is also essentially mortal and therefore in need of redemption. This notion of dust is something very concrete and visible. Dust is an essential constituent of human beings, and indeed of all sentient beings as well. The Breath of Life is a vivifying force that gives life to dust. A living being is a breathing being, and hence, breathing is the core

of living. A breathing body indicates a real man. We need to calm down the intellect and vivify our inner self by breathing through the whole body, for by doing so we will become sharp, focused, and possessed of a strong will (determination). Through this body-perception we are enabled to catch a phenomenon of life, and penetrate to the very core of reality. It is not so much reason (*ratio*) but primarily the body, that becomes a notion or vehicle of wisdom. We can really touch God himself through this event of embodied and incarnated Wisdom: "And the Word became flesh and lived among us" (John 1:14).

Through the act of breathing we can really see what we are, and how we were created. The Breath of Life manifests also the nature of life given to beings. This "Life" first of all is the attribute and substance of God, as it belongs to him and his proper nature. In Exodus 3:14, God introduces himself using the words: "I am, who I am" (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה, *ehyeh aser ehyeh*). Living beings (נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה, *nephesh haya*) take their origin from "I AM," who is the source of life. Human beings are mysterious because they have life that comes from God. He always acts through his Spirit which is full of energy, since he is a living force. By doing Zazen we can become active as well, thanks to this divine energy and life working in us since the moment of creation. Yet it needs to be activated, as otherwise it may lie dormant, only as a potentiality in our life. Our living means breathing. Now we are "living" dust, because every moment we receive from God the Breath of Life. My breathing comes from the breathing of God. At the bottom of *hara* there is an abyss where dwells the Holy Spirit, the Breath of Life. The Holy Spirit through the process of breathing enters into us, and thus we enter reality and the communion of divine life.

In all our activities during training we were constantly reminded and urged to breathe deeply, or even to breathe through the whole body, so that we could identify ourselves with this breathing. At certain moments of spontaneous breathing, one has to take the initiative to help the breathing. We have to synchronize our initiative with the dynamism of breathing present in us since creation. While breathing we need to "forget" about ourselves, since it is better not to be conscious that it is 'we' who are breathing. It should be the same with the sitting position. We should show reverence to breathing—for this is respect towards life. Kadowaki remarked: "Breathing is crucial. Every child on being born breathes with *hara*. It is only later when the child grows more egoistic that it gradually starts to breathe very shallowly, using the lungs. That is the reason why our lungs gradually developed."

Man can reach a deep harmony with the Breath of Life through the great death, because this way he can become pure, and he can realize that God is very close to him. Following the intuition of St. Augustine formulated in the light of his own experience, one can say that God is much closer to

us than we are to ourselves.⁸ God penetrates very deeply our innermost self. This becomes a supranatural process when a person commits himself wholeheartedly to the practice of prayer and experiences the great death, as a result of which he or she will also enter into an intimate and close relationship with God and the divine life of the Trinity as Circumincession (περιχώρησις *perichoresis*), while realizing a very profound and deep presence of God in the here and now.

The great attention paid by Buddhism to the role of breathing is having a significant impact on Christian practice, which in the course of history had somewhat forgotten or neglected this important function of life. Zen practice helped me to recover this essential dimension in my daily practice of prayer and work. Through systematic and tenacious practice, one can deepen one's appreciation of breathing. Master Dogen speaks about the necessity of showing "respect towards the breath of life." For him, Zen training is a means to adjust our breathing to the "activity" of the Way (道 *do*).

By paying attention to breathing we gradually acquire more respect for our body and its role in meditation. Through breathing, a practitioner establishes a connection with the body, which is a kind of sanctuary or sacred space. Jesus himself in the Gospels speaks of "the temple of his body" (John 2:21), and St. Paul too exhorts us to treat our bodies as "a temple of the Holy Spirit" (1 Cor 6:19-20).⁹

In Buddhism, the role and function of the body has an immense value for practice. A certain Buddhist master from Korea used to explain this relationship between the mind and body in the following way: "The mind is owner of our body, the body is the teacher of our mind." Thanks to the influence of his Zen practice, Fr. Kadowaki very early in life started to apply the bodily reading of the Bible. At some point he was quite dissatisfied with his strictly intellectual formation, as he believed it lacked something, and so he decided to integrate Zen practice with his study of the Bible and the practice of the Spiritual Exercises. Eventually, it was only after the Second Vatican Council that his superiors allowed him to methodically practice Zen, under the guidance of certain Buddhist masters.

The importance of the body was addressed in our practice not only through the sitting meditation, but also through walking, which became the extension of our meditation. Mindful walking (經行 *kinhin*) was another important element of the practice, not just as a break between meditation sessions but as part of the daily Zen practice, exactly as it is in Zen monasteries. We were to walk with spine erect like kings while touching the ground firmly like an ox, yet watchfully and softly like a tiger. Kadowaki

⁸ Augustine writes that the Lord is *interior intimo meo et superior summo meo* "higher than my highest and more inward than my innermost self." Augustin, *Confessions*, III, 6, 11.

⁹ "Or don't you know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. Therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's" (1 Cor 6:19-20).

repeatedly instructed us to “step as an ox and watch as a tiger” (虎眼牛歩 *kogan gyuhō*). This practice aimed at making us one, with ourselves, with the earth, and with creation. *Kinhin* is very crucial because it connects us with reality. It is a bridge between *Zazen* and daily life. *Kinhin* must be full of energy and wisdom. Energy is in stepping and breathing, but wisdom resides in the eyes. *Zen* teaches us in the very concrete way of *kinhin* the transition between *Zazen* and ordinary life. In this way, every action becomes a meditation.

Our practice with all its manifold dimensions was to assist us in reaching the state of *samadhi* (三昧 *zammai*) which in *Zen* is a state of balance, equilibrium, and tranquility of mind, or in other words a state of intense concentration that can be achieved through meditation. In such a state one goes beyond the dualism of subject and object or what is external and internal, thus realizing the unity of both. This state is free from attachment and clinging to any object or intention, since it is a thought-free state of non-discrimination, and total attention to here and now.¹⁰

The state of *samadhi* can be attained not only through the practice of meditation, but also through other daily activities that help in mastering the power of concentration in performing ordinary things. We were also given the opportunity to practice some elements of the traditional Japanese arts, which were developed or refined for the sake of attaining *samadhi*. These included incense appreciation (香道 *kodo*), the tea ceremony (茶道 *sado*), calligraphy (書道 *shodo*), martial arts such as archery (弓道 *kyudo*), or flower arrangement (華道 *kado*) known also as *ikebana*. With the exception of the last two, all other elements were included in our practice and cultivation of *samadhi*.

The outcome or goal of *Zen* practice is what Buddhists call *satori* (悟り), the state of enlightenment, illumination, understanding or realization of the Buddha nature. A term similar to *satori* that is also used in *Zen* Buddhism as a description of enlightenment is *kensho* (見性), but it reflects rather an initial awakening experience, and literally means “seeing one’s (true) nature.” Being an initial stage of awakening it cannot be considered the full state of Buddhahood, and hence further training is still required. When the adept reaches full, final, or absolute enlightenment, such a final stage of

¹⁰ Definition of “*samadhi*” in *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*: “*Samadhi* (Jap., *sammai* or *zanmai*); collectedness of the mind on a single object through (gradual) calming of mental activity. *Samadhi* is a non-dualistic state of consciousness in which the consciousness of the experiencing ‘subject’ becomes one with the experienced ‘object’ – thus is *only* experiential content. This state of consciousness is often referred to as ‘one-pointedness of mind’; this expression, however, is misleading because it calls up the image of ‘concentration’ on one point on which the mind is ‘directed.’ However, *samadhi* is neither a straining concentration on one point, nor is the mind directed from here (subject) to there (object), which would be a dualistic mode of experience.” S. Schuhmacher, G. Woerner, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*, 296.

training in Zen Buddhism refers to the experience of the “great realization or enlightenment” (大悟徹底 *daigo tettei*).

The Christian equivalent of *satori* would be *metanoia* (μετάνοια), meaning transformation of mind or “transformative change of heart” as a result of spiritual transformation, when Christ becomes the center of life and the person becomes a “new creation,” seeing the whole of creation as filled with divine love. Even though some would disagree, yet for many what can be called Christian enlightenment implies Zen enlightenment, and there is no contradiction here. A Zen master who trained Fr. Kadowaki used to define *satori* (enlightenment) as “I – We, here – everywhere, now – anytime.” Another master said that Zen was like a “two sword fight.” Since life is a battle, we have to be vigilant, and always watching. Instead of speaking about enlightenment Kadowaki preferred to use the term *realization* (證 *sho*), which is an authentic actualization, awakening, and insight into the true nature of reality. It consists of having an awareness of the Way which is fully present where one is at a given moment. When dualistic thinking arises the Way “disappears,” and it is easy to lose it or miss it. In the realization of the Truth (法 *ho*, skr. dharma), the True Way (眞道) manifests itself as the “Real.” Such realization is the proof and real evidence (眞證) that our practice of the Way is authentic. In Christian terms this amounts to our realization of being dust, going through *Kenosis* with Christ, rising to a new life with him, recognizing that God is our Father, and offering oneself for the service and salvation of the world. Experience of this spiritual reality is the evidence of Christian truth.

Zen Master Shunryū Suzuki (鈴木 俊隆) clarifies the reason for practicing Zazen by stating, “a mind full of preconceived ideas, subjective intentions, or habits is not open to things as they are. That is why we practice zazen; to clear our mind of what is related to something else.”¹¹ For Master Dogen practice and enlightenment are one and there is no difference between them, as long as one does not operate at the level of the discriminatory mind (rationalization). When one does the practice, the person’s body is full of the Way. However, to sustain this sense of the Way we have to keep great faith, on the basis of which the Self (自己 *jiko*), that is one’s original self, is harmonized with the Way. Hence—to paraphrase Dogen—when one practices the Way, the person is already in the state of enlightenment. There is no need to think (rationalize) about it, otherwise this unity with the Way can easily be forsaken. The Way reveals the True Reality through the practice. The True Reality manifests itself spontaneously to the one who is attuned to the Way. If it is not practiced, this reality is not accessible. The true manifestation is present by the evidence of the True Reality. This is the meaning of realization, enlightenment, or *satori* (證 *sho*), that is, it

¹¹ S. Suzuki, *Zen Mind, Beginners Mind*, ed. Trudy Dixon (New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1995), 88.

becomes the “evidence.” Satori is based on the evidence of the True Reality as experienced by a practitioner.

Similarly, the reality of the kingdom of God is the equivalent of the Way in Zen. When a Christian believer lives and practices his faith, he is already in the state of realization wherein he sees God’s presence as something real, because the Kingdom of God is close, or as Jesus said: “For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you” (Luke 17:21). This is how we discover the truth of God’s presence among us. It is our act of faith which contains already the presence of God. In this way we can find God who is already present and working in us, through faith in the act of breathing. To realize that however, a practitioner has to open his “third eye” or “spiritual eye.”

Zen Master Yamada Roshi¹² often stressed the issue of gaining enlightenment. According to Fr. Kadowaki, to focus on enlightenment is not a proper way. For him, we should not be attached even to what we gain as realization or enlightenment. Through experiencing reality we always have to get some evidence, as proof that our practice is correct. Our proper state of evidence is the fact of our being dust, our being nothingness. *Kenosis* is the True Reality. In this kind of realization, one can have confidence that Christ the Lord is emptying himself now and concretely in our own life. We should not be attached to the reality of illumination, at least for the reason that concerning that reality we can say nothing. It is just “no-thing” beyond words and conceptual proliferation. If one conceptualizes this reality, he is expecting a specific experience of it, and that already means an attachment. We are facing here an iron wall. We have to jump beyond it. We need to reach *Mu* (無) by transcending all attachments. In this way our defilements should be eliminated. From here starts conversion or transformation from homocentrism to theocentrism. The effect of theocentrism is reverence (*acatamiento*). Reverence towards God shows that we realize the fact of our being dust. This should always be kept as part of one’s practice. Together with this experience of being dust there should be a firm decision to die with Christ. This is the proof (evidence) of an authentic Christian realization.

The presence of God in Christianity or the sense of the Way in Zen, generates an authentic sense of reverence and respect towards the mystery of the reality. One of the most vital practices of our training was the act of showing respect via the gesture called *gassho* (合掌).¹³ This is an act of observance and reverence, that is, showing respect with palms touching each other. Kadowaki associated *gassho* with the Ignatian style of reverence that was constantly present in the life of St. Ignatius. He saw God’s presence in all things, in every occasion he learned to give glory to God and to revere

¹² Yamada Koun Zenshin (山田 耕雲, 1907–1989) was a Buddhist master and the leader of the Sanbo Kyodan lineage of Japanese Zen Buddhism.

¹³ *Gassho* means “two hands coming together.” It is a pose of “praying hands,” a position created by placing the hands and palms together in the act of prayer or reverence.

God's Majesty by the act of *acatamiento*.¹⁴ Kadowaki stated that *acatamiento* as reverence towards God in the vision of St. Ignatius means loving reverence, and it should result in a readiness to obey God. There are two kinds of reverence: actual and mystical. The former is just a preparation for the disposition of mystical *acatamiento*. There is first an act of practice, and mystical experience may then follow. To be able to put ourselves in the presence of God we have to become dust, to have a sense of being "nothing" before God.

Kadowaki constantly insisted on the importance of practicing *acatamiento*, in many circumstances. We bowed to each other just before we started the Zazen meditation, as well as after the walking meditation or physical exercises. We practiced reverence during the consecration in the Eucharist, and we bowed to each other to share the sign of peace. We equally bowed before meals, and also when we started our individual session-meeting with the Zen master called *dokusan* (独参).¹⁵ There was also an act of *gassho* during the period of meditation, when the Zen master at the request of an individual used the *kyosaku* or *keisaku* (警策), a flat wooden stick or slat, to remedy our sleepiness or lapses of concentration. It was administered on our backs and shoulders. We expressed our gratitude by bowing for this act of kindness on the part of the master. The practice of *gassho* taught us to be mindful of the holy presence of God or the Way, to which we had to constantly adjust ourselves. We had to accommodate our practice to the dynamism of the Way, to feel it through our mind and heart, but without thinking or speculating rationally about it. The internal harmony was to spring out naturally from the unity with the Way, and therefore we needed to keep alive our reverence (*acatamiento*) towards the mystery of the Way. For Kadowaki the gesture of respectful bowing is one of the most critical acts and it had to be done with reverence, for it would then be accumulated as a good seed, and at some moment it would come out spontaneously, resulting in realization.

The Pillars, Essentials, and Fundamentals of Zen Practice

There are certain pillars, essentials and fundamentals of Zen practice that are a *sine qua non* for authentic spiritual progress. We were provided by Fr. Kadowaki with the doctrinal and spiritual background of Zen, in order to acquire an accurate insight and understanding of the Zen-Ignatian practice we were committed to. One of the most important initial stages of Zen practice is the experience of the great death (大死 *dai shi*), which in Zen particularly means death of the attachment to one's ego, or rather, the deconstruction of the delusional self. It may be equivalent to *Kenosis* in

¹⁴ Spanish noun *acatamiento* means reverence; respectfulness; abidance.

¹⁵ *Dokusan* in Japanese means "going alone to a respected one" that is for a private meeting between a Zen practitioner and his master.

Christian practice as self-abnegation through *imitatio Christi*, when one is born anew through the saving passion of Christ. In Zen it is imperative that a practitioner dies to himself. Fr. Kadowaki asserted, “at some time you must die on the cushion,” and this is because Christ too is dying with us as we practice. In Zazen one has to seek to die the great death, through total self-denial. However, the main prevailing problem is ignorance. Since we do not know who we are and we have a shallow insight into our ego and delusions, we do not know what has to die in ourselves. Zen stresses wisdom, which is more pivotal than mercy, and we need wisdom to get rid of this ignorance. There exist not only inordinate affections that confuse us and affect our practice, but ignorance above all is a major stumbling block as well. Ignorance (無明 *mu myo*) is nothing other than no-wisdom. Hence, passing through the great death means getting rid of ignorance. The first target of Zen training is the great death, and hence, while making a bow, we should always remember that, “we are dust.” When one realizes the great death, the result should be what Buddhists call the great rebirth (大活 *dai katsu*) and great delight (大歡喜 *dai kangī*). This is a state of “no-self,” because the deluded self has disappeared to be replaced by a life of compassion. In Christian terms, this great death results in a “new creation” in Christ. This rebirth is not self-centred, but rather oriented towards service, compassion, and love.

Fr. Kadowaki shared with us certain experiences of renunciation in his life, as for instance when he desired to start his Zen practice. He testified to the painful change he underwent, by recalling how he went out to seek a master to train him in Zen, and how he had found Master Oomori Sogen, who at first had no wish to receive him at all. Finally however, when he got a chance to speak to him, Fr. Kadowaki was asked to share what he had learned so far. When he mentioned the Koans he had worked on earlier with other masters, Master Oomori Sogen declared, “you have to cut down everything.” That was the condition for him to be admitted for training, since what he has learned earlier could be a hindrance in his new practice. Hence, he submitted totally to the new teaching and guidance. For him this was similar to the change in the life of St. Paul, after his conversion. Frankly speaking, Fr. Kadowaki’s conclusion was that for a new beginning to commence, it is indeed essential that we give up what we have.

With regard to Ignatian spirituality, we were invited to cultivate the practice and rising of the Great Spirit. The Great Spirit (大勇猛心 *dai yūmō shin*) is the equivalent of generosity in Ignatian spirituality, where St. Ignatius recommends that the retreatant in his spiritual quest offers himself generously during the exercises, by giving rise to what he terms the *grande animo*. St. Ignatius uses the term *grande animo* in Annotation number 5 of the Spiritual Exercises, where he speaks of two conditions for doing fruitful retreats. One is *liberalidad* (freedom) and the other is *grande animo* (generosity). *Liberalidad* means distributing gifts and goods freely

and generously without reserve, and without expecting any reward, while *grande animo* signifies the great courage and will to serve the Lord with generosity.

In fidelity to Zen tradition we were initiated and led through three essentials (三要) that were mandatory for attaining enlightenment in Zen Buddhism, namely the great root of faith (大信根), the great mass of doubt (大疑團), and the great overpowering will (大憤志). These three elements were considered as parallel to and resembling Christian experience, and they aided us in acquiring deeper insights in our personal practice.

The 'great doubt' (大疑團 *dai gidan*) is a pillar of Zen practice. The Zen adept has to experience at a point the great doubt, the mass of doubt, a probing impurity, perplexity, an intense self-questioning, to an extent that even the body of the practitioner seems replete with questioning. This is necessary in order to get rid of everything that constitutes an obstacle to the spiritual path. *Via purgativa* in Christianity is part of this process of purification from disordered affections. When a Christian experiences dryness, bleakness, and doubt in his practice, it should open him up to an authentic relationship with God, shattering 'idols' that stand in the way. The experience of the great doubt has some analogy to the notion of "desolation" in the Spiritual Exercises. With reference to the discernment of spirits, a retreatant can discern states that separate him from God, or when he experiences spiritual deserts, he can discern states that lead him to the realization as to who is the source of authentic consolation in spiritual progress.

The great faith (大信根 *dai shinkon*) signifies the 'great belief root,' and it is a pillar of Zen and Christian practice. Without faith one cannot progress in spiritual life. To practice Zen one has to have faith. Fr. Kadowaki quoted an Italian Zen Master, Fausto Taiten Guareschi, who, in his experience of accompanying converts from Christianity to Buddhism, remarked that many former Christians who had lost their faith and decided to practice Zen, in fact could not make substantial progress in their spiritual journey as Zen adepts. Since they had lost their faith and abandoned the Church some were not good candidates for Zen practice, and they could not attain enlightenment since they did not have enough faith. They had lost the foundation and the root of their life, which is faith.

The 'great determination' (大憤志 *dai funshi*) is the last pillar of Zen practice. It means having a strong will and fierce determination to pursue the Zen way. It arises in relation to great doubt, and the practitioner makes a resolution to dispel this doubt with strong will and determination. It is also based on the faith and conviction that a practitioner is naturally endowed with the spiritual potential to realize the truth of reality, and pursue the path of liberation.

In Buddhist practice there are certain fundamentals of Zen, and discussing them during our training was very useful. The essential

fundamental dimension of Zen practice is that of harmonization (調 *cho*), which consists in creating an inner condition. One may say it is a precondition for good practice. It means also “to dispose” oneself so as to follow the Master and his instructions, properly and faithfully. During the practice, one has to harmonize three dimensions: (1) Body (身 *shin*). (2) Breath (息 *soku*). (3) Heart/Mind (心 *shin*). This task of harmonization starts from the adjustment of the body (身). In the practice, the proper composition of the body comes first, and then what follows is harmonization of breathing and adjusting of the state of mind, by focused attention or one-pointedness. One needs to adopt the right position for the body, so as to adjust it and predispose it for the correct sitting. This is very important, as the posture during meditation and the overall behaviour, reflects the practitioner’s inner attitude and inner state. For many philosophers as well the role of the body is very important. Heidegger, for instance used to say, “the body speaks.”

Finally we were taught about two aspects of Zazen that practitioners needed to pay heed to, namely sitting and activity. When sitting, one had to have a peaceful and at the same time dynamic attitude (靜中動 *seichu no do*), but when doing various activities, the person needed to act with dynamism, and yet simultaneously possess an inner quietness (動中靜 *dochu no sei*). This is real harmony (調) of meditation and action, and one finds this to be a close echo of what St. Ignatius intended by *contemplativus in atione*.

Between Meditation Hall and the Daily Life Samadhi

Towards the end of each training session, Fr. Kadowaki used to remind us that whatever we learned during practice would have to be continued in daily life, as otherwise we might easily lose it. It is important to be perseverant and systematic during the daily practice, so as to deepen the experience. This especially concerned improving the quality of breathing and faithfulness to regular sitting. Every degree of knowledge and skill acquired is to be tested and verified in real life, as only then can one see if the realization was authentic or not.

In the Zen tradition there are the so-called *Ten Ox Herding Pictures* (十牛圖 *jogyu*), which indicate the path and stages of one’s progress towards enlightenment. They conclude with the stage of returning to the marketplace and society, where the practitioner is to realize wisdom and compassion. In the view of St. Ignatius, this is no more than to be a *contemplativus in atione*.

While undergoing training under the guidance of his Novice Master, Fr. Arrupe, Fr. Kadowaki too was informed that after the retreats, the real practice began when a person returned to daily life. Years later he had a similar experience while being instructed by his Zen master, who at the end of the *sesshin* said to him, “now the real *sesshin* starts, that is, in daily life.” He then realized clearly how Buddhism and Christianity in fact said the same thing, with regard to spiritual practice.

How do we deal with practice in daily life? Fr. Kadowaki compared it to the experience of riding a horse. It is visualized lucidly by the Zen proverb: "On a saddle nobody, under the saddle no horse" (鞍上無人, 鞍下無馬 *anjo hito naku, anka uma nashi*). It signifies the perfect union of the rider with the horse, and so there is no distinction or discrimination. Fr. Kadowaki asserted that if you rode a very good horse, you would surely win. A horse runs best when the rider is in perfect harmony with the rhythm of its gallop, and the same requirement for harmony applies to riding a bike, driving a car, ringing a bell, washing dishes or performing other daily duties. The outcome of the practice is best when a person becomes one with the performed activity.

What would be the fruits of the Zen-Ignatian practice one is called upon to implement in daily life? The chief spiritual fruit to be gained consists in the practice of Wisdom (*Sapientia*). It is a direct reference and judgement based on certain criteria (基準 *kijun*) for evidence, which indicate that the practice is authentic. We should make a direct reference to the experience of dust and "divine wind" (Breath of Life), which are the criteria for judgment and discernment. The second fruit is the experience of freedom, complete detachment, flexibility, and generosity in service. We should acquire and apply Wisdom through listening to the body that speaks. Through the practice of *gassho*, *acatamiento*, and respect for the mystery, we can have an experience of God as delicate, forgiving, and merciful.

Fr. Kadowaki in the course of a long life sought to arrive at a synthesis of Zen practice and Ignatian spirituality. He made an effort to embody it in his life. He shared with us the essence of the experience he acquired from other Masters, and particularly the fruits of being led and taught by the Holy Spirit. He said, "we practice here the spirit of St. Ignatius concretised in a Zen way." He was a faithful Jesuit who was willing to learn from the Buddhist tradition, wherein he had found a tremendous source of inspiration. He was not a Buddhist, even though he received the transmission and became a Zen Master. For him, there was no contradiction in integrating Zen with Christianity, since he viewed the former as an aid to his becoming a better Christian. On one occasion he shared with us a personal reflection by saying, "I am a disciple of Christ and a disciple of the Buddha, but I am not a Buddhist. I believe in Christ as a Way, not as a doctrine. I am following Christ. The way of living is important."

A crucial aspect underscored by Fr. Kadowaki was the spirit of service as the result of authentic practice. Both the spirit of Christianity and the spirit of Zen agree that one should be ready to serve immediately. In western traditions we tend to separate study, prayer, work and service, but in Zen there is no such separation. To be able to integrate all these dimensions as an integral and holistic way of living, is a sign of deep spiritual maturity and realization. At the same time though there should be an effort to reach the depth of one's self, and not remain at a superficial level of practice. Fr.

Kadowaki encouraged us to be aware of this when he said, “try to reach the deepest experience in yourself.” When practicing faithfully it becomes clear that we are dealing here with entirely and authentically Christian experience, mediated through the practice of Zen.

As a continuation of our training program, Fr. Kadowaki provided us with some practical hints for our daily practice, in order that our experience may be deepened. We were told to try and find the keyword for every spiritual talk or message that was given while participating in the *sesshin* and training, after which we were told to observe our everyday experiences in the light of that keyword. From the perspective of that keyword, we had to try to discern our daily experiences in ordinary circumstances. He suggested that in the daily lives of those who viewed themselves more as beginners, they should not sit for meditation alone but rather aim at sitting together with others. Individual meditation was advisable only to those who had already attained some experience in Zazen practice, or in doing the Spiritual Exercises.

He also provided us with some practical hints as to how we may manage our daily practice of Zazen after the training, in order that its fruits may not be lost. The hints are as follows.

- 1) In daily life Zazen can be done for as long as two hours, inclusive of Holy Mass. He even suggested we celebrate the Holy Eucharist seated in a Zazen position. We need to discover the most suitable time for each of us, but we had to be faithful to the schedule and dedicate if possible a full hour for Zazen.
- 2) The breathing practice had to be performed every moment of the day. This is what is referred to in Zen as “full day samadhi” (宝鏡三昧 *hokyo zammai*).
- 3) The Examination of Conscience had to be performed three times a day as a sign of fidelity to God, and by the mindful practice of this examination of conscience, we resolve to enter into a covenant with God.
- 4) We had to be attentive and control our use of media, food, and rest.
- 5) We had to organize well our study and research, and also apply breathing into them as much as possible. If practiced diligently, this is something we could get accustomed to in three years, and when tired, we can make a covenant with God asking for his grace.

Evaluation and Conclusion

In these closing remarks I wish to offer my personal reflections and a general evaluation of the program. My experience of this Ignatian-Zen training concerned the realization of the fact that I am dust, a fundamental fact of my existence. From this arises a deep awareness of the nothingness and

contingency of my being. This realization evoked within me a state of deep reverence towards God who gave us the Holy Spirit, who, as the Breath of Life and power of God's love, creates and sustains us unceasingly. While meditating on *Mu* I experienced the Holy Spirit (Breath of Life), always acting within me, as the creative power of God. Through the "divine wind," God leads us to the truth of our total reliance on him. This experience of dust and consequently reverence towards God, has so far perhaps been the deepest in my life. The action of the Breath of Life became therefore the primary point of reference within me, through which every authentic religious act is possible. In this way and in all circumstances, through the action of the Breath of Life, I can contemplate the loving and dynamic presence of God.

I became more aware of the Glory of God present in all reality, and more aware of the wonders God performs in his creation. Also, I had a more profound experience of the unity of body and spirit as a harmonious existence, animated by the Spirit of the Lord who is the Breath of Life. This insight enabled me to transcend the harmful western dichotomy and dualistic division of spirit and body, or mind and heart, and I thus realized that spiritual reality expresses itself through the whole human being, and that this spiritual realization comes through the body (*hara*) more than the mind. This new insight was a result of a deeper understanding (*conocimiento*) of Ignatian Spirituality, seen from the perspective of Zen intuitions and based on our practice of the Zazen meditation.

After the training, my personal prayer became deeper, and ever since it has been more conscious and mindful. This to a great extent was due to a more intensive practice of breathing and paying more attention to the role of the body. The deeper my breath the deeper became my prayer, since I found it easier to be in touch with God who is present within me. I experienced this while going deep down to *hara*, in order to realize my nothingness or the fact that I am dust. I not only became more conscious but I felt within my body this contingency of my being, as well as my total reliance on the God-Creator. As an inspiration there arose within me the truth from our Credo about Christ who descended into hell (שְׁאוֹל *sheol*), in order to bring back to life those who were deceased. I realized my own descent with Christ into my *hara* where I could be transformed by him, so to have life through sharing the *Kenosis* with him. Thus it was necessary for me to go down into the deepest level of my personal *sheol*, so as to locate the true nature of myself beyond the veil of ignorance and self-delusion.

Thanks to the practice, I came to sense much more deeply the gift of my body, and to realize that the body is a real and concrete *locus* of wisdom that needs to be discovered and cultivated. There was lesser perception occurring at the level of my intellect and greater realization (experiencing) at the level of my body, that is, at the level of the heart and *hara*. I had a deep grasp of the fact that I was dust, as I sought to reach down to my

hara so to touch my darkness, weakness, and nothingness. This aided me in gaining a general view of my attachments, egoism, and illusions, and evoked within me a desire to undergo the great death and great rebirth in God, not through my own effort but via God's transforming power. I received deep inspiration from the *Kenosis* of Christ (Phil 2, 6-11), because Christ "emptied" himself and became a man. I associated this "emptying" (*Kenosis*) of Christ with my own emptying of attachments. In the light of the Buddhist *Śūnyatā* I perceived how our attachments are products of illusion, and the fact that they are empty because they are in essence "no-things." Thus, by realizing the emptiness of these illusions we may become more transparent to the grace of God, which works more effectively within us. In contemplating the life of Christ, I realized more deeply the mystery of Christ's incarnation, mission, and finally his redemptive passion, *Kenosis* and resurrection. It assisted me in acquiring a deeper affinity with this God's Reality. The central "Existenz" of Christ's *Kenosis* was experienced in quite a new and genuine way, and it led me to a certain kind of spiritual purification through the body. Realizing my identification with Christ in *Kenosis* was a turning point in the training. It altered my way of viewing myself and realizing my illusions and weaknesses, but it also provided me with a fresh perspective on observing all reality. I became more aware of the dynamism of faith that the identification with the poor and crucified Christ generates. The death of Christ broadened my spiritual horizon of understanding with regard to God's salvific vision for mankind. The value of acting and doing as God is active in creation, became very vital to me. Christ's will of universal salvation for all humankind is the power that helps me to live more deeply his *voluntas salvifica*, and participate in the mission he has shared with us.

I thank Fr. Kadowaki for having led us in this training, for the experiences and testimonies he liberally shared with us, as well as for his patient and wise leadership. This training proved very fruitful in deepening my grasp and personal experience of the Catholic faith, and principally of Jesuit spirituality. Viewed from an alternate angle, I grew more familiar with the Zen tradition of Buddhism, and learned how to apply Zen methodology and spirituality to the Christian context of my faith, and to Ignatian praxis. The program enabled me to engage in dialogue with two traditions, hailing from totally diverse cultural milieus. From this outlook of practice, I now see better as to how equally enriching this sort of dialogue between the two spiritualities could be.

I am also deeply indebted to Fr. Kadowaki for the fact that after the training he made arrangements for me to visit Engaku-ji, one of the oldest Zen monasteries in Kamakura, where I met the Great Abbot and obtained a superb chance for dialogue with him through the assistance of a Japanese translator, who also happened to be a disciple of Fr. Kadowaki. Aside from interreligious dialogue there was also time for meditation with the Abbot

alone in their great *zendo* (禅堂), after which we visited other monks as they practiced Zazen and the walking meditation. All this provided me with a profound sense of Zen practice, in one of the most significant Zen spots in Japan. As we were leaving, the Abbot accompanied us to the very gate of the Zen monastery along with his assistant, and both of them waited until we had vanished from sight. These were some of the most intense and moving experiences of dialogue and exceptional hospitality, that I had ever encountered in my life. This meeting had a deep impact on me, and reinforced my firm belief that dialogical exchange between Buddhism and Christianity, will continue to be a font of genuine and transforming inspiration in the future.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Augustine. *Confessions*. Translated by Sarah Ruden. New York: Modern Library, 2017.
- Chinese Buddhist Encyclopedia Contributors. "Zazen." *Chinese Buddhist Encyclopedia*. March 16, 2016. Accessed March 30, 2021. <http://www.chinabuddhismencyclopedia.com/en/index.php?title=Zazen&oldid=245261>.
- García-Huidobro, Tomás. "Kakichi Kadowaki: L'inculturazione del cristianesimo nella cultura giapponese." *La Civiltà Cattolica* 4037, Volume III (9 October 2018): 415–425.
- Habito, Ruben L. F. *Zen and the Spiritual Exercises: Paths of Awakening and Transformation*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2013.
- . *Be Still and Know: Zen and the Bible*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2017.
- Johnston, William. *Christian Zen*. New York: Harper and Row, 1971.
- Kadowaki, J. Kakichi. *Invito alla meditazione. Sintesi fra cultura orientale e occidentale*. Torino: Ed. Paoline, 1992.
- . *Por el camino del Oriente: posibilidades de una teología cristiana japonesa*. Zamora, El Colegio de Michoacán: ITESO (Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Occidente), 2000.
- . *The Ignatian Exercises and Zen: An Attempt at Synthesis*. Jersey City, N.J.: PASE (Program to Adapt the Spiritual Exercises), 1974.
- . *Zen and the Bible: A Priest's Experience*. London & Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979.
- Kapleau, Philip, ed. *The Three Pillars of Zen: Teaching, Practice, Enlightenment*. Foreword by Huston Smith. New York and Tokyo: Beacon Press, 1967.

Schuhmacher, Stephan, and Gert Woerner, eds. *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion: Buddhism, Taoism, Zen, Hinduism*. Translated by Michael H. Kohn, Karen Ready, and Werner Wünsche. Boston: Shambhala Publications, 1994.

Suzuki Shunryu. *Zen Mind, Beginners Mind*. Edited by Trudy Dixon with a preface by Huston Smith, and an introduction by Richard Baker. New York and Tokyo: Weatherhill, 1995.

2

Chinul's Empty and Quiescent Spiritual Knowing (kongjök yŏngji 空寂靈知) and Ignatius of Loyola's Indifference and Discernment of Spirits¹

Yon-dahm Kwon

Abstract

To favor a better understanding between Buddhists and Christians in Korea and beyond, this essay makes a functional comparison between Chinul's 知訥 (1158-1210) concept of "empty and quiescent spiritual knowing" (kongjök-yŏngji 空寂靈知) and Ignatius of Loyola's (1491-1556) "indifference and discernment of spirits." Both Chinul and Ignatius have set at the beginning of the spiritual journey a fundamental experience that pervades it thoroughly to its end: Chinul's initial sudden awakening (tono 頓悟), which underlies gradual practice (chŏmsu 漸修) until one's final awakening (chŭngŏ 證悟); and Ignatius' principle and foundation, which underpins the process allowing one to enter in full union and/or communion with God. For Chinul, when through flawless detachment one's mind essence and function reach a point of complete harmony, one achieves perfect empty quiescent spiritual knowing. For Ignatius, when through perfect indifference one's will becomes one with God's, one can discern His will without fail. Such uninterrupted empty quiescent spiritual knowing and continuous indifference and discernment represent ultimate realization in Chinul's and Ignatius' respective thought. According to this functional comparison, just as the experience of quiescent emptiness allows one to see Buddha-nature in one's mind, the experience of the Spirit allows one to see God dwelling in oneself. It is, indeed, on the basis of these awakening experiences to quiescent emptiness on the one hand, and to God's presence on the other, that God and/or quiescent emptiness work in or through human mind-nature, thus allowing the making of right discernments leading to right thoughts, words, and actions.

Keywords: Chinul 知訥, Ignatius of Loyola, empty and quiescent spiritual knowing (kongjök yŏngji 空寂靈知), indifference, discernment of spirits.

¹ This essay has been published in the *Journal of Korean Religions* 10, no.2 (October 2019): 183-220.

Moving from Ego-oriented Desires to Ego-free Ones

This essay intends to favor a better understanding between Buddhists and Christians in contemporary Korea and hopefully beyond. It is a comparative approach between the very basic Buddhist quest to attain complete freedom from existential suffering caused by one's attachment, and the no less basic Christian quest for union—or \neg communion²—with God, leading one to full salvation. It is essentially focused on a functional comparison between Chinul's 知訥 (1158–1210) concept of “empty and quiescent spiritual knowing” (*kongjök yongji* 空寂靈知),³ and Ignatius of Loyola's (1491–1556, hereafter Ignatius) teaching on “indifference” and “discernment of spirits” (*yong tül üi sikpyöl* 靈들의 識別) as it is found in *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius* (hereafter *Spiritual Exercises*). Such a functional comparison seems possible, a priori, because these two concepts clearly appear to have a similar soteriological function within the system of thought each belongs to. Chinul and Ignatius have expressed, through their lives and works, the deep human desire to be in touch with the sacred, and the way in which the human mind connects with ultimate reality. Both have especially explored ways of emptying oneself from ego-oriented desires, in order to reach a deeper self, centered on ego-free desires, thus allowing the practitioner to attain and realize spiritual knowing, in the sense of fully embodying in real life what has been or is grasped by the mind (*sim* 心).

For the sake of clarity, I will present Chinul in the first part of the essay and Ignatius in the second, beginning with a brief description of the primary and secondary sources used for each of them. In order to introduce their thoughts, the three following themes will be successively dealt with. First, a brief outcome of their life journey, focusing on how they both renounced worldly fame in order to pursue devotional lives.⁴ Second, their awakenings, or the experiences through which they reached a new understanding of reality. Third, their respective understanding of the relation of essence (*ch'e* 體) to function (*yong* 用), or of the Creator to Creation. The final part is an attempt to rethink, in the light of this essay's results, not only the relation

² Henri Nouwen (1932–1996), one of the most influential writers in the realm of spirituality since the publication of his first book *Intimacy* (1969), focused much of his thought on a desire for “communion,” rather than “union.” Talking to himself in his journal, he says “a desire for communion has been part of you [Henri] since you were born. The pain of separation, which you experienced as a child and continue to experience now, reveals to you this deep hunger. All your life you have searched for a communion that would break your fear for death. This desire is sincere. Don't look on it as an expression of your neediness or as a symptom of your neurosis. It comes from God and is part of your true vocation” (Nouwen 1996, 95). For the difference between communion and union, see note 39.

³ There are several possibilities for the translation of *kongjök yongji* 空寂靈知: “empty quiescence and spiritual awareness” (Muller 2014); “void and quiescent numinous awareness” (Buswell 2012); and “empty-quiescent spiritual knowing” (Keel 1984), which this essay follows.

⁴ Readers unfamiliar with Chinul and Ignatius may find chronological tables in Appendices 1 and 2.

of cultivation to awakening, but also that of emptiness leading to correct knowing, either Chinulian or Ignatian, in contemporary Korea.

Introducing Chinul

To present Chinul, this essay draws on Han Hyöngjo's 韓亨祚 (1996) and Ingyöng's⁵ 印鏡 (2017) interpretations of his thought. The former reads it from a soteriological perspective that is mostly theoretical, and the latter from a practical one intending to provide concrete help to those on a spiritual journey. Both approaches are in full harmony with ours. The essay also relies upon the late Sim Jaeryong's 沈在龍 research (2004) which, above all, emphasizes the influence of *Huayan* 華嚴 doctrine on Chinul's thought. To take into account recent and challenging research on Chinul, I will rely on Bernard Senécal's entry on Chinul in *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism* (2019). Besides the original text of Chinul's complete works (*Pojo chönsö* 普照全書), I will rely on their English translation by Robert Buswell (2012; 2016), but modifying several key concepts. Indeed, at times Keel Hee-Sung's 吉熙星 translation (1984) appears to express better the subtle nuances of the Chinese as it is found in the original manuscripts.

Chinul's Life Journey: Renouncing Fame and Profit to Found the *Samādhi* and *Prajñā* Society (*chöngnye kyölsa* 定慧結社)

Chinul, also known as Moguja 牧牛子 (the Oxherder) or State Preceptor Puril Pojo 佛日普照國師, is often regarded as one of the five representative thinkers of Korean history,⁶ because he is generally considered the most outstanding Buddhist of the Koryö 高麗 period (918–1392).

In the socio-political and religious context of the Koryö period, Chinul's prominent achievement was the foundation of the *Samādhi* and *Prajñā* Society (*Chöngnye kyölsa* 定慧結社). This society was earnestly dedicated to the practice and realization of the Buddha Path (*pulto* 佛道), away from the feuding, secularized, and corrupt Buddhism, which in those days appears to have been typical of Kaesöng, the kingdom's capital.

According to the Funerary Inscription and Epitaph for the State Preceptor Puril Pojo of the Society for Cultivating Sön on Chogye Mountain (Chogyesan susönsa puril pojo kuksa pimyöng 曹溪山修禪社佛日普照國師碑銘, hereafter Funerary Inscription),⁷ Chinul was mysteriously cured from multiple diseases in his early life. Indeed, it says that ever since his birth he was always sick, and that no medical treatment worked. Desperate, his

⁵ Sünim or Venerable.

⁶ It is generally accepted in Korea that these five thinkers are, besides Chinul, Wönhyo 元曉 (617–686), Yi Hwang 李滉 (1501–1570), Yi I 李珥 (1536–1584), and Chöng Yagyong 丁若鏞 (1762–1836).

⁷ Written by Kim Kunsu 金君綏 in 1211.

father prayed to Buddha swearing that if his son were cured, he would make him a monk. The Funerary Inscription goes on to say that very soon after making that vow, the diseases completely disappeared. As a result and without delay, Chinul's father entrusted his seven-year-old son to Sön Master Chonghui 宗暉禪師 at Kulsansa 崛山寺⁸ (1165).

When he was twenty-four years old (1182), Chinul successfully passed the state examination for monks (*sŭngkwa* 僧科). He thus found himself in an excellent position to start a career in the capital. However, a short time later, during a convocation called to discuss the practice of Sön, he agreed, with more than ten fellow monks, to create a society, saying: "After the close of this convocation we will renounce fame and profit and remain in seclusion in the mountain forests. There, we will form a retreat society designed to foster constant training in samādhi balanced with *prajñā*"⁹ (Chinul 2012, 118–119). Accordingly, sometime later he left the capital for the southern part of the peninsula intending to realize this project.

It seems quite clear that Chinul was not asked his opinion before being taken by his father to a monastery to become a monk. And even if he had been, he would hardly have had the maturity required to make an informed decision. In his father's mind, the fact that his son had been healed was more than enough to be convinced that he had to be entrusted to the Buddha. Moreover, it is not unreasonable to imagine that all sufficiently talented young monks were naturally expected to pass the state exam for monks. This reveals that, once more, the young man Chinul may not have been given much of a possibility to make an individual choice as he prepared that test and successfully passed it. All this suggests that Chinul's decision to renounce a monastic career and found the *Samādhi* and *Prajñā* Society could well be his first genuinely free choice. Even though this decision is not described as an awakening by the *Funerary Inscription*, it nevertheless is an obvious sign of a mind oriented toward an awakened life, and thus is a major event in Chinul's adult life, albeit he had to wait several years to realize his project.

The Awakenings of Chinul: A New Understanding of the Self-nature and the *Dharmadhātu* (pŏpkye 法界)

In Chinul's *Funerary Inscription*, it is said that three successive awakenings or enlightenments¹⁰ allowed him to develop his thought and establish its

⁸ One of the Nine Mountains Sön Schools (*kusan sŏnmun* 九山禪門).

⁹ 歲在壬寅正月 赴上都普濟寺 談禪法會。一日第一張與同學十餘人 約曰罷會後 當捨名利 隱通山林 結爲同社 常以習定均慧 爲務 (*Encouragement to Practice: Samādhi and Prajñā Society* (*Kwŏnsu chŏngnye kyōlsa mun* 勸修定慧結社文, ABC, H0067, v. 4, 698a24-b06).

¹⁰ Throughout this essay, "awakening" and "enlightenment" are used as synonyms.

overall logical structure¹¹ (Senécal 2019, 857). To introduce this formation process, I will relate Chinul's first and second awakening experiences. The first one will be described using both the preface of the *Condensation of the Exposition of Avataṃsaka Sūtra*¹² (*Hwaōm non chōryo* 華嚴論節要, hereafter *Condensation*) and the *Funerary Inscription*. The second awakening's description relies solely upon *Condensation*.¹³ This second awakening is also described in the *Funerary Inscription*. However, Chinul's own description is far more accurate, detailed, and insightful than that of Kim Kunsu. For reasons exposed in recent research, Chinul's so-called third awakening will not be taken into account (Senécal 2019, 856). As a result, the essay essentially focuses on the first two experiences, because they have clear soteriological implications regarding cultivation and realization (*sujūng non* 修證論).

The first awakening took place in 1182 while Chinul was staying in Ch'ōngwōnsa 淸源寺,¹⁴ and as he read the following passage from the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch* (*Liuzu Tanjing* 六祖壇經, hereafter *Platform Sūtra*).

The self-nature of suchness generates thoughts. Although the six sense-faculties may see, hear, sense, and know, they do not taint the myriad sensory objects and the true nature remains constantly autonomous.¹⁵ (Chinul 2012, 371; for a complete description, see Appendix 3)

As the source of Chinul's first awakening, this quotation gives us insight into how strongly his fundamental thought on human nature was influenced by the *Platform Sūtra*. Judging from the way the same passage indirectly appears in the preface of *Condensation*, in which the Oxherder looks back on his first awakening, its content may be paraphrased as "Mind is Buddha" (*chūksim chūkpul* 卽心卽佛). Indeed, in this preface he wrote: "I reflected constantly on the Sōn adage 'Mind is Buddha.' I felt that if one had not encountered this approach, one would end up wasting many kalpas (*kōp* 劫) in vain and would never reach the domain of sanctity" (Chinul 2012, 355). Here, the self-nature of suchness (*chinyō chasōng* 眞如自性) and true nature (*chinsōng* 眞性) obviously are synonyms of Buddha-nature and Buddhahood. Chinul's perspective obviously follows Chan 禪 tradition as expressed in the *Platform Sūtra* when it says "knowing the mind, seeing the nature, and achieving Buddhahood by oneself" (*siksim kyōnsōng*

¹¹ The *Funerary Inscription* systematizes Chinul's thought as follows: "There were three kinds of [practice] gates that he opened: [1] the gate of the balanced maintenance of alertness and calmness (*sōngjōk tūngji mun* 淸寂等持門); [2] the gate of faith and understanding according to the complete and sudden teaching (*wōndon sinhae mun* 圓頓信解門); and [3] the gate of the shortcut [of *kanhwa* Sōn] (*kyōngjōl mun* 經截門)" (Chinul 2012, 376).

¹² *Flower Ornament Scripture*.

¹³ Indeed, in *Condensation* Chinul quotes the exact passage from the *Exposition of Avataṃsaka Sūtra* that inspired him. He also describes the process he went through during three years (1185–1188), from the very moment he raised his question until he finally found an answer to it.

¹⁴ Uncertain location.

¹⁵ 眞如自性起念 六根雖見聞覺知 不染萬境 而眞性常自在 (*Funerary Inscription*).

chasōng pulto 識心見性自成佛道).¹⁶ In other words, knowing one's mind (*siksim* 識心) corresponds to seeing the nature (*kyōnsōng* 見性)¹⁷ and accomplishing Buddhahood by oneself (*chasōng pulto* 自成佛道). When one condenses it as Chinul does, this famous quote from the Sixth Patriarch Huineng 慧能 can easily be contracted into "Mind is Buddha."

In Chinul's teaching on sudden awakening (*tono* 頓悟), "awakening" basically means "seeing the nature," that is, becoming awakened to that nature. Han Hyōngjo gives an easy-to-understand soteriological interpretation of this teaching on sudden awakening. He says that it "starts with the announcement that the distance between Buddha (*pul* 佛) and all sentient beings (*chungsaeng* 衆生), and between enlightenment (*myōng* 明) and delusion (*mumyōng* 無明), is not abyssal but very near. Sudden awakening allows a fundamental change of direction, from the false obsession [which consists in looking for truth] outside of oneself, to the recognition that salvation is very near, [because its source is no other than oneself and, thus, inside oneself]" (Han 1996, 217). In other words, "sudden awakening" does not mean that one suddenly achieves Buddhahood. Rather, Chinul emphasized the importance of understanding that one's mind is Buddha. Therefore, this sudden awakening is an "understanding-awakening" (*haeo* 解悟).

Chinul's second enlightenment is very precisely an answer to his question on how one can achieve such an understanding-awakening (*haeo* 解悟) at the beginning of one's faith journey. It took place in 1185, while he was in Pomunsa 普門寺 on Mount Haga 下柯. While he was seeking a clear understanding of "an initial access to faith" (*ch'oich'o sinip chi mun* 最初信入之門) that would be appropriate for the ordinary people of his time, he further read the following explanation of the "first level of the ten faiths" (*sipsin ch'owi* 十信初位) in the *Exposition of the Avatamsaka Sūtra* (*Xin Huayan-jing lun* 新華嚴經論,¹⁸ hereafter *Exposition*) by Li Tongxuan 李通玄 (635-730). As he describes this second awakening in the preface of *Condensation*, Chinul wrote the following excerpt from the *Exposition*, describing it as the scriptural locus which triggered it.¹⁹

Chief of Enlightenment (*kaksu* 覺首) Bodhisattva has three [enlightenments]. First, *s/he* is enlightened to the fact that *her/his* own body and mind are originally the *dharmadhātu* [*pōpkye* 法界] because they are immaculate, pure, and untainted. [Second, *s/he* is enlightened to the fact that the discriminating

¹⁶ T2007.48.338a12.

¹⁷ Strictly speaking, it is not the seeing of one's own nature, which would be *kyōn chasōng* 見自性.

¹⁸ T1739.36.

¹⁹ Actually, this second awakening is a threefold one. Judging from what Chinul says, it appears to be a gradual cultivation/gradual awakening (*chōmsu chōmo* 漸修漸悟) pattern, where practice consists in reading scriptures thoroughly during a long period of time, and awakening amounts to understanding them better as well as desiring to help others along the path (Senécal 2019, 855-857).

nature of *her/his* body and mind originally does not distinguish subject and object. Originally it is the Buddha of motionless wisdom]. Third, *s/he* is enlightened to the fact that *her/his* own mind's sublime wisdom, which readily distinguishes the genuine from the distorted, is Mañjuśrī. [Since] *s/he* becomes enlightened to these three things at the first level of faith, *s/he* comes to be known as Chief of Enlightenment.²⁰ (Chinul 2012, 357; modification in italics).²¹

In this quotation, the Bodhisattva named Chief of Enlightenment is a personification of the first level of the ten faiths, which is the first stage of the 52 degrees of awakening described in *Huayan* 華嚴 doctrine.²² The three awakenings enumerated in this quotation can be understood from a synchronic (*kongsi-chōk* 共時的) viewpoint as well as the following diachronic (*tongsi-chōk* 通時的) one.

First of all, one should start one's faith journey with faith in that one's own body and mind are originally immaculate, pure, and untainted, that is, as aforesaid, faith in the fact that "Mind is Buddha." In this context, "*dharmadhātu* can be understood as both thusness (*pōp* or *pōpsin* 法身) and the phenomenal world (*kye* 界), including one's body, as well as their mutual interpenetration" (Senécal 2019, 855). In other words, one's enlightened body and mind now attain a new understanding of reality, which includes both thusness and the phenomenal world, and their mutual interpenetration.

Second, this faith journey leads one to attain the understanding that one's Buddha-nature does not fall into discrimination between subject and object, but that it is motionless wisdom. This can be further interpreted as the understanding that one's enlightened body and mind are free from the dichotomy between self and other. Such a state of motionless consciousness is in fact one of the ends pursued by the practice of *samādhi*.²³ Although this motionless mind is a non-cognitive state of consciousness, besides being personalized as the Buddha of motionless wisdom, it can be expressed at a cognitive level as suchness or thusness (*tathātā*, *chinyō* 眞如), or static Nirvāṇa (*chōngjōk yōlban* 靜的涅槃).

Third, the faith-based understanding composed of the two enlightenments above moves toward the understanding that one's mind's non-discriminative sublime wisdom is able to discern what comes from the genuine and what does not. Therefore, Mañjuśrī embodies the wisdom which is pursued and achieved by the practice of *prajñā*, and enables oneself to discern what is right and wrong in the phenomenal world conceived as dynamic Nirvāṇa (*tongjōk yōlban* 動的涅槃).

²⁰ 釋十信初位云 覺首菩薩者有三。一覺自身心 本是法界 白淨無染故。二覺自身心分別之性 本無能所 本來是不動智佛。三覺自心 善簡擇正邪妙慧 是文殊師利。於信心之初 覺此三法 名爲覺首 (Condensation, ABC, H0075, v. 4, 767c19-768a02).

²¹ For the full description of this second experience, see Appendix 4.

²² A central theme that runs throughout the whole text is the cultivation of the bodhisattva path, with its 52 distinct stages of practice and realization (Poceski 2004, 341).

²³ More precisely, *musim sammae* 無心三昧.

According to Chinul, who follows Li Tongxuan, this faith-based understanding comprised of three simultaneous or successive awakenings is the very crucial first stage of one's faith journey. To explain why this faith is so essential, Han Hyōngjo raises an existential question: "How can subjects of agony and suffering, in other words imperfect and restless sentient beings whose existences depend upon one another, be able to believe that salvation is the result of self-confidence in one's original energy? [However difficult to believe it might be] If you do not believe in this principle [of faith] you will never find any other way of salvation. That is the reason why faith (*sin* 信) is so much emphasized" (Han 1996, 217).

When, as aforesaid, Han says, "faith must lead to understanding" (*hae* 解), he underscores the dimension of religious conversion in Chinul's sudden awakening and faith-understanding (*sinhae* 信解). "If faith corresponds to a religious conversion from gradual (*chōm* 漸) to sudden (*ton* 頓), then understanding means the experiential knowledge (*ch'ehōm-jōk ihae* 體驗的 理解) that illustrates this new religious faith attained through introspection (*chagi panjo* 自己返照). The content of 'cultivation and realization' (*sujuŋg* 修證) boils down to the purification and redemption of one's whole life on the basis of this experiential knowledge. The emphasis obviously is on experiential knowledge" (Han 1996, 218–219).

Sim Jaeryong (1943–2004) pointed out that Li Tongxuan's interpretation of the core of Mahāyāna Buddhism, according to which "all sentient beings are originally Buddha," is very radical. This is because Li invites one to make the direct and subjective experience of the *dharmadhātu* (*pōpkye* 法界), unlike the main stream Huayan scholars' stress on the intellectual understanding of the categorical and systematic *dharmadhātu* theory. Sim explains that Chinul had great confidence in Li's interpretation, and that his emphasis on it clearly reflects a rebellion against the tradition of his times (Sim 2004, 20, 45–46). In good measure, this is the very point on which Chinul laid the overall philosophical foundation of his conception of Sōn practice.

To sum up, Chinul's faith-understanding is the result of his two awakenings. Since these experiences are respectively based on the *Platform Sūtra*, belonging to the meditative tradition, and on *Exposition*, belonging to the scholastic one, they helped him to discover the harmonious complementarity between meditation (*sōn* 禪) and doctrine (*kjo* 教), that is, *sōn'gyo ilch'i* 禪教一致,²⁴ which constitutes with faith-understanding the basis of the main themes he developed in his various works.

²⁴ "What the World-Honored One said with his mouth is Kyo (教). What the patriarchs transmitted with their minds is Sōn (禪)" (Chinul 2012, 358). 世尊說之於口即為教 祖師傳之於心即為禪 (Condensation, ABC, H10075, v. 4, 768a07).

Essence (ch'e 體), Function (yong 用), and Empty and Quiescent Spiritual Knowing

If sudden awakening corresponds to seeing the nature (*kyōnsōng* 見性), then how can one arrive at seeing it? Chinul gives concrete explanations on the way to achieve seeing the nature in *Moguja's Secrets on Cultivating the Mind* (*Moguja susimgyōl* 牧牛子修心訣, hereafter *Moguja's Secrets*), published between 1202 and 1205. Here is a significant one:

Question: If you say that the Buddha-nature exists in the body right now, then, since it is in the body, it is not separate from us ordinary persons. So why can we not see now this Buddha-nature?

Answer: It is in your body, but you do not see it. Ultimately, what is that thing that during the twelve time-periods of the day knows hunger and thirst, cold and heat, anger and joy? [...] That which is able to see, hear, sense, and know is perform your Buddha-nature.²⁵ (Chinul 2012, 208–209)

In other words, it is by asking oneself what it is that sees, hears, senses, and knows that one may arrive at seeing the nature.²⁶ Ingyōng gives a succinct and accurate explanation of Chinul's thought on seeing the nature from the perspective of the relation between essence (*ch'e* 體) and function (*yong* 用). "Seeing, hearing, sensing, and knowing (*kyōnmun kakchi* 見聞覺知) are [one's] nature, and [this] nature is their function. Essence and function are inseparable, so that it is 'your mind [*sim* 心] who is asking now [what sees, hears, senses, and knows]" (Ingyōng 2017, 78). In other words, according to this explanation, while the mind stands at the crossroads of the essence and the function, it also is both. As a result, one may become aware of one's function, that is, of what is happening in one's mind when it is in contact with phenomena from moment to moment. Moreover, as we shall see, one may also exert control over the function of the mind. One's awareness of one's function amounts to knowing one's essence as well as one's mind-nature, to the point of being aware that they are one, that is, seeing equals nature (*kyōn* 見 = *sōng* 性 [Ingyōng 2017, 79]). When providing this explanation, Ingyōng is obviously, and rightly, inspired by the *Platform Sūtra*:

True Reality [or suchness] is the substance [or essence] of thoughts (*nyōm* 念); thoughts are the function of True Reality [or suchness]. If you give rise to thoughts from your self-nature, then, although you see, hear, perceive, and know, you are not stained by the manifold environments, and are always free.²⁷ (Yampolsky 2012, 139)

²⁵ 問. 若言佛性 現在此身 既在身中 不離凡夫 因何我今 不見佛性? 更爲消釋 悉令開悟. 答. 在汝身中 汝自不見. 汝於十二時中 知飢知渴 知寒知熱 或嗔或喜 竟是何物. [...] 能見聞覺知者 必是汝佛性 (*Moguja's Secrets*, ABC, H0068 v. 4, 708 c03-c10).

²⁶ Interestingly, when asked by novices how to meditate, a number of Korean monks still answer in the very way Chinul does, suggesting they read the *Platform Sūtra*.

²⁷ 眞如是念之體. 念是眞如之用. 自性起念 雖即見聞覺知 不染萬境 而常自在 (T'oeng Sōngch'ōl 2007, 130–131).

Indeed, we have already seen how the reading of the *Platform Sūtra* triggered Chinul's first awakening,²⁸ and thus how this text is intimately related to the development of his thought. However, we have yet to mention the connection that can be made between the passage that he read in it then, and a very famous one coming from the *Diamond Sūtra*.

One should not give rise to the mind dwelling [or relying] on forms; one should not give rise to the mind dwelling on sounds, smells, taste, tactile objects or objects of mind; one should give rise to that mind without dwelling anywhere.²⁹

Although the *Diamond Sūtra* is not mentioned as one of the three scriptural loci that prompted the three enlightenments described by Kim Kunsu in the *Funerary Inscription*, it nevertheless is intimately connected to the *Platform Sūtra*. Indeed, according to the latter, as we know, it is at the sudden hearing of an unknown traveler reciting the *Diamond Sūtra* near the entrance of a guesthouse that the young Huineng had his first awakening; the one that made him determined to renounce secular life for that of a monk destined to become—as the Sixth Patriarch—the emblematic figure of the Chan school. The link of Chinul's thought to the *Diamond Sūtra* through the *Platform Sūtra* becomes even stronger if one also underscores that the passage of the *Diamond Sūtra* quoted above is often presumed—by tradition—to be precisely the four-line verse (*saguge* 四句偈) that awakened Huineng. To further underscore the place occupied by the *Diamond Sūtra* in Chinul's thought, let us be reminded how the *Funerary Inscription* describes the works to which Chinul referred himself when teaching:

When he exhorted people to recite and keep [scriptures], he always recommended the *Diamond Sūtra*. When he established the dharma and expounded on its imports, his preference was necessarily for the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*, and when he expounded on it, he used Li [Tongxuan's] *Exposition of the Avatamsakasūtra* or the *Records of Dahui*, which were inseparable like wings and feathers.³⁰ (Chinul 2012, 376–377)

If this structure is compared to a bird on a tree, the *Diamond Sūtra* is both the branch on which it is perched and its legs, the *Platform Sūtra* its body, and Li (Tongxuan's) *Exposition* and the *Records of Dahui*, its two wings.

Be this as it may, by saying that “one should not give rise to the mind dwelling...” on sense objects, but instead that “one should give rise to the mind without dwelling anywhere,” the *Diamond Sūtra* clearly points to the fact that one can and should be in control of the type of mind one gives rise to. Interestingly, the passage of the *Records of Chan Master Dahui Pujue* 大

²⁸ See note 15.

²⁹ 不應住色生心 不應住聲香味觸法生心 應無所住 而生其心 (T8.235.749.c22-23).

³⁰ 其勸人頌持 常以金剛經 立法演義 則意必六祖壇經 申以華嚴論大慧錄 相羽翼 (“Funerary Inscription,” <http://gsm.nricp.go.kr>).

慧普覺 (1089–1163), which—according to the *Funerary Inscription*—sparked Chinul's third awakening dwells in a similar orbit of thought:

“Sōn does not consist in quietude; it does not consist in bustle. It does not consist in the activity of daily life; it does not consist in ratiocination. Nevertheless, it is of first importance not to investigate [Sōn] while rejecting quietude or bustle, the activities of daily life or ratiocination. Unexpectedly, your eyes will open and you then will know that these are all things taking place inside your own home.” I [Chinul] understood...and naturally nothing blocked my chest again and I never again dwell together with an enemy. From then on I was at peace.³¹ (Chinul 2012, 374)

Although, to be sure, one's mind is absolutely pure when perceived from the viewpoint of Buddha-nature, when perceived in space and time, it is neither pure nor impure a priori. On the contrary, it will be either pure or impure according to the way one lets it arise. In this, the *Diamond Sūtra* is consistent with the fundamental teaching of the Consciousness-only school (*yusik-p'a* 唯識派), which says that all things are created by the mind alone (*ilch'e yusimjo* 一切唯心造). This is the reason even though a sentient being and a Buddha are endowed with the same Buddha-nature, the former appears as unenlightened and the latter as enlightened.

In Mahāyāna Buddhism, including the *Platform Sūtra*, *Diamond Sūtra*, and even Chinul's thought, there is always a risk of putting excessive emphasis on a viewpoint from the perspective of Buddha-nature, to the detriment of one from the perspective of space and time, that is, on suddenness to the detriment of gradualness. This risk may naturally be exacerbated, albeit inadvertently, by an insistence on a sudden awakening prior to the beginning of gradual cultivation—like in Chinul's thought—because it tends to make sentient beings believe that they have already arrived at the ultimate goal of practice, even though they are just at the beginning of the path to be trodden to reach it. Falling into the trap of such confusion of the beginning and the end may have devastating ethical repercussions.³² As he raises the following question, Ingyōng demonstrates that he is aware of the consequences that may be induced by an unenlightened identification of the essence (*ch'e* 體) with the function (*yong* 用).

If all actions (*yong* 用), like for instance speaking [good and evil of others], feeling [happy and] angry, rejoicing and being sad, and doing right as well as wrong things, were actions of Buddha-nature (*ch'e* 體), we would have to fully conclude that humiliating and killing others also are in themselves actions of Buddha-nature. We would then fall into a serious ethical contradiction. [Consequently,] is there a way to solve this risk of misunderstanding? (Ingyōng 2017, 80)

³¹ “禪不在靜處 鬧處 日用應緣處 思量分別處。然第一不得 捨靜處 鬧處 日用應緣處 思量分別處 忽然眼開 方知皆是屋裡事。”自然物不碍磨 當下安樂耳 (“Funerary Inscription,” T.1998.47a. 893c28–894a2).

³² Quietism (*chōngjōk chu'ui* 靜寂主義) and so-called crazy wisdom (*makhaeng maksik* 慢行 慢食) exemplify these consequences.

Judging from the development of his thought when defining the meaning of “empty and quiescent spiritual knowing” (*kongjök yongji* 空寂靈知), it seems that Chinul progressively became fully aware of the same ethical danger. The following definition is found in *Moguja’s Secrets*:

At the point where all dharmas are empty, the spiritual knowing (*yongji* 靈知) is not obscured. It is not the same as insentience for *the nature by itself spiritually understands* (*songja sinhae* 性自神解). This is your pure mind-essence (*simch’e* 心體) of *empty and quiescent spiritual knowing*. This pure, empty and quiescent mind is that mind of outstanding purity and brilliance of all the buddhas of the three time-periods; it is that enlightened nature which is the original source of all sentient beings.³³ (Chinul 2012, 223; modifications in italics)³⁴

According to this quotation, the human mind is one with Buddha-nature, and this one mind is no other than empty and quiescent spiritual knowing. Therefore, the spiritual practice of all sentient beings should begin with seeing and having faith in the fact that one’s mind is empty and quiescent spiritual knowing. But that definition obviously does not suffice to prevent one from falling into the aforementioned ethical trap, rather the contrary. However, Chinul presents a far more complete one in his magnum opus *Excerpts from the “Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record” with Inserted Personal Notes* (*Pöpchip pyörhaengnok chöryo pyöng ip sagi* 法集別行錄節要并入私記, hereafter *Excerpts with Personal Notes*), published in 1209.

Although ... *empty and quiescent spiritual knowing* is neither the discriminative consciousnesses (*punbyöl chisik* 分別之識) nor the wisdom generated by the realization-awakening (*chüng’o chiji* 證悟之智), it can nevertheless also give rise to *those* consciousnesses (*sik* 識) and that wisdom (*chi* 智) and can perform wholesome and unwholesome actions as either an ordinary person or a saint. Its salutary and unsalutary functions can change their appearance in a variety of ways. This is possible because its essence is *knowing* (*chi* 知): when it is in contact with any conditioned object, it can *discern* (*punbyöl* 分別) whether it is skillful or unskillful, meritorious or demeritorious, and so forth. Although liking and disliking, anger and joy, seem to arise and cease, when *empty and quiescent spiritual knowing* is in contact with conditioned objects, the mind that is capable of *knowing* (*nüngji chi sim* 能知之之心) is never interrupted but remains tranquil and ever quiescent.³⁵ (Chinul 2016, 160; modifications in italics)

As Chinul explains, the mind that is capable of knowing is originally neither consciousness nor wisdom, because it corresponds to the non-cognitive quiescent realm of Nirvāṇa. It can nevertheless engender both consciousness and wisdom while remaining always quiescent, because it

³³ 然諸法皆空之處 靈知不昧 不同無情 性自神解。此是汝空寂靈知 清淨心體。而此清淨空寂之心 是三世諸佛 勝淨明心 亦是衆生本源覺性 (Moguja’s Secrets, ABC, H0068, v. 4, 710 c13-c17).

³⁴ Here, Chinul is heavily influenced by Guifeng Zongmi (Ingyöng 2017, 73–74).

³⁵ 今之所明 空寂靈知 雖非分別之識 亦非證悟之智 然亦能生識之與智 或凡或聖 造善造惡 順違之用 勢變萬端 所以然者 以體知故 對諸緣時 能分別一體是非好惡等。雖對諸緣 愛憎嗔喜 似有起滅 能知之之心 無有間斷 湛然常寂 (Excerpts with Personal Notes, ABC, H0074, v. 4, 757a19-b01).

remains in contact with the essence of reality (*ch'e* 體). Consequently, Chinul emphasizes that in order to maintain practice, one needs to hold quiescence on the one hand, and knowing on the other, because it is when the mind is empty and quiescent that genuine spiritual knowing is experienced. In other words, one's mind has to strike a correct balance between the transcendental and the phenomenal world through practice, in the spirit of the Middle Path, which consists in maintaining in perfect equilibrium these two aspects of reality, to the point that they become one. Indeed, since in such an enlightened mind essence and function are inseparable, one is able to know and discern the path to be followed in the phenomenal world. Because the knowing thus achieved allows one to see that world correctly (*chōnggyōn* 正見), that is, as it is (impermanent, selfless, and suffering),³⁶ and therefore to fully realize the seven other components of the eightfold path: right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration.

To summarize, in Chinul's teachings enlightenment consists in "seeing the nature," which is an awakening to the uninterrupted experience of "empty and quiescent spiritual knowing." For all sentient beings, such seeing the nature and its corresponding experience of "empty and quiescent spiritual knowing" constitute the starting point of the spiritual journey, the path to follow, and the end to reach. And such is also the ultimate goal of the apparently simplistic practice suggested by Chinul in *Moguja's Secrets*, because it very precisely consists in introducing – by raising the fundamental question "what is it that perceives?" – a distance between one's inordinate perception (*yong* 用) of reality and ultimate reality itself (*ch'e* 體). In other words, it aims at putting a distance between one's false self (*kōjit chaa* 거짓 自我), or self as an ordinary sentient being (*pōmbu* 凡夫), and one's true self (*ch'am na* 참나, *china* 眞我). By creating such distance, it intends to project the light (*myōng* 明) of ultimate reality, that is, of the *Dharmakāya* (*pōpsin* 法身), on one's unenlightened (*mumyōng* 無明) perceptions, with the intention of making one aware of how inordinate these perceptions are. In other words, unless one's capacity to perceive reality (*yong* 用) becomes fully connected to the substance of that reality (*ch'e* 體), one's perception of it cannot but be deeply distorted. When one's true self progressively becomes the root of one's perception of the phenomenal world, thus slowly but surely dissolving the false self, one naturally starts moving from ego-centered desires to ego-free ones. This process, which consists of – by raising the aforementioned question – "Tracing back the radiance (*hoegwang panjo* 迴光返照) of the mind to its source," may be defined as constituting the ultimate core of Chinul's thought (Senécal 2019).

Interestingly, as it helps to make those who practice it aware of their sensations and thoughts against the background of their impermanence,

³⁶ Three seals of the Dharma (*sambōbin* 三法印).

without either repressing them, nor following them, nor trying to get rid of them, Vipassanā meditation also aims at rendering one aware of one's inordinate perceptions against the background of a higher unchanging reality (*ch'e 體*). Quite amazingly, what chiefly remains in the mind thanks to this process, which functions as one of decantation, are the thoughts that have to be followed, that is, put into practice.

Introducing Ignatius

To introduce Ignatius of Loyola, this essay draws on *The Autobiography of St. Ignatius* (1974), which is of great help in understanding the interior experiences he made at the most decisive moments of his spiritual journey. It also draws on his *Spiritual Exercises*, using George Ganss' translation and commentary (1992). These exercises are a systematization of Ignatius' spiritual journey, in view of allowing others to concretely make a similar one. For further explanations on them, I quote the *Directory to the Spiritual Exercises* (1925). I also quote *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus*, written by Ignatius and some of his companions as a set of guidelines for the Jesuits, that is, the religious order he founded. Furthermore, this essay relies upon Balthasar (1991) for an interpretation of the historical and cultural background of Ignatius' time and the influence it had on his spirituality. It also relies on Ladaria's (2010) research, which helps to understand the Trinitarian theology underlying Ignatius' spirituality. To take into account the importance of the role played by affectivity in Ignatius' spirituality, it draws on the explanations of Buckley (1993) and Doran (1993). Finally, to highlight the signification of inter-faith experiences in the context of an encounter between Buddhism and Ignatian spirituality, I briefly, albeit significantly, quote Waldenfels (2017).

Ignatius' Life Journey: Giving Up Worldly Fame to Devote Himself to God

Ignatius of Loyola was born in the castle of Loyola (in modern Spain's Basque Country), the youngest of thirteen children. Ignatius was an excessively ambitious knight, desiring to be recognized by the king of Spain in order to achieve fame in the kingdom. According to recent historians, he led an amazingly dissolute life, all too often confusing the means and the ends (Idigoras 1986). Among his many dreams, one was to marry the crown princess, albeit he was remarkably shorter in comparison with other men of his time. However, things changed dramatically when he was thirty years old (1521). At that time, he was the Spanish commanding officer in the city of Pamplona when it was besieged by the French. Since the construction of the fortification walls surrounding the city had not been finished, all the other Spanish officers were in favor of an immediate and complete

surrender. Nevertheless, Ignatius, with the view of attracting the king's attention, convinced these officers to resist to the end. But almost as soon as the battle commenced, his two legs were broken by a cannonball. As a result, the Spanish immediately surrendered, and all of Ignatius' secular and vain dreams of grandeur came to nothing. After undergoing extremely painful surgery, which left him limping for the rest of his life, Ignatius returned to his hometown Loyola for several months of convalescence. There, he had plenty of time to reflect upon the meaning of his life, which seemed, from a human viewpoint, to have ended in complete failure.

While convalescing in bed, he chiefly read two books: *The Life of Christ* by Rudolph the Carthusian and *Flowers of the Saints*, the reading of which allowed him to begin to have, for the first time in his life, a spiritual experience. Indeed, he observed the alternation of two different kinds of thoughts in his mind. One consisted in imagining what he should do in honor of an illustrious lady—most probably the crown princess—to catch her attention. The other consisted in imagining himself doing for God greater things than those done by St. Francis and St. Dominic. As he pondered these things in his mind, he kept proposing to himself the accomplishment of highly challenging endeavors. Ignatius wrote about this experience in his autobiography as follows:

This succession of such diverse thoughts, either of the worldly deeds he wished to achieve or of the deeds of God that came to his imagination, lasted for a long time, and he always dwelt at length on the thought before him, until he tired of it and put it aside and turned to other matters. Yet there was this difference. When he was thinking about the things of the world, he took much delight in them, but afterwards, when he was tired and put them aside, he found that he was dry and discontented. But when he thought of going to Jerusalem, barefoot and eating nothing but herbs and undergoing all the other rigors that he saw the saints had endured, not only was he consoled when he had these thoughts, but even after putting them aside, he remained content and happy. He did not wonder, however, at this; nor did he stop to ponder the difference until one time his eyes were opened a little, and he began to marvel at the difference and to reflect upon it, realizing from experience that some thoughts left him sad and others happy. Little by little he came to recognize the difference between the spirits that agitated him, one from the demon, the other from God. (Ignatius of Loyola 1974, 23–24)

In other words, when visiting certain thoughts, he would become unhappy. But when dwelling on others, he would become and remain peaceful. Later, in the part of the *Spiritual Exercises* explaining the rules for the discernment of spirits, Ignatius called the former spiritual desolation, and the latter spiritual consolation. Consolation indicates a movement of one's affectivity toward God, while desolation reveals one's moving away from Him (Buckley 1993, 279). This experience, which allowed him to perceive different spirits and their influences on the human mind, is the most fundamental experience that he ever had. In other words, he

understood that God was working within him through the basic experience of those spirits. This experience is the very foundation of the spirituality he created and transmitted. It triggered in him a conversion that completely changed the direction of his life, from one dedicated to the satisfaction of vain desires, to one entirely devoted to God.

The Awakenings of Ignatius: A New Understanding of God Dwelling in the World and in Oneself

Having made the decision to spend the rest of his life as a wandering mendicant, after recovering from his injuries, Ignatius visited the Catalonian Benedictine monastery of Santa Maria de Montserrat in 1522. There, he thoroughly examined his past life and confessed all his sins. Afterwards, he offered his sword and dagger to the Virgin Mary. He gave his aristocratic clothes to a poor man he met on the road, and left Montserrat for the nearby town of Manresa dressed in humble garb. Living in a cave nearby Manresa during several months, he practiced asceticism rigorously. During this time, he had various spiritual experiences all of which he recorded in his diary. Later he wrote in his autobiography that during those days “God dealt with him as a teacher instructing a pupil.” In that work Ignatius also enumerates five spiritual experiences that had strongly transformed him for the rest of his life.

First. He had great devotion to the Most Holy Trinity, and each day he said a prayer to the three Persons individually. [...] Second. One time the manner in which God had created the world was revealed to his understanding with great spiritual joy. [...] Third. [...] While he was hearing mass [...], at the elevation of the Body of the Lord, he saw with interior eyes something like white rays coming from above. Although he cannot explain this very well after so long a time, nevertheless what he saw clearly with his understanding was how Jesus Christ our Lord was there in that most holy sacrament. Fourth. Often and for a long time, while at prayer, he saw with interior eyes the humanity of Christ. [...] Fifth. One time he was going out of his devotion to a church a little more than a mile from Manresa [...]. The road ran next to the river. As he went along occupied with his devotions, he sat down for a little while with his face toward the river which was running deep. While he was seated there, the eyes of his understanding began to be opened; though he did not see any vision, he understood and knew many things, both spiritual things and matters of faith and of learning, and this was with so great an enlightenment that everything seemed new to him. Though there were many, he cannot set forth the details that he understood then, except that he experienced a great clarity in his understanding. This was such that in the whole course of his life, through sixty-two years, even if he gathered up all the many helps he had had from God and all the many things he knew and added them together, he does not think they would amount to as much as he had received at that one time. (Ignatius of Loyola 1974, 37–40)

Of those five successive experiences, in which he understood being instructed by God, four are related to the core teachings of Christianity: the Trinity, the Creation of this world, Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, and the humanity of Christ. No one knows for sure how much Christian doctrine he had learned before these experiences, about which he says that they took place “with interior eyes.” Judging from what he says about the fifth one, that “the eyes of his understanding began to be opened” and “he understood and knew many things, both spiritual things and matters of faith and of learning,” it is clear that it was far more than a mere intellectual experience (*haeo* 解悟). It is even more obvious considering that it allowed him to attain a new understanding that lasted for the rest of his life. These experiences in Manresa, especially the fifth one, reinforced the one from Loyola and his decision to fully commit the rest of his life to God. Additionally, only the fifth experience somehow resembles a Buddhist awakening, albeit it definitely took place and is expressed in a Christian context.

From Manresa, Ignatius went to Barcelona and then to Jerusalem. Although he wanted to stay in Jerusalem, he was not granted permission to do so by the Franciscans who were the then custodians of the Christian holy places. He therefore returned to Europe in 1523, and started studying theology in Alcalá and Paris for ten years. In 1534, in Saint Peter's Church's chapel, on Montmartre, Ignatius and six companions took vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, as well as to go on pilgrimage to Jerusalem. In case that last promise proved impossible to realize, as it did, they vowed to accept instead any apostolic work requested by the Pope. This led Ignatius of Loyola in 1539 to found the Society of Jesus, which was approved by Pope Paul III in 1540.

God Dwelling in the Creation and in all its Beings: Theology of Inhabitation in The Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola

Ignatius started to write the booklet entitled *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius* “immediately after his outstanding mystical illumination at Manresa in August or September [of 1522]” (Ignatius of Loyola 1992, 3). As he continued to compose the booklet until its completion in 1541, and its publication in Latin in 1546, he also used it to guide others along the path of Christian spiritual life. In other words, the text of the *Spiritual Exercises* is essentially a guide based on both the spiritual experience of its author and the experience he acquired as a spiritual master. Consequently, it is right to say that the *Spiritual Exercises* is not at all a book to be read, but, rather, one to be used to guide others.

At the very beginning of the work, Ignatius defines its content:

[*SpEx* 1] By the term Spiritual Exercises we mean every method of examination of conscience, meditation, contemplation, vocal or mental prayer, and other

spiritual activities [...]. For, just as taking a walk, traveling on foot, and running are physical exercises, so is the name of spiritual exercises given to any means of preparing and disposing our soul to rid itself of all its disordered affections and then, after their removal, of seeking and finding God's will in the ordering of our life for the salvation of our soul. (Ignatius of Loyola 1992, 21)

These exercises can be done intensely, during a silent retreat lasting approximately one month, or in daily life, over a number of months that will vary according to the time that the *exercitant*,³⁷ can dedicate to their everyday practice. Just as attaining the fullness of God's love to the point of being completely transformed into a loving being is the goal of Christian life, so it is the ultimate goal of these exercises. As aforesaid, the process to attain love may be defined as emptying oneself of ego-oriented desires, in order to reach a deeper self, centered on ego-free desires such that one does not live for oneself anymore but for the good of others. In Ignatius' *Spiritual Exercises*, the "contemplation to attain love" (*SpEx* 230–237) is the last of the series of spiritual exercises constituting the work's content. This indicates that all the preceding exercises are a means to prepare the retreatant to do this final contemplation. Among the four points constituting this final exercise, the second one (*SpEx* 235) is about God as "the indweller."

I [the retreatant] will consider how God dwells in creatures; in the elements, giving them existence; in the plants, giving them life; in the animals, giving them sensation; in human beings, giving them intelligence; and finally, how in this way he dwells also in myself, giving me existence, life, sensation, and intelligence; and even further, making me his temple, since I am created as a likeness and image of the Divine Majesty. (Ignatius of Loyola 1992, 95)³⁸

The dwelling of God in all creatures, as well as in oneself, is the main theme of Jesus' farewell discourse in John's Gospel (Jn 13–17). Indeed, in the hours before entering into his Passion, Jesus utters the following words to his disciples:

Abide in me as I abide in you (Jn 15:4) [...] I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. (Jn 15:15)

Then, Jesus prays to the Father, saying "As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us" (Jn 17:21). Jesus' final words first "gave rise to the idea of mutual 'inhabitation' of the Father and of the Son," which was "enriched later on with the explicit mention of the Holy Spirit" (Ladaria

³⁷ The name given to those receiving the *Spiritual Exercises*.

³⁸ "In the Gospel of John, the word 'to dwell, remain, abide' (Gk. *menein*) is applied to many different constitutive elements in Christian life. [...] Here, the context is both one of entering into a definitive relationship of covenant with God and of enjoying communion with him on the one hand and, on the other, of being in a state in which one is the true temple in which God dwells and where he is given spiritual worship" (Congar 2005, 79–80).

2010, 309) that led to the Trinitarian formula: in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. For Christians, Jesus—as a friend—is the paradigm of this experience of inhabitation,³⁹ because the manner by which he “lived his human life indicates concretely the way that leads to” a life of communion with God (Waldenfels 2017).

The spirit of the contemplation to attain love, which aims at allowing one to make such an experience of inhabitation and remain in it, is closely and deeply linked to the entire process of spiritual growth proposed by the *Spiritual Exercises*. This is shown right from their beginning in the passage entitled “Principle and Foundation” (*SpEx* 23).

Human beings are created to praise, reverence, and serve God our Lord, and by means of doing this to save their souls. The other things on the face of the earth are created for the human beings, to help them in the pursuit of the end for which they are created. From this it follows that we ought to use these things to the extent that they help us toward our end, and free ourselves from them to the extent that they hinder us from it. To attain this, it is necessary to make ourselves indifferent to all created things, in regard to everything which is left to our free will and is not forbidden. Consequently, on our own part, we ought not to seek health rather than sickness, wealth rather than poverty, honor rather than dishonor, a long life rather than a short one, and so on in all other matters. Rather, we ought to desire and choose only that which is more conducive to the end for which we are created. (Ignatius of Loyola 1992, 32)

The spirit of this text pervades all the *Spiritual Exercises*, especially thanks to the preparatory prayer that an exercitant has to recite at the beginning of each exercise.⁴⁰ In short, it says that to enter in communion with God, one must know the end for which one is created and the means to achieve it. This spirit entirely rests on the adamant and fundamental faith in the fact that God is working “in me” and “through me” in this world. It constitutes the very core of Ignatius’ spirituality. To help us understand the meaning of the “Principle and Foundation,” Balthasar underscores the importance of the concept of “representation” in the historical context in which Ignatius wrote the *Spiritual Exercises*.

Baroque culture, in those aspects which from a Christian point of view are the most positive, builds upon the idea of representation. It underlies not only the

³⁹ In the spirituality of St. John of the Cross (1542–1591), self-consciousness may be “temporary” lost at the top of mystical experience. More than “union,” “communion” emphasizes the fact that such self-consciousness, which allows a sense of relationship with God, remains at the top of spiritual or mystical experiences. From a Buddhist perspective, the word communion may be considered meaningless since Buddhism tends to emphasize far more a doctrine of non-self than the contrary. However, from the Christian viewpoint which emphasizes very much the existence of a personal self, surviving death and entering into so-called eternity, talking about the definitive loss of oneself cannot be acknowledged as valid theologically or philosophically. See note 2.

⁴⁰ [*SpEx* 46] *The Preparatory Prayer* is to ask God our Lord for the grace that all my intentions, actions, and operations may be ordered purely to the service and praise of the Divine Majesty (Ignatius of Loyola 1992, 40).

apostolate of a man like Francis Xavier and of the entire Jesuit mission, including the experiment in Paraguay, but also the theatre, both secular and sacred, where a man plays the “role” entrusted to him in the “costume” lent him and consequently makes present, re-present, a fragment of eternal knowledge. The idea of representation thus brings about a new awareness of the manifestation of divine glory in the world. (Balthasar 1991, 106–107)

Hence, in Ignatius’ spirituality, knowing God who is working in and through oneself in this world is no different than knowing the end for which one is created. Consequently, those who start Ignatius’ Spiritual Exercises are invited to search, as they unfold, the end for which they are created, and, whenever necessary, to make a decision regarding the lifestyle they have to choose in order to better serve God. But making a right decision requires the achievement of a state of perfect indifference, without which discerning God’s will is not possible. Indeed, “the aim of the Spiritual Exercises is to help others to order their lives without reaching decisions through disordered attachments [*SpEx* 23]” (Ganss 1993, 270). According to Balthasar, “Indifference, the central concept in the ‘Principle and Foundation’ [...] shows how much Ignatius stands in late medieval tradition. [...] At every stage [of the Spiritual Exercises], the principle of indifference means detachment from all created things for the sake of immediate union with God” (Balthasar 1991, 102). Balthasar goes on with an explanation of the Spiritual Exercises’ overall structure that allows the grasping, at a glance, of the successive steps an exercitant is expected to go through.

The First Week⁴¹ of the Exercises involves the purgative and preparatory “hell of self-knowledge,” which strips the sinner, as he stands before the cross of Christ, of any consciousness of his own goodness. This enables him, dispossessed of any self-constructed pattern of life, to enter into the imitation of Christ, to which he is introduced in the Second, Third and Fourth Weeks of the Exercises by means of contemplation of the life of Jesus. Now this imitation is decided for the individual in a personal call from Christ himself. According to Ignatius, this call will ring out loud and clear during contemplation of the life of Jesus if that is being done in an attitude of “indifference” and readiness for anything God may ask. It will imprint and bestow on each person a form of life which descends from above as a gift of grace. (Balthasar 1991, 102–103)

In the discernment of spirits, affectivity can be considered key in order to become aware of the direction in which one has to be heading. Consolation, as aforementioned, indicates a movement of one’s affectivity toward God, while desolation reveals one moving away from God. Only

⁴¹ The “week” being used not to designate seven days but a stage in the development of the exercitant’s prayer (Buckley 1993, 279).

when one's affectivity is perfectly ordered, that is, purified, can it turn into a clue allowing one to discover the will of God (Buckley 1993, 279–280).⁴²

Ignatius spent much time during the last years of his life writing constitutions for the Society of Jesus, that is, the Catholic religious order of which he was the founder. In 1539 he drafted the first outline of the order's organization, which Pope Paul III approved on September 27, 1540. Interestingly, although Ignatius kept begging God not to let him die without having completed these constitutions, he passed away first. However, even though he attached considerable importance to their writing, he clearly wrote in the first part of their preamble that what helps one most in God's service – which is the end towards which the Society of Jesus has been founded – “more than any exterior constitution,” he insists, is “the interior law of charity and love which the Holy Spirit writes and imprints upon hearts” (Ignatius of Loyola 1996, 56). The logical consequence of this text implies that one who has reached a state of full union or communion with God no longer needs the help of constitutions, because the Spirit has become one's motive power. Such a state of union to or communion with God through the Spirit is reminiscent of a famous – albeit enigmatic – verse of John's Gospel:

The wind blows where it wills, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know whence it comes or whither it goes; so is it with everyone who is born from the Spirit. (Jn 3:8)

Ignatius of Loyola said that he had, and he is believed to have, reached such a state of consciousness during the last years of his life. That undoubtedly was the result of a complete surrender to God achieved through the practice, over decades, of transformative prayer and of all the other spiritual means that he recommended to his followers: daily general and particular examinations of conscience; receiving spiritual direction; daily meditation and contemplation; regular confession; taking part in the Eucharist, etc. It amounts to a fully integrated or unified vision of reality, deprived of any duality, because henceforth all that exists, that is all creation, has become essentially perceived in God, not outside of Him. It is also described as an ability to find God in all things, no matter what happens, which is called contemplation in action. Once one has reached such a state of consciousness, one does not have to wonder anymore about what one ought to do, because in all circumstances one knows spontaneously what God's will is, and puts it into practice right away. In other words, one does

⁴² “Discernment is a matter of noticing constancy in, or departure from, the state of equilibrium that makes affective self-transcendence possible. [...] Such an equilibrium is constituted by the creative tension or functional interdependence of the linked but potentially opposed principles of (1) limitation rooted in the body and (2) transcendence rooted in the spirit. [...] That tension is felt in the sensitive psyche, and these feelings are ciphers, indeed criteria, of one's genuineness. [...] Grace is needed to preserve us in the inner harmony felt in the psyche as equanimity or equilibrium” (Doran 1993, 13).

not have to take great pains anymore to discern what one has to do, because one knows right away what course of action has to be taken.

But the preamble⁴³ goes on to say, in its second part, that since human creatures have to cooperate with God's grace to receive it, since great saints of the past have written constitutions, and since the Pope asked that some be written, that constitutions have been written for the Society of Jesus (Ignatius of Loyola 1996). In other words, the preamble says—in a paradoxical but understandable way—that even though human beings not only may, but also must, set at the start of their spiritual journey the realization of a state of consciousness amounting to a perfect union or communion with God, they will need, in order to achieve it, the help and guidance provided by the constitutions of the religious order to which they belong.

Judging from the contents, not only of Ignatius' autobiography, but of those historians who have written about his life, including following his conversion, it is obvious that he is far from having become a great saint overnight. Not unlike Chinul, it took him all his life; it was a long process of trial and error to finally realize this ideal of inhabitation.

The Art of Empty Quiescence and the Art of Indifference

Comparing Chinul to Ignatius was a risky gamble. To begin with, the traditions respectively represented by these two spiritual masters are, in too many regards, so radically different that they can in no way be reduced to one another. Indeed, Buddhism and Christianity were not only born in different eras, but also in distant geographical and cultural areas. As much as Buddhism is an awakening-centered system of belief, Christianity remains, to the great dismay of many a Buddhist, a Christ-centered one. While the former is essentially based on a non-self (*mua* 無我) doctrine, the latter consistently maintains the existence of a personal and divine soul (*sina* 神我), which it considers the abode of God in the person. Moreover, Chinul and Ignatius are very different men. The latter's dissolute life before his conversion as a thirty-year-old can hardly be compared with that of Chinul, who was brought to a monastery by his father when still a seven-year-old child. While Chinul's funerary inscription is predominantly focused on the description of his awakening experiences, a genuine equivalent of such experiences is nowhere to be found in Ignatius' life. If Chinul definitely is a scholastic, Ignatius is neither a philosopher nor a theologian. To be sure, comparing the former to Thomas Aquinas (1225–1274) would have been easier.

To confront all those difficulties, this research has focused on a specific point: a functional comparison between Chinul's empty and quiescent spiritual knowing, and Ignatius' indifference and discernment. The work

⁴³ See Appendix 5.

done to reach this point of comparison leads to the acknowledgment that, despite all their obvious differences, Chinul and Ignatius share a number of important characteristics. Above all, both intensely desired to achieve the highest possible degree of spiritual realization as they respectively conceived it. In order to do so, both renounced a career in secular life and made, with a few companions, the vow to pursue their spiritual ideal. Both were endowed with practice-oriented minds, that is, they were only interested in scholastic speculations so long they were related to practice. Both set at the beginning of the spiritual journey a fundamental experience that pervades it thoroughly till its end: Chinul's sudden awakening or "seeing the nature," which underlies gradual practice until one's final awakening, and Ignatius' principle and foundation, which underpins the process allowing one to enter in full communion with God. For Chinul, when through gradual practice and flawless detachment one's mind essence and function reach a point of complete and uninterrupted harmony, one achieves perfect empty and quiescent spiritual knowing, that is, constant seeing the nature. For Ignatius, when through years of exercises and perfect indifference one's will becomes one with God's, to the point of experiencing his uninterrupted dwelling within oneself, one can discern His will without fail. Such empty and quiescent spiritual knowing, and discernment based on indifference represent the ultimate realization in Chinul's and Ignatius' respective thoughts.

However, to avoid the risk of falling into undesirable confusion, it must be underscored that Chinul's empty and quiescent spiritual knowing was not at all oriented toward the same scope of action as Ignatius' indifference and discernment of the will of God. As a monk who renounced secular life, Chinul was essentially preoccupied with becoming awakened and helping others on the path to the accomplishment of Buddhahood. The Oxherder never intended to be a reformer of either Buddhism or Korean society, or to become the founder of a Buddhist order. During the last years of his life in Susōnsa, the *Samādhi* and *Prajñā* Society did not grow, at best, beyond a few hundred members. In contrast, as a man of the Renaissance and a Catholic counter-reformer, Ignatius founded a religious order—headquartered in Rome and directly subordinated to Papal authority—which has spread widely throughout the world, becoming involved, not only in education and religious affairs, but also in all areas of social interaction.

As a disciple of Ignatius who practices Zen 禪, Waldenfels asks fundamental questions regarding what immediately follows so-called experiences of radical detachment and emptiness: "Here it must be asked what prompts the word after the silence, 'inducing the practitioner to speak,' and what does the one who has come to this point then do" (Waldenfels

2017).⁴⁴ Judging from the conspicuous differences between Chinul's and Ignatius' patterns of action, the "art of empty quiescence" and the "art of indifference" obviously lead their practitioners to spiritual knowledge on the one hand, and to the result of a discernment on the other, whose respective results appear to be significantly influenced by one's worldview prior to such experiences. To be sure, this is a clear invitation not to absolutize but, rather, to humbly relativize the way spiritual knowing on the one hand, and the result of a discernment of the spirits leading to the knowledge of God's will on the other, translate into thoughts, words, and actions that intend to be right (*chōng* 正). In other words, it invites us to ask ourselves, once more, what truly allows one's patterns of thought and action to be purified and thus genuinely improved.

As this essay has demonstrated, the thought of Chinul and Ignatius are as different as they are deeply similar. By encountering one another, the followers of these two spiritual masters have the opportunity of learning new religious languages, that may help them redefine, and thus renew, themselves and their respective worldviews in the religious context of contemporary Korea.

REFERENCES

Abbreviations

- ABC *Pulgyo kirok munhwa yusan ak'aibū* (Archives of the Documents of Buddhist Cultural Heritage): <http://kabc.dongguk.edu>.
- T Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaikyoku 渡邊海旭, eds. *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 [Revised Buddhist canon compiled during the Taishō reign-period]. 100 Vols. Tokyo: Daizōkyōkai, 1924–1935.

Primary Sources on Chinul

- Chinul. 2012. *Chinul: Selected Works. Collected Works of Korean Buddhism*. Vol. 2. Translated, annotated, and with an introduction by Robert E. Buswell, Jr. Seoul: Jogye Order of Korean Buddhism.
- . 2016. *Numinous Awareness Is Never Dark: The Korean Buddhist Master Chinul's Excerpts on Zen Practice*. Translated, annotated, and with an introduction by Robert E. Buswell, Jr. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.

⁴⁴ One can easily understand how one can come to situations of this kind by bearing in mind that Zen exercises consist of a radical detachment, where practitioners eventually become empty of everything, even of their own thoughts. When total peace is achieved and "no thought is given to anything," the possibility that everything that has been removed in the subconscious and unconscious re-emerges to consciousness and attempts to find a place in the fact of feeling empty (Waldenfels 2017).

Pojo sasang yŏn'guwŏn [Society for Research on Chinul's Thought]. 1989.

Pojo chŏnsŏ 普照全書 [Complete works of Chinul]. Sunchŏn: Puril ch'ulp'ansa. The following items are included in this book:

———. *Chogyesan susŏnsa puril pojo kuksa pimyŏng* 曹溪山修禪社佛日普照國師碑銘—
Kwŏnsu chŏnghye kyŏlsa mun 勸修定慧結社文.

———. *Hwaŏm non chŏryo* 華嚴論節要.

———. *Moguja susimgyŏl* 牧牛子修心訣.

———. *Pŏpchip pyŏrhaengnok chŏryo pyŏng ip sagi* 法集別行錄節要并入私記.

Pulgyo kirok munhwa yusan ak'aibŭ [Archives of the Documents of Buddhist Cultural Heritage]. <http://kabc.dongguk.edu>.

Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Watanabe Kaikyoku 渡邊海旭, eds. *Taishō shinshū daizōkyō* 大正新修大藏經 [Revised Buddhist canon compiled during the Taishō reign-period]. 100 vols. Tokyo: Daizōkyōkai, 1924–1935.

Primary Sources on Ignatius

Ignatius of Loyola. 1974. *The Autobiography of St. Ignatius Loyola*. Edited with Introduction and Notes by John C. Olin. Translated by Joseph F. O'Callaghan. New York: Harper Torchbooks.

———. 1996. *The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms: A Complete English Translation of the Official Latin Texts*. Edited by John W. Padberg, S.J. St. Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sources.

———. 1992. *The Spiritual Exercises of Saint Ignatius*. Translation and commentary by George E. Ganss. Chicago: Loyola Press.

Ignatius, and Claudio Acquaviva. 1925. *Directory to the Spiritual Exercises of Our Holy Father Ignatius: Authorized Translation*. London: Manresa Press.

Secondary Sources

Balthasar, Hans Urs von. 1991. *The Glory of the Lord: A Theological Aesthetics, Vol.5: The Realm of Metaphysics in the Modern Age*. Translated by Oliver Davies, Andrew Louth, Brian McNeil C.R.V., John Saward, and Rowan Williams. San Francisco: Ignatius Press.

Buckley, Michael J. 1993. "Discernment of Spirits." In *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, edited by Michael Downey. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press.

Congar, Yves. 2005. *I Believe in the Holy Spirit*. Vol. 2. Translated by David Smith. New York: A Herder & Herder Book.

- Doran, Robert M. 1993. "Affect, Affectivity." In *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, edited by Michael Downey. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press.
- Ganss, George E. 1993. "Detachment." In *The New Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality*, edited by Michael Downey. Minnesota: The Liturgical Press.
- Han, Hyöngjo. 1996. "Chinul üi kuwöñ ron kwa sin yuhak" [The soteriology of Chinul and Neo-Confucianism]. *Chinul üi sasang kwa kü hyöndaek chök üimi* [Chinul's thought and its meaning in modern times]. Söngnam: Han'guk chöngsin munhwa yön'guwön.
- Idigoras, J. Ignacio Tellechea. 1986. *Ignacio de Loyola: Solo y a Pie*. Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad.
- Ingyöng. 2017. *Pojo Chinul üi chöngnye sasang yön'gu* [Research on the samādhi and prajñā thought of Chinul]. Seoul: Myöngsang sangdam yön'guwön.
- Kapleau, Philip. 1967. *The Three Pillars of Zen: Teaching, Practice, and Enlightenment*, Boston: Beacon Press.
- Keel, Hee-Sung. 1984. *Chinul: The Founder of the Korean Sön Tradition*. Berkeley Buddhist Studies Series. Seoul: Pochinchai.
- Ladaria, Luis F. 2010. *The Living and True God: The Mystery of the Trinity*. Florida: Convivium Press.
- Moretti, Robert, and Guy-M. Bertrand. 1971. "Inhabitation." In *Dictionnaire de Spiritualité*, Tome VII. Paris: Beauchesne.
- Muller, A. Charles, and Ockbae Chun. 2014. *A Korean-English Dictionary of Buddhism* [Han-yöng pulgyo taesajön]. Seoul: Unjusa.
- Nouwen, Henri J. M. 1996. *The Inner Voice of Love: A Journey through Anguish to Freedom*. Kindle book. New York: Doubleday.
- Poceski, Mario. 2004. "Huayan Jing." In *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, edited by Robert E. Buswell, Jr. New York: Macmillan Reference USA.
- Schuhmacher, Stephan, and Gert Woerner, eds. 1989. *The Encyclopedia of Eastern Philosophy and Religion*. Translated by Michael H. Kohn, Karen Ready, and Werner Wünsche. Boston: Shambhala Publications.
- Senécal, Bernard [Sö Myöngwön, Seo Myeongweon 徐明源]. 2014. "Jesus Christ Encountering Gautama Buddha: Buddhist-Christian Relations in South Korea." *Journal of Korean Religions* 5 (1): 81-107.
- . 2019. "Chinul." In *Brill's Encyclopedia of Buddhism*. Vol. 2. Leiden, Boston: Koninklijke Brill NV.
- Sim, Jaeryong. 2004. *Chinul yön'gu: Pojo Sön kwa Han'guk Pulgyo* [Research on Chinul: the Sön of Pojo and Korean Buddhism]. Seoul: Söul Taehakkyo chulpanbu.

- Suzuki, Shunryū. 1995. *Zen Mind, Beginners Mind*. New York: Weatherhill.
- T'oeong, Sōngch'ōl 退翁性徹. 2007. *Tonhwang-bon Yukcho tangyōng* 敦煌本 六祖壇經 [Tunhuang version of *The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*]. Hapchōn: Haein-sa.
- Waldenfels, Hans. 2017. "The Practice of Zen and Christian Meditation." *La Civiltà Cattolica* 1708 (14 October). Hong Kong: Union of Catholic Asian News.
- Yampolsky, Philip B. 2012. *The Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch: the Text of the Tun-huang Manuscript*. New York: Columbia University Press.

Webography

- Han'guk kumsōngmun chonghap yōngsang chōngbo system* [United information system of the images of Korean metal and stone inscriptions]. <http://gsm.nricp.go.kr/third/user/main.jsp>.
- La Civiltà Cattolica*. <https://www.laciviltacattolica.com/the-practice-of-zen-and-christian-meditation/>.
- Muller, A. Charles, and William Edward Soothill. 1995. *Digital dictionary of Buddhism*. [Japan]: [A. Charles Muller]. <http://www.buddhism-dict.net/ddb/>.
- New Revised Standard Version of the Bible*. [https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-Revised-Standard-Version-NRSV Bible/#vinfo](https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-Revised-Standard-Version-NRSV-Bible/#vinfo).

Appendix 1. Chronology of Chinul

1158	Born in Tongju 洞州 (west of Kaesōng 開城).
1165	Becomes a novice at Kulsansa 掘山寺.
1182	Passes the state examination for monks. Makes the decision to found the <i>Samādhi</i> and <i>Prajñā</i> Society. Leaves the capital for the South: First awakening.
1185	Second awakening at Pomunsa 普門寺.
1188	Starts to practice <i>Samādhi</i> and <i>Prajñā</i> at Kōjosa 居祖寺 together with high-minded scholars (<i>Kosa</i> 高士) from various sects.
1190	Publishes <i>Encouragement to Practice: Samādhi and Prajñā Society</i> (<i>Kwōnsu chōnghye kyōlsa mun</i> 勸修定慧結社文).
1198	Third awakening at Sangmuju hermitage 上無住庵 in Mount Chiri 智異山.
1200	Moves to Kilsangsa 吉祥寺 on Mount Songgwang 松廣山 for the expansion of the <i>Samādhi</i> and <i>Prajñā</i> Society. After reconstruction and expansion, official opening of the new compound in 1205. The names are changed to Susōnsa 修禪社 and Chogyesan 曹溪山.

1203-1205	Publishes <i>Moguja's Secrets on Cultivating the Mind</i> (<i>Moguja susimgyōl</i> 牧牛子修心訣).
1205	Publishes <i>Admonition to Neophytes</i> (<i>Kye ch'osim hagin mun</i> 誠初心學人文)
1207	Publishes <i>Condensation of the Exposition of Avatamsaka Sūtra</i> (<i>Hwaōm non chōryo</i> 華嚴論節要), and <i>Postscript to the Dharma Treasure: Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch</i> (<i>Yukcho pōppo tan'gyōngbal</i> 六祖法寶壇經跋)
1209	Publishes Excerpts from the "Dharma Collection and Special Practice Record" with Inserted Personal Notes (<i>Pōpchip pyōrhaengnok chōryo pyōngip sagi</i> 法集別行錄節要并入私記).
1210	Death
1215	Two posthumous works (published by his disciple Hyesim 慧諤): <i>Treatise on the Complete and Sudden Attainment of Buddhahood</i> (<i>Wōndon sōngbullon</i> 圓頓成佛論); <i>Treatise on Resolving Doubts about Observing the Keyword</i> (<i>Kanhwa kyōrūiron</i> 看話決疑論).

Appendix 2. Chronology of Ignatius

1491	Born in Loyola (Spain's Basque Country).
1521	Injured at the battle of Pamplona; first conversion.
1522-	Visits the Benedictine monastery of Santa Maria de Montserrat; general confession. Has five spiritual experiences while practicing asceticism in Manresa; starts to write <i>The Spiritual Exercises</i> .
1523	Pilgrimage to the Holy Land.
1524-1535	Studies Latin, theology, etc. in Barcelona, Alcala and Paris.
1534	Takes vows with six companions in Saint Peter's Church's chapel on Montmartre.
1537	Ordination to priesthood.
1539	Founds the Society of Jesus; writes the draft of their <i>Constitutions</i> .
1540	Pope Paul III approves the Society of Jesus.
1541	Completes the writing of <i>The Spiritual Exercises</i>
1548	Pope Paul III approves <i>The Spiritual Exercises</i> ; they are published.
1556	Dies in Rome.
1583	Pope Paul V approves the <i>Constitutions</i> of the Society of Jesus.
1622	Ignatius of Loyola is canonized by Pope Gregory XV.

Appendix 3. Chinul's First Awakening in the Funerary Inscription

By chance one day in the dormitory as he was looking through the *Platform Sūtra of the Sixth Patriarch*, he came across [the following passage]: “The self-nature of suchness generates thoughts. Although the six sense-faculties may see, hear, sense, and know, they do not taint the myriad sensory objects and the true nature remains constantly autonomous.” Astonished and overjoyed, he gained what he had never experienced before; getting up, he walked around the Buddha hall, reflecting on the passage while continuing to recite it, until he understood its meaning for himself. From that time on, his mind was disillusioned with fame and profit; he desired only to dwell in seclusion in the mountain ravines. Bearing hardships joyfully, he aspired to the path; even in moments of haste, he cleaved to it (Chinul, 2012, 371–372).

偶一日 閱六祖壇經 “真如自性起念 六根雖見聞覺知 不染萬境 而真性常自在。” 乃驚喜起繞佛殿 頌而思之 意自得也。自是 心厭名利 每欲棲 遁林壑 艱恬以求其道 造次必於是 (“Funerary Inscription,” <http://gsm.nricp.go.kr>).

Appendix 4. Chinul's Second Awakening in the Preface of Condensation

In the autumn of Dading *ūlsa* [1185], as I began living in retreat on Haga Mountain, I reflected constantly on the Sōn adage “Mind is Buddha” (*chūksim chūkpul* 卽心卽佛). I felt that if one had not encountered this approach, one would end up wasting many kalpas (*kōp* 劫) in vain and would never reach the domain of sanctity. [...]

Nevertheless, as I was still not fully clear about the initial access to faith that was appropriate for ordinary people of today, I reread the explanation of the first level of the ten faiths in the Xin Huayan-jing lun 新華嚴經論 (Exposition of the Avatamsaka sūtra) written by the Elder Li [Tongxuan] 李[通玄] 長者 [635–730]. It said: “Chief of Enlightenment (*kaksu* 覺首) Bodhisattva has three [enlightenments]. First, *s/he* is enlightened to the fact that *her/his* own body and mind are originally the *dharmadhātu* [*pōpkye* 法界] because they are immaculate, pure, and untainted. [Second, *s/he* is enlightened to the fact that the discriminating nature of *her/his* body and mind originally does not distinguish subject and object. Originally it is the Buddha of motionless wisdom]. Third, *s/he* is enlightened to the fact that *her/his* own mind's sublime wisdom, which readily distinguishes the genuine from the distorted, is Mañjuśrī. [Since] *s/he* becomes enlightened to these three things at the first level of faith, *s/he* comes to be known as Chief of Enlightenment.” It says elsewhere: “The difficulties [people encounter] in accessing the ten faiths from the state of an ordinary person are due entirely to the fact that they acquiesce to themselves being ordinary persons and are unwilling to acknowledge that their own minds are the Buddha of Immovable Wisdom.” [...] Thereupon, I set down the volume and, breathing a long sigh, said: “What the World-Honored One said with his mouth is Kyo (教). What the patriarchs transmitted with their minds is Sōn (禪). [...] From that

point on, I have continued to build my mind of faith and have cultivated diligently without indolence; a number of years have already passed since then (Chinul 2012, 355; 357–358 with modification in italics).

余始隱居下柯山 常以禪門 卽心卽佛 冥心 以謂非遇此門 徒勞多劫 莫臻聖域矣. [...] 然未詳今日凡夫 最初信入之門 又閱李長者所造華嚴論. 釋十信初位云 覺首菩薩者有三. 一覺自身心 本是法界 白淨無染故. 二覺自身心分別之性 本無能所 本來是不動智佛. 三覺自心 善簡擇正邪妙慧 是文殊師利. 於信心之初 覺此三法 名爲覺首. 又云 從凡入十信難者 摠自認是凡夫 不肯認自心是不動智佛故. [...] 於是 置卷長歎曰 世尊說之於口 卽爲教 祖師傳之於心 卽爲禪. [...] 從此益加信心 勤修匪懈 于茲積歲矣 (Condensation, ABC, H0075, v. 4, 767 c04-c06; 767c17–768a07).

Appendix 5. Preamble to the Constitutions in The Constitutions of the Society of Jesus and Their Complementary Norms

[134] Although God our Creator and Lord is the one who in his Supreme Wisdom and Goodness must preserve, direct, and carry forward in his divine service this least Society of Jesus, just as he deigned to begin it; and although on our own part what helps most toward this end must be, more than any exterior constitution, the interior law of charity and love which the Holy Spirit writes and imprints upon hearts; nevertheless, since the gentle disposition of Divine Providence requires cooperation from his creatures, and since too the vicar of Christ our Lord has ordered this, and since the examples given by the saints and reason itself teach us so in our Lord, we think it necessary that constitutions should be written to aid us to proceed better, in conformity with our Institute, along the path of divine service on which we have entered (Ignatius of Loyola 1996, 56).

3

Zen and Religion

Ama Samy, S.J.

Spiritualities, particularly New Age ones are sprouting everywhere, while traditional religions are in decline and are losing members. These spiritualities usually are guru-centered, and they promise health, wealth, and spiritual powers, and thus are alluring and flattering. If the spiritualities are rooted in the great religions and draw their sources from them, they are reliable and liberating. The great religions are pillars of spirit and of society, even if they are challenging and demanding and even though they may seem to be routine and stale. Without peace between world-religions, there cannot be peace in the world. Yet religions also have a darker side. They become destructive when they are identified with the social or political realms, particularly when they claim ethnic identities. When they are centered on universal ethical values and are rooted in the transcendent, they are liberative, salvific, and healing (Cf. *Is God Dead?* In: *Zen: The Wayless Way*).

(I) Rabbi Jonathan Sacks writes that it is by going deeper into one's own religion that we can find meaning and liberation, justice, and love. Here some quotes: "Humans also are meaning-seeking animals." We live, as Sacks writes, in a century that "has left us with a maximum of choice and a minimum of meaning." The secular substitutes for religion—nationalism, racism and political ideology—have all led to disaster... Among religious people, mental shifts arise by their reinterpreting the holy texts themselves. There has to be a Theology of the Other: a complex biblical understanding of how to see God's face in strangers... The great religions are based on love, and they satisfy the human need for community. But love is problematic. Love is preferential and particular. Love excludes and can create rivalries. Love of one scripture can make it hard to enter sympathetically into the minds of those who embrace another... Alongside the ethic of love there is a command to embrace an ethic of justice. Love is particular, but justice is universal. Love is passionate, justice is dispassionate. Justice demands respect of the other. It plays on the collective memory of people who are in covenantal communities: "Your people, too, were once vulnerable strangers in a strange land." The command is not just to be empathetic toward strangers, which is fragile. The command is to pursue *sanctification*, which involves struggle and sometimes conquering one's selfish instincts. Moreover, God frequently appears where he is least expected—in the voice

of the stranger—reminding us that God transcends the particulars of our attachments... The reconciliation between love and justice is not simple, but for believers the texts, when read properly, point the way. Sacks' great contribution is to point out that the answer to religious violence is probably going to be found within religion itself, among those who understand that religion gains influence when it renounces power. It may seem strange that in this century of technology, peace will be found within these ancient texts. But as Sacks points out, Abraham had no empire, no miracles and no army—just a different example of how to believe, think and live" (David Brooks, Nov. 17, 2015).

(II) Religions comprise scriptures, doctrines, rituals, ethics, motivations and behaviors. The sociologist C. Geertz defines religions as cultural systems. He remarks that religion as a model *of* the world tells us how things are, and thus induces certain moods in the believer, and religion as model *for* the world tells us how things ought to be, and thus induces certain motivations and behaviors. I would say that religion is a world-view, a *Weltanschauung*. A religion interprets the world and all of reality in its own frame of perspective and expresses meaning in its own categories. It can learn from other religions and disciplines, but as a world-view it is all-embracing. The great German theologian Karl Rahner was known for the term *Anonymous Christian*. The term means that Christ's grace and salvation touches and reaches all humans, every non-Christian and even the atheist. It is said that the Japanese Zen philosopher Keiji Nishitani once asked him, "If you say that I, a Buddhist, am an Anonymous Christian, can I say that you are an Anonymous Buddhist?" Rahner replied that Nishitani should call him (that is, Rahner), an anonymous Buddhist, as otherwise he would not be true to his Buddhism. This story brings out the meaning of world-view. Buddhism will interpret all of life and reality in terms of Buddhism, as Christianity will do the same in its turn. Each religion is such an all-embracing world-view.

(III) But we live in one world and humankind is one species. It has even been shown that all humans have descended from a single mother in Africa. We are not alien to one another. Still, our cultural and religious world-views will diverge. There are many different ways of modelling religions and relating one religion to another. Here I point out some simplified ways which can be helpful to us, particularly on how to relate to Zen and religions. I will use ad hoc, inadequate labels as a help to remember:

The Exclusive Way: Each world-view is different and unique. We cannot collapse one into the other, or make one soup of them all. Of course, all of them will have their similarities and commonalities, but ultimately each will stand alone and singular; each will interpret the others in its own terms. Even as regards the concepts or symbols in one religious system, they cannot be equated exactly with another concept or symbol in another system. Yamada Koun Roshi once asked a Benedictine Sister who was studying Zen along with me under his guidance, as to how God and Zen Emptiness were

related. She replied that God was Emptiness (the emptiness of Zen), and Emptiness was God. This is a complete misunderstanding. Some would say that Truth is One, and people call it by different names, meaning different religions. How do they know that Truth is one? Such claims are made when viewed through the eye of God, something that is not available to us humans. Each religion will claim that it is unique and singular, and that it cannot be relativized. Each has its own path and practice, and its own history and symbols, which may find no counterparts in other religions. Buddhism claims there is no personal God, Theism claims the contrary, and so on and so forth. Some Neo-Hindus say that all religions are one and that they lead to the same summit, yet their implicit understanding is that their Hinduism is the superior and supreme summit, and that all others are only tributaries of ancient Hinduism.

The exclusivist stance can take the form of 'my religion is the only true one, the others are imperfect, inadequate or false.' Often it will be in terms of Christ, Buddha, Muhammad, Krishna, and so on and so forth. This means for Christians it is Jesus Christ who is the unique and final revelation, for Buddhists it is the Buddha, and so on. Karl Barth declares that all religions are idolatrous, and only Christ is the Truth, only Christ is our salvation.

The Inclusive Way: In this second form, in the case of Christians for instance, Christ is the unique revelation, Christ is the fullness of the Godhead; the other religions and religious figures are rather indirect and implicit manifestations of Christ. Here the world-views of others are interpreted in terms of one's own religion, and they are validated accordingly. For example, Christians may say that Buddhism does have belief in a God, but in an indirect way or implicit form, and that Christ's grace reaches all human beings. Buddhists in turn may say that the Christian God is only an illusion and that Jesus is a *Bodhisattva*, and so on. Zen master Hakuin claims that all beings have the Buddha-nature, and that each tries to interpret the others in terms of their own. In a way this is commendable, since there is no explicit hostility towards others but only compassion for the, so to say, 'misguided' people. Yet, there are others who cannot accept such a condescending attitude, and the result is that it provokes resentment and bitterness, if not hostility.

The Pluralistic Way: In this theory, every religion is said to be equal and valid, with none being either superior or inferior. Religions differ from each other and may even be incompatible. In the extreme form, it asserts that they are mutually different paths. They have different forms of ultimate realities, different forms of liberation, and they inhabit different universes. There are many different truths, many different ethics. This way relativizes all religions, and followers of religions have to learn to co-habit and tolerate each other. "East is East, West is West, and never the twain shall meet." You live in accordance with your religion, and I live in accordance with my religion; if we meet that's fine, if not, its okey. Each is shut in his or her own home and place.

This cannot serve as the way in the present-day world which is ravaged by violence and conflict, and which is endangered by impending ecological catastrophes. We have to find a way of living together and caring for our common world. We have to learn to be open to each other, and to dialogue with, listen to, and respect each other, as otherwise we may end up as the Roman poet declared, "*homo homini lupus*," which means, "man is wolf to his fellow men; each one for oneself, and the devil take the hindmost!"

Dual Belonging: There are now many people who say that they live in a dual or double-belonging, that is, in two religious traditions at the same time; and at times even in multiple belongings. These could be Christian-Buddhist, Hindu-Christian, Jewish-Buddhist, and so on. It is rather the Christians and Jews who are more involved in such dual belongings. Living in an exclusive tradition one feels suffocated and confined. John Dunne coined the phrase, "*passing over and coming back*." Passing over into the other tradition or religion and then coming back home (Cf. my article on Zen and Christianity in *ZEN: Ancient and Modern*). Such a passing over and coming back is liberating, and it enlarges one's vision. One no more makes idols of one's religion and tradition.

(IV) Let me now focus on Christians passing over into Buddhism/Zen and coming back home. There are risks in such a dual belonging. There can be syncretism, erasing of the boundaries of one or the other, indifference, superficial immersion in the other, a lack of commitment to one's community of faith, or even betrayal of one's community and religion, and so on. This is always the fear of the religious authorities. Yet, dual belonging can be a blessing both for individuals and for communities. Paul Knitter claims, "Without Buddha, I could not be a Christian." (This is the title of Knitter's book. Rose Drew has a book on this theme and an article on dual belonging in: <http://www.oikoumene.org/en/what-we-do/current-dialogue-magazine/dialogue-51>).

In dual belonging both traditions or religions will be enriched, resulting in mutual tolerance, understanding, and respect. It involves both intra-religious and inter-religious dialogue. No man is an island, for everyone is part of the continent. Nothing human is alien to me. In dual belonging you bring blessings to both traditions. If institutional religion can accept this, it will be a grace for it. However, such dual belonging cannot be realized by the majority of religious people. Only certain persons can truly achieve this passing over and coming back. Further, one will inevitably favor one tradition over the other, and that cannot be helped. Paul Knitter confesses, "As I believe this book makes clear, my core identity as a Christian has been profoundly influenced by my passing over to Buddhism. Even though my primary allegiance is to Christ and the Gospel, my Christian experience and beliefs have not dominated nor always had to trump what I learned or experienced through Buddha. There have been many instances in this book where I have recognized, often with great relief, that Buddhism can offer us

Christians a deeper insight, a clearer truth. And yet, at the end of the day, I go home to Jesus."

(V) In the Ground of Emptiness—The In-between Way:

My own position is close to that of dual belonging, but still different. Let me narrate an incident: Years ago I was giving a talk on Zen to a Christian audience in a Catholic church in Sydney. A member of the audience attacked me and challenged me as to how I could be both a Christian and a Zen person. I tried to explain, but he was adamant in his opposition. A friend of mine, John Hughes, tried to intervene. The man turned on Hughes and demanded, "Tell me, Mister, is your master a Christian or a Buddhist?" John quietly answered, "He is human!" That was a wonderful reply, even if it was a bit inadequate. I am a Christian and a Zen master. When I celebrate the Eucharist or perform a Christian service, I am a Christian through and through. I inhabit the Christian world-view and express the Christian vision. When I do Zen, I am a Zen person through and through. I then inhabit the Zen Buddhist world-view and teach and express the Zen vision, Zen experience, and Zen discipline. I move in each world-view without reservation, though I use both Christian and Zen terms in my teaching. However for me Zen is Zen and Christianity is Christianity. There is no mixing or mingling.

I stand between both these traditions or religions in the in-between. This in-between is the realm of unknowing and darkness, it is so to say, 'a Cloud of Unknowing.' This is the dimension of what Zen calls Emptiness. Zen master Banzan said to his disciples, "In the three worlds, there is no Dharma. Where could you find the mind?" (HR 37). Dharma here refers to beings. Another master said, "Do not sit on the top of a hundred-foot pole; step forth and manifest your body in ten directions." (MK 46). Sitting on the top of a hundred-foot pole refers to sticking to Emptiness. The in-between is the realm of Emptiness; you cannot stay in Emptiness; but you can realize Emptiness. Zen Awakening is awakening to Emptiness. *The Heart Sutra* proclaims, 'Emptiness is form, form is Emptiness.'

Form signifies being. Emptiness is not apart from form. When I abide in the in-between of Emptiness, I abide in the groundless ground. A Zen *Koan* asserts, "Standing nowhere, let your 'self' come forth." When standing in-between concepts, ideas, or even symbols, a ground opens—it is here where you go beyond the concepts and forms. However, you cannot stick to this realm, you have to enter form and manifest your body and self as a Christian or a Buddhist. Emptiness is your true self and it is manifested in the embodied form of yourself.

(VI) In my opinion Masao Abe's Zen is inadequate and wanting. Still, his remark on Emptiness as the ground of self, world, and God, is very incisive: "True emptiness is never an object found outside of oneself. It is what is really non-objectifiable. Precisely for this reason, it is the ground of

true subjectivity. In Christian mysticism, it is true that God is often called nothingness or the unknowable. However, if this is taken as the ultimate, or the object of the soul's longing, it is not the same as true nothingness in Zen. In Zen, this is found only by negating 'nothingness' as the end, and 'emptiness' as the object of one's spiritual quest. To reach the Zen position, one must be reconverted or turned back from 'nothingness' as the end to 'nothingness' as the ground, from 'emptiness' as the object to 'emptiness' as the true subject... Real emptiness, which is called in Buddhism *sunyata*, is not a nihilistic position that simply negates religious values. Overcoming nihilism within itself, it is the existential ground of liberation or freedom in which one finds for himself liberation even from what is non-Buddha, liberation even from a rigid view of emptiness... The ground of our existence is nothingness, *sunyata*, because it can never be objectified. This *sunyata* is deep enough to encompass even God, the 'object' of mystical union as well as the object of faith. For *sunyata* is the nothingness from which God himself emerged. *Sunyata* is the very ground of the self and thereby the ground of everything to which we are related. The realization of *sunyata*, as such, is precisely what is meant by the self-awakening of Dharma. *Sunyata* as the non-objectifiable ground of our existence, it *expands endlessly into all directions*. The same is true of 'awakening in the Dharma'... We are originally — right here and now — in the expanding of self-awakening, that spreads endlessly into all directions. This is why we can talk about relationships with the world and about an 'I-Thou' relationship with God. Nevertheless, just as Yajnadatta looked for his head outside of himself, we are used to looking for our true self outside of ourselves. This is our basic illusion... When we realize this basic illusion for what it is, we immediately find that, in our depths, we are grounded in endlessly expanding self-awakening [*sunyata*]" (Ch: God, Emptiness and the True Self, *The Buddha Eye*. Ed. Frederick Franck).

(VII) Conclusion:

Religions are ways, or *Margas* in Sanskrit. In point of fact, religions were originally referred to as *Ways*. Not only are they *Ways*, they may also be described as being *on the way*. That is to say, religions have to change and grow according to the needs and challenges of the times, yet they have to be faithful to the original vision and charism of the founder. It should not be a static fidelity but a creative fidelity. However, apart from their darker sides, they often are like lethargic elephants, unable to respond adequately to issues concerning human rights and human dignity, in keeping with the spirit of the modern times. That is the reason why so many people are walking away from suffocating religions. Also, each religion appears in multiple varieties and branches, though in general they ought to have a common spirit. Buddhism, for example, is not only caught within its many branches and ramifications, there are doctrines and practices which at times are incompatible with each other. Furthermore, the original vision and

teachings of the founders in their exact formulations lie in the remote past, and hence are practically inaccessible. Buddhism for example is burdened with doctrines, theories, and practices that cry out for a hermeneutic interpretation that is authentic and true to the human heart in today's world, and it is exactly the same situation with Christianity as well. This is something I do not need to elaborate upon. Both in Buddhism and in Christianity, doctrines have to be tested and verified in life-experiences. Of course, life-experiences and doctrines influence each other mutually, but life-experiences need to have priority. It is the spiritualities that are rooted in their respective religions, and which are responsive to life-experiences, that carry the promise and potential for creative change.

Spiritual techniques like Zen and *Vipassana* can be redeeming and liberating, both for Buddhism as well as Christianity. Yet, there could also arise problems with regard to interpretation, and meaningful relevance with regard to practice. Here, a great deal depends on the teachers. We have the following well-known saying: In the hands of a good teacher even a bad doctrine will turn out good, but in the hands of a bad teacher even a good and sound doctrine will turn out bad. This is a problem concerning teachers and gurus, but there are also problems concerning seekers and students. It is in such a world of imperfection and sinfulness that we need to live and learn. Our hearts too are deluded and greedy, and yet, we are part of the mystery of Emptiness that is graciousness. That is to say, the ground of our selves is Emptiness that is mystery, mystery that is graciousness.

Let me end with a *Koan* that points to the mystery of the silence of self-manifestation, that can lead to liberative awakening:

A Non-Buddhist Philosopher Questions the Buddha.

Engo's Comment:

It has no form and yet appears. It extends in every direction and is boundless. It responds spontaneously and works in emptiness. Even though you may be clever enough to deduce three from one instance, and to detect the slightest deviation at a glance, and though you may be so powerful that the blows fall from your stick like raindrops and your shouts sound like thunderclaps, you are not yet to be compared with the man of advanced enlightenment. What is the condition of such a man? See the following.

The Case:

A non-Buddhist philosopher said to the Buddha, "I do not ask for words; I do not ask for non-words." The World-honored One remained silent for a while. The philosopher said admiringly, "The World-honored One, in his great mercy, has blown away the clouds of my illusion and enabled me to enter the Way." After the philosopher had gone, Ananda asked the Buddha, "What did he realize, to say he had entered the Way?" The world-honored One replied, "A fine horse runs even at the shadow of the whip."

Setcho's Verse:

*The spiritual wheel does not turn;
 When it turns, it goes two ways.
 The brilliant mirror on its stand
 Divides beauty from ugliness,
 Lifts the clouds of doubt and illusion.
 No dust is found in the gate of mercy.
 A fine horse watches for the shadow of the whip; He goes a thousand miles a day.
 Once the Buddha made his mind turn back. Should the horse come back
 when I beckon,
 I'll snap my fingers thrice at him.
 (HR 65)*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Ama Samy. *Zen: Ancient and Modern: The Way to Heart-Mind*. Dindigul, Tamilnadu: Vaigarai Publishing House, 2010.
- . *Zen: The Wayless Way*. Perumalmalai, Tamilnadu: Bodhi Zendo, 2013.
- Brooks, David. "Finding Peace Within the Holy Texts." *The New York Times*, November 17, 2015. <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/11/17/opinion/finding-peace-within-the-holy-texts.html>.
- Drew, Rose. *Buddhist and Christian? An Exploration of Dual Belonging*. London: Routledge, 2011.
- . "Christian Self-Understanding and the Question of Dual Belonging." *Current Dialogue*, December 2011. https://www.oikoumene.org/sites/default/files/File/CurrentDialogue_51.pdf.
- Franck, Frederick ed. *The Buddha Eye: An Anthology of the Kyoto School*. New York: Crossroad, 1982.
- Knitter, Paul F. *Without Buddha I Could Not Be a Christian*. Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2009.

4

My Journey towards Zen

Mathew Cyril, S.J.

It was in the year 1992 that I for the first time came across the word 'Zen,' and at that time I was 22 years of age and a first year novice in the Jesuit novitiate situated in the city of Dindigul, in South India. While in the novitiate I happened to read books authored by the late Fr. Anthony de Mello, such as for instance his *Song of the Bird*, *Prayer of the Frog* and so on, when I happened to come across certain Zen stories that exerted a forcible impact upon me, evoking feelings of liberation and tranquility within my heart. These tales promptly captured my attention, and I was also charmed by the Master-Disciple bond, the training provided in monasteries, the simple and practical approach to life, and other such issues these stories dealt with and which in stages I imbibed. In time the question arose within my mind, as to whether such spiritual traditions truly existed in our present-day world or not. With the passage of years however such concerns slowly faded from my mind and they were replaced by issues that were much more critical, such as those linked to my Jesuit training as well as my own petty problems of life.

Nevertheless however those concerns surfaced once more, when I studied Philosophy in the city of Chennai in 1995. On commencing my study of Buddhist philosophy, I was once again struck by its clarity and realism regarding matters such as suffering, impermanence, interdependence, the middle path, mindfulness, compassion and so on, and it was also while studying philosophy that I became aware that Zen arose from the Buddhist tradition. Accordingly, I developed an interest in Zen and read the book *Zen flesh Zen bones* by Paul Reps, but while I did manage to grasp some of his stories most of them however eluded me and remained a mystery, but all the same I found the whole thing very absorbing. Yet there was a book written by Osho entitled *The Grass grows by Itself* which I found appealing and freeing, and it provided me with a little more insight into Zen.

After my study of Philosophy however these issues once more faded away for me. I forgot all about them since I was fully engaged in my Jesuit training, the period of training we Jesuits generally refer to as Regency. I busied myself with teaching in a school, taking care of boys in a dormitory and so on, and since I was fully occupied the next two years with day-to-

day responsibilities, commitments, challenges, personal problems, and so on, I had no time to consider my interests.

The Search and the Struggle

It all cropped up again, much more vividly and in a much more powerful manner than before, when I happened to be busy with my post graduate studies on computer applications in the city of Tiruchirappalli in 1999. Although my studies progressed well yet I felt forlorn and discontented, feeling as though I was missing something very vital deeply within. I thereupon commenced reading books on meditation, yoga, Indology and other related subjects, as though I was really searching. My college studies became less critical for me and I found myself evincing keener interest in the quest. It all appeared very mysterious, for I desired to give up my studies completely and embark upon this quest – a quest for a novel path. I could scarcely believe myself thinking in such a manner, since by nature I am a soft spoken man, though I do at times experience a great deal of anger within. Eventually the thought of abandoning my studies grew so strong that I could hardly help myself, and on occasion I lay awake at night, unable to focus on anything else. It was a real struggle.

Providentially for me I was blessed in having a competent spiritual director, namely Fr. Rex Pai SJ, a deeply devout individual with whom I shared these inner struggles. The fact that he perceived my problems rightly provided me with some much needed strength. He assisted me in arriving at a proper decision through making an Ignatian discernment, whereupon I finally decided to discontinue my studies. This decision did indeed come as a shock to many of my Jesuit friends and associates who believed I was making a big mistake, yet a few who knew me well remarked, “If you really feel this is your calling, then go ahead.”

At that time, I was also fortunate over the fact that my provincial superior, Fr. Francis Xavier SJ, had arrived on a visit. When I communicated to him all the strivings I had gone through and expressed my desire to abandon my studies, he expressed a profound understanding of the issues I was faced with and asked, “So, after abandoning your studies what are you planning on doing?” On my confessing to him that I had no idea, he advised, “We already have a Jesuit named AMA Samy who is a Zen Master, running a meditation center in the city of Kodaikanal. Why don’t you go over and pay him a visit? He may offer you some guidance.” Fr. AMA Samy was a person whom I had vaguely heard of earlier, but had never met. Hence I wrote to him a letter introducing myself, and asking whether I could come over and see him the following weekend. It was January 2000, and his reply which arrived promptly by post said, “you are welcome.”

My First Visit to Bodhi Zendo

That weekend I was really excited, and I left early morning for Kodaikanal. It was a five hours journey by bus from Tiruchirappalli, and though I had visited Kodaikanal several times earlier I had never as yet been to the meditation center. On alighting from the bus I asked the local people for directions, and walking a long way upwards I entered a beautiful coffee farm, and by the time I arrived at Bodhi Zendo it was 12.30 PM.

It was quiet everywhere and none was to be seen. As directed by the board I rang the bell, and instantly a tall, lean, and elderly gentleman with a long beard and wearing a simple kurta¹ appeared at the door with a smile. I knew at once that it was Fr. AMA Samy. "Is it Cyril?" he asked. "Yes," I replied. "Welcome. I am AMA Samy," he said, and led me right away into the refectory. On entering the refectory I couldn't believe my eyes. The refectory was full, with nearly 35 people consuming their lunch in total silence, and notwithstanding the fact of so many being present, it was so silent. That really made me wonder. Fr. AMA Samy assisted me with my lunch and I felt totally at home, and on the conclusion of the meal a lady by name Ms. Hemma led me to my room, and explained to me some facts concerning the house. Everyone else was observing complete silence.

Later in the afternoon when I met Fr. AMA Samy, I came to know that a week-long Sesshin (Zen retreat) was going on. I had no idea as to what a Sesshin was, but when Fr. AMA Samy remarked, "The sesshin is due to conclude within two days, but if you are interested you are welcome to join the sittings," I replied, "I would love to." So, in the late afternoon, a lady named Ms. Rosemary led me to the zendo, offered me a seat, and gave me an introduction into Zen meditation. I took an instant liking to it and joined the others for zazen, and while participating in the zazen and listening to Fr. AMA Samy's teishos (dharma talks), I realized straight away that this was what I had been searching for all along, and felt very much at home with the practice and the way.

In my daily walks with Fr. AMA Samy I was provided an opportunity to share my struggles with him, and get a great many issues clarified. When he said, "If you are interested in Zen you are most welcome here," I experienced a surge of confidence and clarity, with reference to what I should do.

He also led me to the well-furnished library of Bodhi Zendo, chose a few books and a couple of articles, and handed them over to me for my reading. At first I wondered, "Since I am going to be here for just 3 days how am I to read all these?" But then, I immediately realized the concern he had for me, and those 3 days at Bodhi Zendo proved most precious.

¹ A loose collarless shirt worn in many regions of South Asia.

On my return to Tiruchirappalli I was clear about what I had to do. I wrote to the provincial explaining in detail my interest in Zen, and he in turn gave me written permission to discontinue my studies, and go to Bodhi Zendo in order to work with Fr. AMA Samy.

The formal quitting of my studies was a drawn-out process, due to the fact that the official procedure involved settling numerous details with superiors, such as the Rector, Principal, Formation Coordinator and others. Yet to my surprise things went smoothly, since my superiors seemed to understand my need and permitted me to embark upon my new path.

The Freedom and Joy

I still recall the day I discontinued my post graduate studies. It was in the month of February of the year 2000. I felt free and happy, peaceful and light, feelings I had never experienced before. I cannot describe the joy and freedom I felt within my heart at that time. Even now when I think of it, I feel a deep sense gratitude for that precious moment that greatly changed the direction of my life.

I cheerfully bid goodbye to my fellow Jesuits, friends, and classmates at Tiruchirappalli and came to Bodhi Zendo, and once there for the succeeding 3 months I was guided by Fr. AMA Samy, reading, meditating, performing some services at the center, coming to know the Sangha, occasionally going on walks with him, and so on. It was a kind of a honeymoon for me with regard to my Zen practice, and after 2 months I became a disciple of Fr. AMA Samy. I recall Fr Stefan Bauberger SJ (of Germany) who was already a disciple, taking me to Fr. AMA Samy to be accepted by him as a disciple in a simple ceremony. As a disciple I attended the Bodhi Sangha Meet, the Sangha seminar, I began dealing with Koans, I got to know sangha members, etc. I was happy and fortunate to be part of Bodhi Zendo, and 3 months elapsed in this way.

In due course I was required to finish my theological studies, which took a total of 4 years. During these theological studies I continued my zazen practice almost regularly for 25 minutes a day, and during my annual vacation I used to spend a few days at Bodhi Zendo, in the company of Fr. AMA Samy and other Zen friends. Things went well, and after my ordination to the priesthood my first assignment was to Bodhi Zendo.

In 2004 I assumed responsibility as administrator of Bodhi Zendo, and despite my being new to the job things went relatively well. "New brooms sweep clean," is what the proverb says. Accordingly, I too did fairly well with regard to the garden, library, the recording Fr. AMA Samy's teishos, coordinating Little Flower projects, and so on, for I felt happy and privileged when Fr. AMA Samy announced to the others, "Cyril will succeed me and run this center in the future."

Zen Exposure in Japan

Fr. AMA Samy then sent me to Japan for 6 months, in order to have some exposure to Japan's Zen tradition. Fr. Stefan Bauberger SJ assisted me through the Jesuit mission procurator for the covering of my expenses in Japan, and I stayed at the SJ House located within Sophia University in Tokyo, learning the Japanese language and visiting places associated with Zen. Fr. Jerome Cusumano, the then Rector of the SJ House and certain Jesuits who were known to Fr. AMA Samy such as Fr. Kadowaki, Fr. Riesenhuber, and Fr. Cyril Veliath, were very kind and helpful to me.

I had the privilege of visiting San Un Zendo in the city of Kamakura, where Fr. AMA Samy underwent his Zen training under Yamada Koun Roshi, and Fr. Cusumano was the one who took me there. As it was a Zazenki day we attended the sittings, and he introduced me to Ryouin Roshi, the son of Yamada Roshi. His aged mother happened to be with him, and when Fr. Cusumano informed them of my being a disciple of AMA Samy, she was well able to recall him. Meeting the Roshi, his mother, and the Zen people of Sambokyodan, were fruitful events for me.

Towards the end of my stay in Japan Fr. Stefan Bauberger arrived, and we together visited many Zen temples and monasteries, both of the Soto and Rinzaï sects, spoke to certain Zen Masters, and finally stayed at a monastery in Obama and underwent a ten-day Sesshin over there, which was a very new and enriching experience for me. The Roshi of the monastery was an elderly man with a long beard and loving heart, and he treated us with great kindness. We were nearly 50 to 60 people for the Sesshin and there were many foreigners like us along with the other monks and nuns, each being diligent in his or her practice. The simple, hard, and traditional lifestyle of the monastery really helps one to enter into deep zazen practice, and also helps one to reject one's ego and individuality, and realize that we are all one as a community (Sangha).

I am indeed grateful to Fr. AMA Samy for having sent me to Japan for this Zen exposure, and also to Fathers Cusumano and Bauberger, both of whom were a great support to me in Japan. After this, on my return to Bodhi Zendo, my very life and responsibility at Bodhi Zendo became my Zen practice. They were to be sure a challenge for me, but yet I was somehow able to integrate my daily life and Zen practice. Things went well, I was regular in attending the daily sittings as well as all the Sesshins and mini-Sesshins, and I became part of the routine life of Bodhi Zendo.

Christianity and Zen: An Identity Crisis

It was around the middle of 2006 that I felt I was missing something deep within myself, and that I had an issue to settle on my Christian side. Having been in Bodhi Zendo for nearly 2 years I had developed a deep love for

Buddhism and the Lord Buddha, since the daily prostrations, recitation of Sutras, formal sittings, periodical Sesshins, reading on Buddhist matters and other such activities, had drawn out those feelings within me. Nevertheless however, my love for our Lord Jesus Christ was also undimmed, and this in consequence induced a crisis within me as to where exactly I belonged. Notwithstanding the fact that the teachings of both Spiritual Masters had a great deal in common, yet the anxiety arose within me as to whether I personally would succeed in integrating the two, or whether belonging to one meant denying the other. Briefly speaking, my fear was whether I as a Catholic priest and Jesuit would continue to be accepted by my parents and relatives, the people of my village, and others I had known since my infant days. This situation fueled endless questions within my mind, and finally gave rise to sleepless nights, confusion and darkness, despair and anxiety, anger and self-pity, as well as fear and guilt. It was a real struggle. I lost my serenity, contentment, and balance, and this in turn affected my duties and bonds with others. I got vexed and angry over minor issues, I had disputes with staff members, and everything looked gloomy and hopeless.

Realizing that such a situation could not be left unattended, I discussed the issue with Fr. AMA Samy, who made great efforts to assist me. He insisted that terms used in religion such as *cross*, *enlightenment*, and so on were mere symbols that *point* to the 'beyond.' Our aim should be to attain not the symbol, but the very 'beyond' itself. We should not make the mistake of getting obsessed merely with symbols that point to the beyond. However all his words failed to sway me, perhaps due to my own lack of openness, and hence after pondering over the issue I decided to quit Bodhi Zendo. When I informed Fr. AMA Samy of my choice he assented in an attitude of candor and nobility, saying, "find your own way and be happy." His reaction touched me deeply, as I could guess how intense the sorrow was that he experienced at that moment.

In Search of Peace

So I left Bodhi Zendo in April 2007, and I was assigned as assistant to the novice master in the Jesuit novitiate at Dindigul. Being with young novices and teaching them about issues concerning the Bible, saints, catechism, the English language, hymns, as well as saying daily mass and teaching yoga, meditation, and so on, made my life lively and motivating. The key issue was that here there was no conflict or contradiction. I was doing things any Christian would do, and so I felt relaxed and unfettered. Besides, I was happy to be active and in the company of youth. This went on for three years.

Fortunately for me however even though I had quit Bodhi Zendo, I still practiced Zazen almost daily for at least 20 minutes, and on visiting Kodaikanal for my annual retreats I met Fr. AMA Samy, and spent time

with him. I thus continued being in touch with him, since I considered him my spiritual guide.

Towards the close of my third year at Dindigul I realized deeply that I was missing my Zen, and as this was something I could not clearly pinpoint or figure out, I grew baffled and mystified. In the meantime, in 2010, I did my Tertianship (the final period of Jesuit training) in Goa, and for me that proved an excellent time for self-reflection, for getting a grasp of myself, my views, my beliefs and so on. The call to return to Zen grew strong within me, but my confusion was such that I was unable to arrive at a decision.

In the Buddhist Land of Myanmar

In the meantime I went to Myanmar as a missionary in 2011. The country was just opening itself to the world after its 50 long years of military rule, and there I took care of young candidates in the Jesuit Pre-novitiate, by conducting classes for them, teaching at the English School, preaching retreats to Catholic nuns, and so on, and aside these everyday responsibilities, I also studied the local language. Each day abounded with things to be done.

While engaged in performing my daily duties, I was struck by the awesome Buddhist setting in the nation. Since Theravada Buddhism is the national religion of Myanmar, one observes hundreds of Buddhist monks & nuns, temples and monasteries, in every nook and corner. I was often charmed by the sight of the robed monks, young and old, with their shaved heads, bare feet, serene faces, eyes cast down, and holding begging bowls, walking in long lines in complete silence. The mere sight of it brings peace and calm, both to one's heart as well as to the entire encircling milieu. I was moved by the impact of Buddhism on the culture and life of the people, and I also had chances of visiting a couple of monasteries and interacting with a few monks.

The Integration

I would say, the Buddhist environment in Myanmar strengthened my desire for Zen. It was there I realized that both Zen and Christianity were part of myself, and that I could not be separated from either of them. This realization brought me a profound feeling of peace, a deep acceptance of myself, and intense joy. Now I was at peace with myself, with Zen, and with Christianity, with no more conflicts or contradictions. Now when I practice Zen I am fully and peacefully in Zen, and when I say Mass I am fully and peacefully in it as well, with no more confusion. How this integration occurred is unknown to me, for it is something I cannot talk about. I can only say it transpired by the Grace of God. It was a long struggle but the struggle had ended and now I found myself at peace, not just with Zen and Christianity but with Hinduism, Islam, and Jainism as well. Now no religion

or spiritual tradition constitutes a problem for me, since I feel myself open to them all and relaxed with them all, and that I am sure, can only come about through the Grace of God.

Luckily for me, at that very time Fr. AMA Samy happened to drop in at Myanmar on his way to Australia, and I was able to talk to him about my state of mind with regard to Zen. When he responded saying, "I will be happy if you could come back to Bodhi Zendo," I was deeply grateful for those words.

I was able to remain in Myanmar only for two years, since I had developed some health problems. On returning to India in 2013 I met the Provincial and informed him of my desire to return to Zen, but since another need had arisen, I was assigned to a retreat house in the city of Kanyakumari. Since the place lay close to my hometown I was happy to be there, yet the desire to delve deeper into Zen increased within me. So, when the Provincial arrived in Kanyakumari for a visit I once again expressed my desire to go deeper into Zen, and after listening to me he affirmed that he would do the needful. Hence, in April 2014, I was happy to find my name on the transfer list, assigned to Bodhi Zendo.

Back to Zen

I was back at Bodhi Zendo after a lapse of 7 years, and to me it felt like a homecoming. I was happy to be back after so many ups and downs, and yet, I was plagued by feelings of shame, guilt, and pettiness for having left the place and Fr. AMA Samy seven years earlier, thereby shattering his dreams and hopes. It was indeed a painful feeling, yet I was fortified by the great mood of acceptance I received on entering Zen. In his teishos, Fr. AMA Samy often said, "It is all-right; it is okey; it is true that at times we are wrong, imperfect, weak and stupid; still in a deeper sense, it is all right; it is okey." Oh, what a relief! This deeper sense enabled me to accept myself as I am, with all my snags and virtues. This attitude aided me in accepting the ups and downs of my life just as they are, and in moving forward with faith and love. When I returned to Bodhi Zendo, Fr AMA Samy's comment was, "the prodigal son has returned."

I am grateful to Fr. AMA Samy for accepting me as I am, and I am grateful also to my Jesuit superiors for understanding me as I am and allowing me to be myself.

In 2014, I once again commenced my Zen practice and Koan training under Fr AMA Samy, and this time I could feel the depth, clarity, and conviction in me. It went on steadily, my daily life was the field of my Zen practice, and I could feel the peace and freedom, amidst the ups and downs of my day-to-day life.

In February 2018 Fr AMA Samy appointed me Associate Zen Master in the Bodhi Sangha, and in August 2019 he made me an Independent Zen Master, for both of which I am immensely thankful. I now live at Bodhi Zendo, and teach Zen along with him. Zen has now become my way.

Someone in Bodhi Zendo asked me, "So Cyril, from now on, will you be in Bodhi Zendo for the rest of your life?" My answer was, "Who knows?"

In the 'Song of Zazen,' Hakuin Zenji declares, "Entering the form of no-form, your going and coming is nowhere else."

In that case, where did I go? and where did I come back?

5

Moving beyond the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556)

Bernard Sénécal, S.J.

My First Encounter with the Spiritual Exercises

My first encounter with the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius of Loyola occurred during a wedding party in Bayonne, the main city of the French Basque country. The encounter took place between two dances and some cups of champagne. I had a chat with a lady with whom I had danced, and as we sat down, for no conceivable reason she spoke of a thirty-day retreat according to the *Spiritual Exercises* that she had earlier made in Villa Manrèse under the guidance of Fr. Jean Laplace, in a Jesuit retreat house in a Parisian suburb. I was surprised to hear that such an experience was possible. The woman went to the extent of suggesting I take time to undergo such an experience myself in the future, and my surprise grew even more on learning that she believed that I too could do such a retreat.

Yet I realized beyond doubt that I was deeply attracted by such a possibility, despite my never having heard of it earlier. It was around the year 1976, and I was a third year medical student of age 23, in the city of Bordeaux in France. I worked in the autopsy room of a hospital as an attendant, in order to earn the finances needed for my studies. The ceaseless encounter with death that was implied by that part-time job left me severely tormented by questions relating to the ultimate meaning of life, and besides, my work in the obstetrics and geriatrics departments as a non-residential medical student, kept forcing me face to face with birth, suffering, and old age, all of which served to aggravate my torments.

Professor Lewis Lancaster of UCLA, a famous specialist in Korean Buddhism, declared that life sends us three messengers, namely old age, disease, and death (老病死), and that we will not know what life is all about until we encounter them. Needless to say though his words echoed Siddhartha Gautama's four encounters as a young crown-prince, with old age, disease, and death, and finally with a sage (四門遊觀). Before proceeding I wish to admit that I was a student of Jesuit institutions for a period of eight years, in the city of Montréal of the Province of Québec in Canada. From 1964 to 1967 I pursued High School studies at the Collège Sainte Marie, an experience that eventually terminated in my being 'kicked out,' and from

1967 to 1973 I studied at a Jesuit institution, namely the Collège Jean de Brébeuf, where I was accepted on condition I became a boarding student. Among my relatives were two Jesuit uncles, one each on my father and mother's side, and during my years in Jesuit institutions, although I never explicitly heard of Ignatian spirituality, yet the personality of certain Jesuits there who taught or provided spiritual direction, had quite an impact on me.

My First Ignatian Retreat (Easter 1979)

I experienced my first Ignatian retreat during Easter of 1979 in Châtelard, a Jesuit retreat house located in Francheville, a suburb of the French city of Lyon. At that time I was 25 years old. For a number of reasons I felt as though I was in a deep state of existential crisis, for I just did not know what to do with my life anymore. Although I somewhat enjoyed being a medical student and studying medicine, yet deep down at the bottom of my heart I felt neither at peace nor happy. As I stated earlier, my medical studies left all my philosophical, metaphysical, and theological queries related to ultimate meaning totally unanswered, and I had no idea as to whether I should pursue a medical career as a general practitioner or as a specialist.

My entire family, and particularly my older brother, who was and still is a reputed rheumatologist, kept insisting I shift from my medical school in Bordeaux, France, to one in Montréal, Canada, and this older brother even went to the extent of arriving in Bordeaux and spending several days, briefing me on reasons why I ought to go back to Québec. To make things worse, I had fallen in love with the woman who had introduced me to Ignatian spirituality, only to discover that she was a woman forbidden to me, owing to the fact that she was consecrated to God.

This first Ignatian retreat was a ten-day program, including the days of arrival and departure. The retreat involved a French Jesuit working as a missionary in Chad, who, believe it or not, had never yet given a vocation discernment retreat, but he was supervised by the novice master of the French Jesuit Province.

Nothing much happened during the first five days in terms of decision making, at least at a superficial level of conscience, but from the sixth to the eighth day everything changed, and in depth. On the sixth day it suddenly became very clear in my mind that God wanted me to choose religious life, and I was very happy. On the seventh day it again became very clear in my soul that God wanted me to become a Jesuit, and that made me even happier.

On the eighth day, it suddenly became clear beyond doubt that God wanted me to give up everything to enter the Jesuit order right away, that is, "on the spot." Although this deep spiritual insight plunged me into a state of unspeakable peace and joy, yet I was utterly shocked and confused, since

not finishing my medical studies was something I had not expected at all.

Almost everybody thought I had lost my faculties, and that I was committing a blunder I would sooner or later bitterly regret. Certain family members called me a 'liar' and 'traitor,' and refused to recognize the validity of my decision until I was ordained a priest in 1992, that is, 14 years later. My spiritual director in Bordeaux, a diocesan priest, claimed I had been manipulated and brainwashed by the Jesuits in Lyon, and insisted that I would fare much better in a contemplative mode of life, for instance as a Benedictine or a Carmelite.

Nevertheless however, next Spring will be the 42nd anniversary of that life-changing decision of mine. I can clearly affirm that so far, not only have I never regretted having taken that decision, but it was also without doubt the best judgment I had ever made. Sacrificing my medical studies transformed completely the entire course of my life, opening up possibilities I could never have imagined otherwise.

Life in the Society of Jesus: France and Korea (1979-1990)

In the following season of Autumn the late Fr. Jean Dravet accepted me as a novice, and welcomed me into the Jesuit novitiate of the French Province, located in Lyon. This however was after his having insisted that I submit no less than seven letters of recommendation, so as to be absolutely certain that accepting me without insisting that I first finish my medical studies, was not a mistake.

In 1985 I was missioned to Korea, where after three years study of the Korean language I began studies on Shamanism, Confucianism, Buddhism, and Taoism. On observing my interest in the religious traditions of Asia, a few qualified people, including Fr. Joseph Chöng, who at the time happened to be Provincial Superior of Korea, suggested I specialize in the study of Korean Buddhism.

A First Turning Point: Vipassanā under Satya Narayan Goenka (1990)

A late Australian Jesuit named Antony Ruhan strongly urged me to go to India, not only to visit the four main Buddhist holy places, but also to practice Vipassanā under the guidance of Satya Narayan Goenka (1924-2013). Accordingly, I did so in 1990, on my way back to Paris to study theology, but without receiving Fr. Chöng's permission. Fr. Ruhan believed an experience such as that would radically influence if not alter, the significance of my theological studies back in France.

Even though it lasted just 10 full days, each involving 11 hours of daily meditation, the retreat with Goenka in Igatpuri, located over 160 kilometers north of Mumbai, was an extremely scouring experience. The fact that prior to my departure there I had been softened by 5 years of life in Korea, and that I was vigilant in setting aside everything Christian during the retreat, may be a help in realizing how decisive that experience was for me.

To put it briefly, on concluding the retreat I had the conviction of having experienced something entirely new, an extraordinarily deep spiritual realm of reality that did not need Christ, God, the Holy Trinity, and all other concepts that are part and parcel of Christian spiritualities. Christ seemed to have disappeared from the horizon of my life, at least at a conscious level, and it was going to take very many years before I started to reconnect with Him in a significant way.

As I uncovered that realm of reality, namely the Buddha Dharma, which was born not in the Near East but in North Eastern India some 5 centuries before Christianity, I felt deep within myself that I had not chosen to become a Jesuit in full knowledge of the facts. I realized of course that it could hardly have been otherwise, since whenever we choose something or someone, like a spouse, no one can have a full knowledge of all the choices available. Nevertheless though that was the way I deeply felt, and I was slated to deal with that intense feeling for a very long time.

Back to Paris for Theology (1990-1995)

Once back in Paris, I found the theology taught there both tasteless and toothless, or in other words too Western and too narrowly Roman Catholic. After listening carefully to what I had to say, the late Fr. Édouard Pousset SJ, my spiritual director, made an accurate diagnosis of my soul saying, "You are going through a Christological crisis." As a cure, he strongly recommended I start reading the Gospel of St. Mark from beginning to end along with him and a small group of people, and so I did as he suggested.

I also took the decision to continue practicing Vipassanā, and to register at the Department of Far East Studies of a reputed Parisian university named Denis-Diderot. The rector of the Centre Sèvres's community where I lived in downtown Paris was considerably annoyed when he heard about those decisions of mine, since they were taken without his permission. Yet Fr. Jacques Orgebin, the French Provincial Superior, intervened in my favor.

In Denis-Diderot University I obtained a Licentiate and Master's degree in Korean studies, and completed the course work for a doctoral degree in Korean Buddhism. While in Centre Sèvres I wrote a Master's thesis in theology entitled, "Jésus le Christ à la rencontre de Gautama le Bouddha (Jesus Christ Encountering Gautama the Buddha)" which became a book

in 1998, and after having spent five years in Paris from 1990 to 1995, I returned to Korea.

A Second Turning Point: The Arrupe Month (1992)

Needless to say like other novices or scholastics, I made a series of Ignatian retreats during my early Jesuit life. These included two retreats guided by Fr. Adolfo Nicolás in Seoul in 1986 and 1989, and a couple according to the 19th annotation. I also gave numerous Ignatian retreats in North America, Europe, and Asia, but none could in any way match the impact the discernment retreat of 1979 had upon my life.

There arose a turning point in my relationship to the *Spiritual Exercises*, and it occurred during an Ignatian retreat done precisely at Loyola in the Spanish side of the Basque country, during an Arrupe Month. That is to say, a few months prior to my ordination to the priesthood in 1992. To put it in a nutshell, right at the start of the retreat I informed the director, a charismatic Belgian Jesuit, that I had a number of queries concerning the significance of Christ among the world religions, and also that I was a regular practitioner of Vipassanā. Chances are that what followed next was a consequence of what I had in all frankness shared with him, but I noticed that the homilies of that Belgian Jesuit, who passed away a long time ago, promptly underwent a change. They essentially consisted in his thundering day after day that the only Savior was Christ, and that anything or anyone else was an idol to be cast down from its pedestal.

During that retreat, instead of feeling listened to I felt suspected, as though I was a Jesuit with odd and unorthodox ideas. That experience served as a decisive watershed in my Jesuit life, and since then I have never done the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola, not even during my thirty-days retreat conducted during my tertianship.

I have no wish to discourage people from discovering the *Spiritual Exercises*, if they really wish to do so. On the contrary, I respect and encourage those who keep thriving in them. However, if I have to give them because I feel earnestly called upon to do so, I shall do it, albeit somewhat reluctantly. Some say I was unlucky, because I ran into an Arrupe Month spiritual director who was “not very helpful.” That may be so, but probably only in part.

A Few Points of Critical Reflection on the Content of the *Spiritual Exercises*

I once heard Fr. Adolfo Nicolás remark that St. Ignatius did not expect Jesuits to do the *Spiritual Exercises* more than once, twice, or at the most thrice during their lifetime. In other words, the *Spiritual Exercises* are not

at all intended to be repeated. Fr. Nicolàs added that the *Spiritual Exercises* are quite exciting the first time one does them, because one is unaware of what will come next. However this sense of novelty starts to wear off, as soon as one begins to go through them a second time. Accordingly, an old French Jesuit who had specialized in giving thirty-day retreats once told me that in reality, one can only do the *Spiritual Exercises* once, and not twice. Nevertheless in his writings, Teilhard De Chardin (1881-1955) complained that he was required to do them year after year. With his understanding of the cosmos and its evolution, both as a paleontologist and theologian, Teilhard could hardly have felt at ease with Ignatius's rather anthropomorphic description of the Incarnation.

I was once informed by the late Fr. René Marlé SJ who was in charge of the second cycle of formation in Centre Sèvres in the nineties, that the Society of Jesus in France remained far too influenced by the context of the counter-reformation, within which the Society of Jesus was born. That is to say, in response to Luther's (1483-1546) Reformation. I am still not sure whether I fully grasped what he meant by that comment, though I am sure he made it.

Be that as it may, the aforesaid Fr. Pousset believed the *Spiritual Exercises* had been designed to help people make a choice in life in the context of the Roman Catholic Church, as it was in the days of Ignatius. Following on Pousset's comment, I would say I remain totally puzzled by the conception of mission, that motivated the Jesuits who went to Nouvelle France to convert the natives. In their minds, it was crystal clear that in order to be saved those natives had to be baptized, and they had to become not just Roman Catholics, but also loyal subjects of Louis the 14th (1638-1715), the sovereign of the Kingdom of France. To be sure, Jean de Brébeuf and his companions had a worldview that was highly Roman-Catholic-centered, religious, and political. Much the same I could say of St. Francis Xavier's understanding of his mission towards Asia, not only as a Jesuit but also as an ambassador of the king of Portugal.

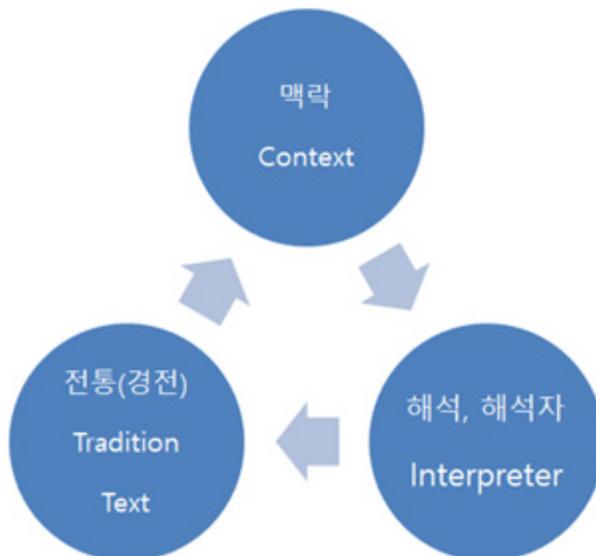
Judging by the surprisingly poor content of the points of meditation of Ignatius, it is obvious he did not know much about the Bible. The fact that in reaction to the *sola scriptura* principle of the Lutherans the Roman Catholic Church forbade its followers to read the Bible, may provide Ignatius with a good excuse. It is also obvious that the *Spiritual Exercises* of Ignatius of Loyola do not appear to reveal much interest in ecumenism. One may add that much of the content of the *Spiritual Exercises* can be found elsewhere, not only in Christian but also Biblical and Greco-Roman traditions. The latter for instance describe in minute detail *ataraxia*, a state of mind that resembles in many ways what we call 'indifference.' The foundation of the discernment of spirits can be seen in both Old and New Testaments, and the Fathers of the Desert described it and put it into practice as early as the first century of the Christian era. While some have keenly analyzed

the *Spiritual Exercises* to highlight their novelty in the history of Christian spirituality, I personally have ceased to have much interest anymore in that kind of research.

The Hermeneutical Circle

There are hundreds if not thousands of spiritualities in the history of Christianity. Some old ones have disappeared or are disappearing, and new ones keep appearing. Ignatian Spirituality inspires not only the Jesuit order, but numerous other congregations and lay people as well, worldwide. It is undeniably one of the best known spiritualities of the Roman Catholic Church, and the *Spiritual Exercises* can be viewed as its foundation. However, can one claim that Ignatian Spirituality, the ultimate goal of which may perhaps be defined as “finding God in all things,” is reducible to the *Spiritual Exercises*? That is to say, can we affirm that “finding God in all things” is possible only in the *Spiritual Exercises*?

I once heard Fr. Peter Hans Kolvenbach (1928-2016) assert in 1985, that no religious order has ever inherited from the Holy Spirit the promise of eternal life, that is, of enduring until the end of the world. In his wisdom he knew too well that religious orders may also disappear from history just as they appeared in it, and when he said so he did not regard the Jesuit order as an exception, even though as Superior General he was its head. In order not just to survive but also remain relevant, each religious tradition, spirituality, or spiritual pedagogy must be regularly reinterpreted, according to the historical context in which it finds itself.



Failure to do so will undoubtedly lead to a hardening of attitudes, which would finally end in fundamentalism. The type of Judaism that Jesus of Nazareth found himself confronting in the temple and in the network of synagogues of his time, amounted in many respects to a fossilized tradition, which was significantly incompatible with the Holy Spirit that He embodied. Ultimately Jesus got out of that network because its leaders had decided to put Him to death, and He went on to found the New Israel.

For me and a few others, it is quite obvious that the worldview displayed by Ignatius in the *Spiritual Exercises* is wholly outdated. Fortunately a considerable number of praiseworthy efforts have been made worldwide to update the exercises. Yet for myself, notwithstanding the fact that I appreciate the value of such efforts since I myself have actively participated in them for at least a decade, I do not believe any more that they are indispensable.

Regrettably though some Jesuits give me a strong impression of being wholly fixated on them. Despite the fact that they too at times seem to be striving to seek a way out, they find that they cannot go beyond them. This could possibly be due to their fear of betraying Saint Ignatius of Loyola and his vision of the Church...? Recently I was called upon to pose the following question to one of those Jesuits: "Why can't you accept the possibility of a spiritual or philosophical experience that can stand fully by itself, like the Buddhist one, without ultimately resorting to the mediation of Jesus Christ?"

A Spirituality Based on Biblical Kōans

These days I guide people on a course of Biblical Kōans. This is because I have been training in the practice of Kōans with a Korean Buddhist association called the Sōndohoe 禪道會 for over 20 years, and in 2007 the association appointed me one of its meditation masters. Through the process of solving Kōans, I realized that a course of Biblical Kōans could be made to help Christians who are in touch with Buddhism.

Like any theology or spirituality this course on Christian Kōans is strongly grounded in the Bible. It is based on a spirituality of enlightenment that emphasizes Christology as much as Pneumatology, and which sees in Christ the paradigm of awakening. It is radically ecumenical and interreligious. It rests on a theology of religions based on a monistic pluralism, which renders it capable of recognizing the existence of a variety of ways to salvation, but without requiring that one renounce the absolute nature of one's own system of beliefs. Of all the Kōans in the course the most important is: "And you, who do you say that I am?" People who know me well and who also know the *Spiritual Exercises*, tell me that I remain deeply structured by them. Be that as it may, to me, to be faithful to Ignatius of Loyola and his *Spiritual Exercises* today, means to have the capability of going beyond them.

6

Insights from *Zen: The Authentic Gate* (2015) by Zen Master Koun Yamada

Jerry Cusumano, S.J.



Zen Master Koun Yamada

Introduction

Koun Yamada was the second abbot of Sanbo Kyodan (recently re-named Sanbo Zen) from 1970 to 1989. He followed in the line of Yasutani Haku'un who had blended Soto Zen with Rinzai training to form the Sanbo Kyodan on 8 January 1954. *Zen: The Authentic Gate* is Koun Yamada's own introduction to Zen practice. It is a translation of *Zen no Shomon* which first appeared in 1980.

My own acquaintance with Koun Yamada began in May of 1979 when he graciously accepted me for Zen training. His first Catholic priest disciple, Fr. Enomiya-Lassalle, SJ, saw to my early training until 1986 when

I began my work on koans with Koun Yamada, and continued until his death in 1989.

In this article I do not attempt a thorough review of his book. Rather I simply note several passages which struck me as typical of Koun Yamada's teaching, meaningful to me personally, and perhaps helpful to others. Each passage is quoted directly in bold print and italicized, and then followed by my own comments in non-bold print. I have given a title to each quote/comment:

1. Awakening
2. Clarification
3. Mind/Emptiness
4. Awakening to Emptiness
5. Pure Practice
6. One World
7. The Delusion of Nonduality
8. Dualistic Opposition
9. Zen Faith
10. Christians Practicing Zazen

1. Awakening

From the standpoint of the single life of my body, there is no left or right, no head or torso, no hair or blood. They all live my one life, and from the aspect of life my body is one. But life itself has no form, color, or weight. It is completely empty. Furthermore, it is always completely one with my body. Life is emptiness; life (body) is form. Zen awakening is to realize that that same relationship applies to the entire universe. (p. 14)

Koun Yamada was very gifted in being able to explain basic aspects of Zen using simple examples that were easy to understand. This talent arose from his background of in-depth reading, especially in philosophy. His ability to render difficult to understand concepts into easily understood metaphors endeared him, especially to his foreign students. Although he was not fluent in English, his examples and metaphors more than made up for that lack of linguistic ability. Even though he was quite learned, his talks rarely came across as pretentious.

2. Clarification

Buddhism does nothing other than clarify who we are. As long as there is a self in opposition to an outside world, we cannot meet the True Self. When body and mind of both self and other fall away, then for the first time we see the true nature of self and other. (p. 24)

One of the attractions many found in Koun Yamada's teaching was this idea of clarifying. By that he meant a rigorous pursuit of introspection, but not of the type many people had been taught, namely, judgments about good and bad in oneself. While this non-judgmental approach had led to many misunderstandings in the West at that time (the age of the sexual revolution, values clarification, etc.) his method of presenting it avoided such pitfalls.

3. Mind/Emptiness

Mind is simply a name; the reality is unattainable, beyond our grasp. Mind is unfathomable and immeasurable, defying human wisdom. It is simultaneously the complete perfection of unlimited capabilities, virtue, and all the properties of life, and yet has no form or substance. This is called emptiness. In other words, the content of that which sees and hears is empty and cannot be grasped. Mind is emptiness. While possessing infinite capabilities, it is zero. (p. 31)

Zen masters of all schools frequently speak of emptiness. Here Koun Yamada equates mind with emptiness. This approach most certainly grew out of his own personal awakening experience of realizing, in his words, that mind was mountain, river, moon, sun, etc., etc. In other words mind does not posit a personal "I." Koun Yamada's successor, his son, Ryouen Yamada, has continued this line, often stating that the well-known dictum attributed to Descartes, "I think therefore I am," is a mistake. The mind that is thinking is empty and cannot generate an "I."

4. Awakening to Emptiness

When awakening, we awaken to a reality that Yasutani Roshi referred to as "original nature." The content of this reality is empty, yet at the same time filled to perfection with mysterious and wondrous capabilities – in a word we awaken to emptiness. Emptiness is the stage on which the myriad phenomena continually appear and disappear, without a moment's deviation, at the mercy of the law of causation. (p. 35)

Here Koun Yamada further explains the emptiness to which the practitioner awakens. The key word is "stage," once again an easily understood metaphor which is easy to grasp conceptually if not experientially. His son and successor, Ryouen Yamada often used his favorite movie, "The Titanic," to enrich even further the metaphor of the "stage." The movie runs the gamut of human experience, and we ourselves are caught up emotionally in it. And yet, all of this is simply taking place on a blank screen. Phenomena truly arise and disappear from the emptiness of the screen which is capable of producing these effects, and yet is empty in itself.

5. Pure Practice

In Zen with the expectation of enlightenment, the practitioner still has thoughts of awakening, asking questions such as: "When will I get enlightened?" or "Why is it taking so long?" People sitting in this way can never become truly one with their koan practice or their practice of just sitting. One of the basic prerequisites for Zen experience is for the practice to become single-mindedly pure. Whether the practice is with koans or just sitting, as long as attention is divided between the koan and concerns about the outcome, the practice will never be truly pure. (p. 43)

Koun Yamada and his successors often distinguished between what they called a "first experience" and an "enlightenment."

To explain this difference Koun Yamada himself used the image of a wall. With the first experience the practitioner makes a breakthrough which can be compared to drilling a small hole in a wall. Through that hole he/she sees that there is indeed something on the other side. With continued practice the hole becomes bigger and bigger until it suddenly shatters completely, and one realizes there was no wall there from the beginning. In the above quote Koun Yamada is pointing out a major obstacle to coming to that point, namely, "expectation Zen." In all other facets of life striving for a goal necessarily involves, as part of the motivation to reach it, the expectation of achieving the goal. However, that is not the case in Zen practice. On the contrary, expectation becomes one of the greatest obstacles.

6. One World

So after breaking through to the world of enlightenment, we must return to the ordinary world—the world of common sense. Having attained enlightenment, we have to wipe away every trace of it and understand that the line we thought existed between ordinary world and the world of enlightenment never actually existed. From the very beginning what we thought to be two worlds was intrinsically one. (p. 96)

Koun Yamada did not write this book specifically for Christians practicing zazen, but I wonder if perhaps this particular passage was written with that audience in mind. Supernatural/natural, heaven/earth, and other expressions which clearly differentiate "two worlds" make it difficult for Christians as well as non-Christians to feel comfortable in one world, regardless of their level of attainment in zazen. Pop psychology often speaks of the necessity of leaving one's "comfort zone." The practice of zazen leads one out of that comfort zone of two worlds.

7. The Delusion of Nonduality

When you see into your own nature, you encounter an unexpected world of equality in which self and other are eliminated, and you find peace in knowing that everything has always been all right. Resting in the world of nonduality, you can fall into self-deception, content with your own individual peace and unconcerned about the suffering of others. This is the delusion of seeing only a single aspect of nonduality, where there are “no sentient beings to save.” (p. 129)

Critics of zazen and practitioners themselves, even those who have not progressed far, often have to struggle with this problem. “Individual peace” can easily become an end in itself, since steady practice of zazen can bring a deep inner peace that the practitioner continually (compulsively?) seeks. The American psychologist, William Glasser, in his book *Positive Addiction* (1976), describes this process very well and uses meditation as one example. Analogous to harmful addictions, positive addictions also produce a high which serves as motivation for continuing the addictive behavior. Of course, a positive addiction does not lead to harmful effects as such. However, in the case of zazen it may lead to a form of delusion of nonduality. A recent example may be the use of zazen and other forms of meditation in the workplace to improve productivity and mental health in the workplace. Large corporations such as Google and Amazon provide meditation rooms for their employees, and many much smaller companies are following their example. However, in a recent survey of such efforts, behavioral scientists discovered an unexpected result, namely, a lessening of motivation on the part of meditating employees (*Don't Meditate at Work*. D. Vohs & A Hafenbrack, 17 June 2018, New York Times). Were he alive today Koun Yamada might well understand this phenomenon as an example of the delusion of nonduality.

8. Dualistic Opposition

The concept of dualistic opposition is the most fundamental of our delusions and the source of all our troubles. Usually we think of ourselves and others as two completely different things; our self-interest and the interests of others are intrinsically at odds. If this feeling of opposition is strong enough, we will think that if we act for the benefit of others we will lose something, and that in order to gain something for ourselves, others must make sacrifices. This is delusion. (p. 157)

The so-called Golden Rule (do unto others as you would have them do unto you) seems to be an almost universal dictum in all religions and moral philosophies. However, from the standpoint of Zen even the Golden Rule is based on a delusion, the dualistic opposition between self and other. Here Koun Yamada makes clear the consequences of living with this

delusion. Koun Yamada often spoke about the need for “personalization” of the fruit of one’s practice. He saw this as a lifetime task. No aspect of Zen, more than overcoming this dualistic opposition, demands such a lifetime commitment. It cannot be accomplished in a single momentary experience; just as the Golden Rule needs to be practiced every day of our lives. Living according to the Golden Rule is the best one can do before having overcome the delusion of dualistic opposition.

9. Zen Faith

The first condition, great faith, means believing, without any doubt that you are intrinsically awake, that “all beings are intrinsically awake.” You also believe that seeing into your own nature means discovering something that you have already been using from morning to night without even realizing it. Because seeing into your own nature is you discovering yourself, you cannot fail to experience it. ... Lastly, great faith means that we believe in the teaching of our Zen teacher. (p. 169)

Zazen is often differentiated from religions by saying that zazen is “jiriki” (using one’s own strength) and religions are “tarik” (depending on others). That is to say that one does not have to believe in any “higher power” of any kind in zazen while religions inevitably include some one or some thing outside of oneself which provides help and strength. However, as is evident in this quote zazen does include an element of faith, although it is quite different from the faith of religions. Practically speaking, especially for the beginner but not limited to beginners, faith in the Zen teacher is very important. He has had the experience for which the practitioner strives, and he is the one who encourages you to believe you cannot fail to also have that experience.

10. Christians Practicing Zazen

Devout Christians are drawn to Zen meditation, hoping that seeing into their own nature, or awakening, will somehow help them to directly experience God. Christians who come for instruction in meditation often ask me whether they can practice zazen while retaining their faith as Christians. Realizing that this is an urgent question for them, I answer, “Don’t worry. It’s fine to practice zazen so long as you have a heart and mind.” I explain that zazen is not religious in the same sense that Christianity is. I imagine most Christians who show up at our San’un Zendo in Kamakura go through a lot of private agony when harmonizing their faith with the practice of Zen. This is a truly noble thing to do. A priest, nun, or pastor who practices Zen meditation can only become a better priest, nun, or pastor. Christians, almost without exception, tell me that they feel that the quality of their prayer deepens after beginning to practice zazen. This is so regardless of whether they have realized their own nature or not. This is nothing unusual, I would say that it is quite natural. (p. 174)

Soon after Koun Yamada married, the Jesuits started a junior/senior high school for boys, and the sisters of St. Paul started one for girls. Both schools were in Kamakura where Koun Yamada lived. He sent his three children, one girl and two boys, to these schools. It was a period right after World War II when many foreign missionaries had come to Japan and opened schools. He wanted his children to have an open education and as much contact with foreign teachers as possible. It was undoubtedly during this period that he came to know Christianity and came to value it very much. A second stimulus was when he became the Zen Master of Fr. Enomiya-Lassalle and several other priests and sisters who followed that German pioneer. From the side of such Christian practitioners they could experience through his teaching that zazen was no threat to their Christian faith. On the contrary it could become a means of deepening it. He speaks of Christians who began zazen with the hope of directly experiencing God. I personally know several sisters about whom he must be speaking in this quote. He clearly understood their aspirations and also the "private agony" which they went through in their journey. While it is true that many so-called "fallen away" Catholics have turned to Zen after leaving the Church, I have yet to meet a Catholic who began to practice Zen and then gave up their Christian faith.

Conclusion

Unfortunately, Koun Yamada is no longer alive to be able to check this article and say if my comments have been on target or not, or to say whether the quotes I have chosen are actually representative of his teaching. Since my own direct contact with him was limited, I also cannot assert either position. However, I am confident that my comments do not in any way contradict his teaching. If they have served to elucidate it in some way for the reader, I am more than satisfied for myself and pleased on his behalf.

My Journey in Vipassana and the Spiritual Exercises

Dunstan Vinny Joseph, S.J.

My first Vipassana retreat was undertaken in the year 1985 in Igatpuri, a town and hill station located in the district of Nashik in Maharashtra, 120 kilometers away from the city of Bombay (now Mumbai) in India, under the famous Vipassana master Satya Narayan Goenka. From then onwards I was somehow attracted to Buddhist teachings, but my active life after that with regard to my own formation and later my priestly ministry, did not provide me with the right opportunities to delve deeper into them. Nevertheless, I did receive a few chances to go to the Zen meditation Center in Perumalmalai and practice 'Zazen,' a form of intensive meditation that is usually practiced within a Zen monastery.

On my arrival in Myanmar in the year 2013, I once again experienced a deep longing to renew my interest in Buddhism. Accordingly I read suitable books, and simultaneously searched around for a chance to practice the Vipassana mediation. In 2016 I received an opportunity to reside for a period of ten days at one of the International Meditation Centers in Yangon, and this brought depth to my life and enabled me to live in the present. It evoked within me an awareness of the fact that the joy of being is the joy of living in consciousness.

From then on, I continued as usual with my busy and hectic ministry, and yet every now and then I sensed within me a yearning to slow down and take a break, to seek some significance and orientation in my existence. The seven months I received as a sabbatical were indeed a great gift and grace, yet my plans of spending 6 months at the Zen Meditation Center in Perumalmalai did not materialize, and hence I was at a loss as to what I should do next. I accordingly decided on choosing a sort of a free sabbatical, namely to do anything God wanted of me. I was invited to preach retreats, including a month's retreat, but the deeper I delved into the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, the closer I felt drawn to the teachings of the Lord Buddha and the practice of Vipassana.

Hence, I returned with the discernment that our Lord was calling me back to Myanmar, to lead people to God through the Ignatian Spiritual Exercises, as well as to lead them to the joy of living in consciousness through Vipassana. For a few months everything proceeded well with my

total immersion in the spiritual ministry, but God had his own plans for my life. The need of the mission overtakes all personal need, and so I was asked to get involved in the education ministry.

The months of October and November are holidays in SAG [St. Aloysius Gonzaga Institute of Higher Studies, Taunggyi, Myanmar], and hence I took advantage of this opening, to register for the Vipassana retreat that was conducted at the Panditrama Forest Meditation Center in Bago. I was looking forward to it, with a profound hope that this spiritual Vipassana retreat would surely lead me to a life of consciousness. This in turn would lead to mindful living and to experiencing the power of the now, and it finally culminates in the peace and happiness that all long for.

My Experience

The Panditrama Forest Meditation Center provided me with a setting wherein I was able to take a break from my normal day-to-day routine, and devote myself fully to contemplative silence and mindfulness of the mind-body process, in their true nature. During meditation, the noting mind or observing mind chooses the object of meditation, with abdominal movement raising and falling as the primary, and pain and other sensations of the body and emotions as the secondary. In the course of this journey, I devoted 14 hours a day to seated and walking meditation, besides practicing in silence, listening to talks, and one-to-one consultations with a Buddhist monk on matters concerning the Vipassana Practice. The remaining time was set apart for meals, rest [there was hardly any time for rest], and for taking care of personal needs, all done in a mood of mindful attention to each moment.

Until about 2:00 AM of the second day the meditation was utter boredom, characterized by stiffness and pain throughout the body, drowsiness, and a total inability to concentrate. The excruciating pain in my body and worry in my mind led to my questioning the integrity of having chosen to do this meditation at all. The question that lingered in my mind was, should I give up or give in? My mind was constantly presenting all manner of reasons for me to give up, and yet, I gradually tried to stop the activity of my mind and sought to focus on the present moment. The present moment was full of pain, and yet I focused on it.

The pain was intense. I felt it increasing and decreasing, moving with different sensations. Slowly however when I was able to focus on the pain at one point near my ankle it began to feel numb, but I just continued sitting in the same posture without moving, accepting the pain. I felt as though something was happening within me. The intense pressure of the suffering forced my consciousness to withdraw identification with my suffering self. I became able disassociate myself from the pain, and observe the pain. I started observing the pain, and though the pain did not decrease, yet I was

able to simply accept it and smile at it. Watching the pain profoundly and focusing on its movements, put a stop to my mental activity and worry. Now there was both the observer and the pain in the body. One was undergoing excruciating pain, and the other was watching. This conflict between the observer and pain persists in almost all meditations. Sometimes the pain won and so I altered my posture, but at other times I, the watcher, won, and as the pain now was no longer able to cause me worry, I was able to smile. It led me to the realization of the impermanence and fleeting nature of the form that is my body, and of the realization of the false concept of the "I". [Was this my realization or my knowledge? I am not sure!] The outcome was a sense of lightness of the body, with a deep sense of peace and joy.

Other important factors that assisted me into this realization were the silence, the time table, the living room having just a bed, a bathroom with no mirror, and the fact of living in the forest with nature. Arising was at 3:00 AM, sitting for meditation was at 3.30 AM, breakfast was at 5:00 AM, and lunch was at 10.30 AM, and after that there was no food except for a cup of juice at 5:00 PM. In the beginning it all appeared rather crazy and difficult to follow, and sometimes I awoke at midnight feeling hungry and unable to enjoy a good sleep. All this made me tired and so I felt drowsy while sitting for meditation, and this evoked a great urge within me to give up. As days progressed however I felt a lightness in my body. I noticed that the stiffness in my shoulders had vanished, and while walking and performing the walking meditation, I felt very light. I felt everything could be done without any effort, once harmony was established between body, mind, and spirit. Living in the present movement with mindfulness and also mindlessness, once again brought me to the realization as to "who I am," namely pure consciousness. As the days progressed, I began to feel a streaming or flowing sensation within my body. My mind had become less restless, it had a desire to calm down, and my inner voices had grown very quiet.

I felt as though I was faceless, owing to my not having looked into a mirror for ten days, since earlier I had been in the habit of looking into the mirror at least half a dozen times a day, such as when washing my face or combing my hair. Caring less about my face and body led me to the awareness of being 'sunnya' [empty]. The external forms I used to hold on to as being myself slowly began to lose their importance, and I came to realize that all suffering arose due to my identification and attachment to my externals, such as my body, my belongings, my friends, my good name, and so on. I realized this was what Christ referred to in his teaching in the Gospel of Luke chapter 17:33, when he said, "Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it." One can preserve one's life only by losing one's ego and the false self. I realized that this loss was truly a gain. "A person who has never seen a flower in his life may use

multiple words to describe it, but a person who has seen the flower, has no word for it.”

The Spiritual Exercises and Vipassana

The effect of giving a one-month retreat brought me to the awareness as to how Vipassana and the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius go hand in hand, with regard to the spiritual awakening of a person. My aim is not to compare, but merely highlight how the process of the flow of spiritual awakening occurs.

Ignatius was very much a man of the world with his ambitions and self-centred attitudes, seeking to serve his king to the best of his ability. He sought to impress the king and noble ladies of the court. However, after his injuries in battle and conversion he turned very much into a man of God, his ambitions and selfless attitude now being oriented solely towards serving his master Jesus Christ, and bringing humanity under his kingdom. He sought to impress God by imitating the lives of saints like Francis, Dominic, and others, and with this mindset he set out on his spiritual pilgrimage.

During his residence in the cave of Manresa undergoing acute mortification and self-denial, and while spending several days in prayer and meditation, God guided him on the path of spiritual awakening, via meditative and contemplative practices. Consequently the format of the Spiritual Exercises arose from his own encounters, with God Himself teaching him the sacred route to follow through his spiritual awakening. This has been an aid and asset for vast numbers of Jesuits and others, who sought to serve mankind by following Christ.

Vipassana on the other hand is a Buddhist meditation, and a means to attain self-realization, enlightenment, or Nibbana. Vipassana is a Dhamma term, and a combination of two words. The word ‘Vi’ refers to the three characteristics of mentality and physicality, namely, impermanence [anicca], suffering [dukkha] and no-self [anatta], while ‘passana’ means acquiring a realization through deep concentration of the right understanding of these three characteristics of mentality and physicality. By realizing these three characteristics one can exterminate all defilements [kilesas], such as lust, greed, desire, craving, hatred, ill will, jealousy, conceit, laziness, sorrow, worry, restlessness and guilt, and when these are destroyed, all manner of suffering ceases to exist.

The principle of the Vipassana meditation or mindfulness meditation, is to observe or be mindful of any predominant mental or physical phenomenon, as it really is. It lays out some practical instructions for bodily posture, breathing, and calming of the mind, but it is quite flexible in its approach. It’s central focus is on awareness in the present moment. Through this practice, one can awaken to the reality of one’s true self from

a deluded way of thinking and being, and effect a personal transformation in one's life.

A closer look at these two great spiritual traditions, one from the west and the other from the east, may take us beyond surface-level differences and reveal some deep similarities. In both, the invitation is to taste and see from our deepest center, as to 'who I am?' It is here that the person is open to the transcendent dimension, and experiences ultimate reality.

The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius are presented as an inward journey to be passed through in four distinctive segments, called "weeks."

The First Week opens with the Principle and Foundation, wherein the goal of human life is presented as, "to praise, revere, and serve God our Creator and Lord on this earth, and thereby attain eternal salvation." Following this are a series of meditations on sin, including its history, the danger of hell as the effect of a life of sin, and our personal sinfulness. The point here is to realize the extent of our inordinate affinity for worldly and sensuous joys, and the extent to which we have drifted away from the purpose and goal for which we have been created.

Sin is a state of alienation from self, others, and nature. This state of separation is the root of one's dissatisfaction with oneself, causing one to think, say, and indulge in acts causing pain to self and others, as well as destroying nature. Ignatius proposes the exercises in this opening week so as to enable the penitent to experience shame and intense sorrow, and shed tears. This part of the exercises calls for setting aside one's selfish and sinful ways, and it corresponds to the stage of purification.

The Second Week launches us into a new phase, the way of illumination. It invites us to fix our gaze on Christ, who opens us to the Way, illuminating our paths with his own words, actions, and life.

Ignatius begins the Second Week with a meditation on the Kingdom of Christ. The exercise consists in following a new way of life in a spirit of self-sacrifice and generosity of heart, under the leadership of Christ the King. For a soldier like Ignatius, it meant shifting loyalties from an earthly king to Christ, the Divine King. Ignatius presents Scripture passages with contemplative exercises, using a method he refers to as "application of the senses." Here, one is led into the heart of Jesus, one is enabled to see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and think as Jesus did, and one's heart beats along with the heart of Jesus. The chief grace we ask for in these exercises is to know Christ faithfully, love Him passionately, and follow Him closely. One who does this exercise could echo the words of St. Paul, who said, "it is no longer I who lives but Christ lives in me." This phase of emulating Christ and seeing oneself as the cherished child of God, corresponds to the illuminative way.

In the Third Week we join Jesus in his suffering and death on the cross, in the Fourth Week we experience the rising and awakening to the

newness of life with the Risen Christ, and the final meditation entitled the "contemplation to attain God's love," bridges all the other meditations.

When meditating on the words of Christ during his last supper, namely, "this is my body," our eyes open to all levels of interconnection with everything and everyone in the universe. One sees everyone and everything with new eyes of interdependence, both in His body and in the bread He shares with us. We are immersed in a wondrous communion with all by partaking in the Eucharistic meal. When he said, "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me; not my will, but yours be done," he surrendered his own will to that of his Father, and in this act of total surrender, the alienation is broken, one finds liberation, and one is filled with profound peace and equanimity. Jesus' prayer, "Father, forgive them for they know not what they do," is an act of exchange of self and the other, whereby the alienation dividing offender and victim is broken, bringing them back to the Father.

In the resurrection meditations, the Divinity of Christ which 'seemed hidden during his passion,' now 'manifests itself in its true and most holy effects.' The presence of Christ is a transforming presence. Christ is no more an external reality to be seen outside of ourselves, but an internal reality that transforms human brokenness. His divinity manifests itself in transforming sorrow into joy, fear into courage, selfishness into selflessness, confusion into peace, and doubt into faith. As we open our hearts to these values, we find the Risen Christ present and alive in our midst, and our hearts are filled with love and peace. This love cannot be confined. It seeks to go out and share its ecstasy with everyone and everything.

The purpose of the contemplation to obtain God's love is to experience this new vision which offers us a fresh mission, namely to love and serve God in all things. Everything is God's gift to us, all we are and all we have. Now, in an outlook of gratitude and surrender we offer everything back to God, since he is the author of all. What we need is his love and grace, a desire to detect signs of his presence everywhere, a desire to love the creator in all his creatures and love all creatures in him, in the midst of a busy life. This is a way to find God in all things, not just in prayer but in the pursuits and concerns of ordinary everyday life. A person who does these exercises wins the capacity to be filled with God. Such a person lives in the ambience of His goodness. This stage of union is capped by an experience of Unconditional Love poured out on us from a divine source, luring us to a life no longer lived for selfish interests, but totally dedicated to serving the least of our brothers and sisters. One does not thereby retreat into solitude and silence. Rather, one offers oneself as a means to heal our injured world, and dedicate our lives to the service, welfare, and happiness of all.

By this mode of experiencing divine love through meditating on Christ's passion and resurrection, and the contemplation to attain God's

love, one grows in the awareness that God, humans, and the cosmos, are interconnected realities, and that it is God who is the unifying factor, since he is the origin and destiny of everything that corresponds to the illuminative way.

Thus, the Spiritual Exercises can be considered a path of spiritual practice, that leads us away from a self-centered way of life to an enhanced other-centered life, sustained and empowered by divine love. A similar view could also be derived from Buddha's teaching and practice of Vipassana.

All the teachings of the Buddha may be summed up in one verse: Refrain from evil, purify the mind, do what is good. Our three great internal foes are, selfish desire, anger, and delusion. According to the Buddha, everybody in the world desires peace and happiness, yet we live in misery and suffering. Everything in the world has its cause, and nothing arises without a cause. He discovered that the cause of suffering is attachment [tanha]. Tanha means thirst, which covers all the senses of greed, lust, desire, craving and attachment. Where there is tanha, there is dukka [suffering]. The cause of tanha [attachment] is wrong view, known as attaditthi - "the false view of a soul, a self, an 'I' or a 'you' a person or a being." This is the realization of anatta, the no-self, non-ego nature of bodily and mental processes. At the moment of attaining the first path the meditator realizes the Four noble truths.

- 1) The truth of suffering: old age, sickness, death
- 2) The truth of the cause of suffering: attachment
- 3) The truth of the cessation of suffering: attachment is removed
- 4) The truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering: mindfulness of the mind-body process and developing the noble eightfold path.

The acknowledgment of the state of dissatisfaction and insecurity, of not being "at ease" (dukkha), is the first of the Four Ennobling Truths taught by the Buddha. The second is the invitation to examine and root out the cause of dukkha, which may be traced to the "three poisons" of greed, ill will, and ignorance. These three poisons are behind the fundamental attitude marked by craving.

With this brief understanding of Buddha's teaching let us focus our attention on the three stages of the Spiritual Exercises, and how they relate to the practice of Vipassana.

The Way of Purification

The first goal of Vipassana is deepening the power of concentration. Conscious breathing stops the mind. Being aware of one's breath forces one into the present moment, the key to all inner transformation. As people continue to engage in the practice of regular seated meditation, focusing on

breathing, sensations, or movements of the abdomen, one slowly begins to get free of sensuous pleasures and attachments. It is only the longing for sensual pleasures and attachments, that directs one's mind to think, feel and act. This inordinate attachment to sensuous pleasures is sin or alienation. Lao Tzu aptly affirms this when he writes, "Colours blind the eye, sounds deafen the ear, flavours numb the taste, thoughts weaken the mind, desires wither the heart." Behind all these is one's false self or ego. It is only when one lives in the present moment that the ego disappears, for the ego can never be in alignment with the present moment. On entering into this stage one grows dead to sensuous pleasures and free from inordinate attachment, the power of concentration deepens, and people are freed of their alienation from self, others, and nature. This could roughly correspond to the stage of Purification in the Exercises.

The Stage of Illumination

As the power of concentration grows, Rupa [body] the object of awareness, gets automatically differentiated with every note-taking by Nama [mind]. One feels all mental and physical processes as ever-changing, appearing and disappearing, arising and vanishing. By taking note of each phenomenon attentively, the mind becomes distinctly calm and concentrated. This result is the realization of the truth of impermanence with respect to both the sense object and the knowing mind. Through this process ignorance gets removed, and one does not take the mind-body process to be a person, a being, a soul or a self. When this concept of personality and individuality has been destroyed, neither attachment nor suffering arises. When mindfulness becomes continuous concentration naturally becomes deeper, and when concentration gets deeper insights unfold by themselves. The experience of seeing one's true self or true nature arises. This is a second fruit of Vipassana, which can roughly correspond to the Ignatian stage of Illumination.

The Stage of Union

Living in the unified way of the Vipassana life is living in consciousness, and that raises life to its fullness and develops within us an ability to enjoy simple ordinary things, and derive immense joy from them. When one experiences the non-self [non-ego], one develops a childlike sense of wonder. One is less and less affected by what others think and say about oneself. One does not feel the need to impress anybody anymore, and life becomes more of responding than reacting. One resists less and accepts life as it comes, and others lose their power of hurting. One's actions are directed by love rather than fear, the Divine permeates one's life, and one begins to view the Divine in others. As an outcome of this one develops a reverence for all creatures, one treats them with great respect and regards them as sacred,

and one develops a repugnance towards hurting others. One develops an ability to love more and more in the present, one is less anxious about the future or the past, one has more energy to be fully in the present, and to perform actions because one enjoys doing them. The profound awareness of living in the present, in the Presence of God, leads to deeper meaning in life. Life becomes an effortless flow where one experiences freedom, peace, joy, and love. By living in an ambience of undifferentiated awareness pure consciousness is a possibility, where one has no desire to judge anything or anyone. Despite having a limited body, one experiences wholeness and linkage to the unconditioned self. It helps one to remember, reclaim and reconnect with his/her Original Divine Unconditioned Self, where one could be fully alive and fully happy. It provides a glimpse of the Kingdom of God within oneself. Individual identity had been destroyed to become part of the collective identity of Unity and Oneness, evoking an experience of relatedness to all beings and things.

The third unified way flows naturally from the second and is called Nibbana. It is self-actualization or enlightenment in our daily lives. It provides genuine inner peace, opening a life of wisdom, compassion, and service to others, following the example of the Buddha. This is the stage of Union.

Both Vipassana and the Spiritual Exercises emphasize the need to receive guidance, from those who have themselves been guided by monks or masters. An important issue for spiritual directors is that they do not hinder the process by explaining too much or giving their interpretations. Instead, they should offer pointers for seekers to find the way on their own.

The path of mindfulness in Vipassana and the path laid out by Ignatius in the Spiritual Exercises may not be parallel, but their ways of experience intertwine. They begin with “who am I?” and “what is the purpose of my life?” and arrive at the realization of living a beautiful life of compassion for others and closeness to Christ, Buddha, Paramatman, the Tao, and others.

In both systems we have found a difficult and disciplined form of spiritual practice that guides us through a process of inner transformation. While fundamentally different in many ways, these two paths of spiritual transformation also exhibit profound resonances. They both launch spiritual seekers on an inward journey through meditative and contemplative practice, allowing them to undergo a process of Purification, Illumination, Union, and connectedness with Pure Consciousness, that empowers human beings to attain a beautiful life of loving service to others.

Part II

Buddhist Traditions

From an Indian *Bodhisattva* to an East Asian Goddess: The Transformation of *Guanyin* in Chinese Buddhism

Anh Q. Tran, S.J.

Among the most beloved Buddhist figures in East Asia, none has surpassed Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva.¹ She is known as 觀世音 *Guanshiyin* (or *Guanyin* for short) in China, *Kanzeon/Kannon* in Japan, and *Quan Thế Âm/Quan Âm* in Vietnam.² As the personification of divine benevolence, she displays a unique role in the religious life of the average Chinese, Japanese, and Vietnamese, among others. To these people, she embodies the virtues of compassion, mercy, and maternal love. Beloved by Buddhists and non-Buddhists alike – one can argue that her popularity even surpasses that of Śakyamuni Buddha in all levels of Chinese society – she was the focus of devotion by members of the aristocracy, monastic communities, and the general population. Her multiple images depicted in Chinese arts – from the caves of Longmen and Dunhuang to the many shrines, temples, and domestic altars – bespeak the creative adaptation of this compassionate deity.

The intriguing story lies in her evolution from a male deity in Indian Buddhism to an androgynous figure and eventually a “goddess” in Chinese Buddhism. This essay aims to study the transformation of the Indian Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara to the Chinese goddess Guanyin, as a case of inculturation or domestication of Chinese Buddhism. Her transformation is an example of the interaction between the Buddhist personification of compassion (*karuna*) of the bodhisattva ideal and the influence of indigenous goddess cults and local heroines, such as the legend of Miaoshan. The feminization process began in the Tang period with the appearance of the White-robed Guanyin. Since the sixteenth century, she has become the most popular Chinese goddess in art, folklore, and devotion, ready to grant

¹ To have a sense of her popularity, consider the amount of attention given to her by Henri Dore, an early twentieth-century researcher in Chinese religions. Dore devoted 100 pages of Vol. 6 of his scholarly work (1920, 134-144) to the legends, devotion, and artworks concerned. Contrast this with 15 pages for Ksitigarbha, 14 for Amitabha, 10 for Dipamkara, 5 for Vairocana, 3 for Maitreya, and 2 pages each for other bodhisattvas like Manjusri, Samantabhadra, Mahasthamaprapta.

² In this essay, I will refer to Avalokiteśvara with the masculine pronoun, but except for Tibet where the deity is still depicted as a male or at least an androgynous figure, Guanyin is known at least in popular devotion as a female figure; therefore, I will use the feminine pronoun to refer to her in the Sinitic world.

favors to the suffering masses. My narrative of Guanyin's inculturation (or her "domestication," to use Chün-fang Yü's expression) will be traced through scriptures, stories, and arts of Chinese Buddhism.

The gender difference between early masculine forms of Avalokiteśvara and later feminine forms of Guanyin is well-known, but the cause of her transformation is not obvious. Various suggestions have been made as to how the Chinese came to regard her as a female deity: she might have come to China as Avalokita (a female bodhisattva in India); she might have evolved from the Hindu fertility goddess Hariti or Tibetan goddess White Tara; her attribute of compassion or mercy might appeal to Chinese sentiment as feminine rather than masculine; Guanyin might have developed as a counterpart or Buddhist variation of Chinese goddesses such as the Queen of Heaven (Tianhou, also known as Mazu), Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu) or Holy Mother (Shengmu); or the story of Miaoshan might have established her as a female (Dore 1920, 202-204; Chamberlayne 1962, 45-52; Paul 1979, 250-252; Kinsley 1985, 27-34). What is missing from these suggestions is a narrative of her transformation. Chün-fang Yü has called this process "domestication," or "Sinification" (2001, 5-6). In Yü's description, domestication is indigenization. She considers the transformation of Guanyin a case study for the Chinese adaptation of Buddhism.

Many would consider the transformation of Avalokiteśvara from male Bodhisattva to female goddess an instance of syncretism — a fusion of diverse religious beliefs and practices. Given the typical negativity associated with the term "syncretism," this view may look down on the feminine development of Guanyin in China as a 'corruption' of the Bodhisattva. If one accepts Judith Berling's definition of syncretism as "the borrowing, affirmation, or integration of concepts, symbols, or practices of one religious tradition into another by a process of selection and reconciliation" (1980, 9), at the least, this transformation of Guanyin is seen as neutral or somewhat positive.

I prefer the term 'inculturation' (differentiated from 'enculturation'³) to describe the process. This term, popular in theological circles, is used interchangeably with contextualization to mean the encounter between one culture and another, which leads to cultural change. It results in a cultural synergy rather than contestation. What I mean by inculturation is the process in which a foreign symbol interacts with native cultural expressions, and eventually becomes integrated into its new environment. Inculturation is a two-way process. It changes its new environment as well as itself. The inculturation of Guanyin seems to be a 'Sinification' of Buddhism, and at the same time, 'Buddhification' (for lack of a better word) of Chinese religious culture.

³ "Enculturation" (sometimes spelled as "inculturation") refers to a cultural learning process somewhat related to socialization.

In the case of Guanyin, a degree of indigenization or domestication happened, but the story does not end there. Her inculturation occurred in the cultural context of China. It changes Avalokiteśvara, and it changes the Chinese concept of goddess as well. As we shall see in the rest of the paper (which I owe much to Prof. Yü's incisive analysis and wealth of data), the narrative of the transformation of Guanyin is set within or parallel to the development of Chinese Buddhism.

Textual Origin of the Devotion to Guanyin

It was no exaggeration when C. N. Tay (1976) called the worship of Guanyin, 'the Cult of Half-Asia.' Indeed, Avalokiteśvara has been worshipped in South Asia (Greater India,⁴ Nepal, Sri Lanka), South East Asia (Burma, Cambodia, Vietnam), and East Asia (Tibet, China, Mongolia, Korea, and Japan). The cult of Avalokiteśvara emerged out of the development of Mahayana Buddhism. Whereas earlier Buddhists, in imitation of the historical Śākyamuni, sought release from endless cycles of birth and death through a self-effort path of ethical conduct (*śīla*), meditation (*samadhi*), and wisdom (*prajñā*), Mahayanists sought liberation from the phenomenal world of samsara by calling on many cosmic Buddhas who were committed to helping seekers in their quest for salvation. Accompanying these Buddhas is a particular group of enlightened beings – the Bodhisattvas – who, having achieved spiritual attainment, postponed their own salvation (that is, entrance into nirvana) to help others achieve a similar goal.⁵ In Mahayanist understanding Bodhisattvas are classed into two kinds: 1) the transcendental Bodhisattvas who can come to earth in multiple forms to relieve the sufferings of sentient beings, and 2) the living Bodhisattvas who are exemplified human beings, and who by their high virtues and fullness of compassion are ready to help others.

Most scholars agree that the Bodhisattva doctrine was a combination of the devotional tradition (*bhakti*) and the spiritualization or idealization of the Buddha. Early Bodhisattvas of the Mahayanists are personifications of different virtues attributed to the Buddha. Among the transcendental Bodhisattvas, Avalokiteśvara stood out as the Bodhisattva of compassion (*karuna*), just as Mañjuśrī is the personification of wisdom (*prajñā*). The etymology of the variant names of Avalokiteśvara can be helpful to understand the essential character of this deity and his origin. Buddhist scholars have generally taken Avalokiteśvara to be a combination of

⁴ In this essay, India refers to the pre-1947 state of India, which includes present-day Pakistan and Bangladesh, but not Sikkim.

⁵ Of course, Bodhisattvas were not an invention of Mahayana Buddhism. In earlier forms of Buddhism, they were said to be past lives of Śākyamuni Buddha, as beings on their ways to final liberation. In Mahayana Buddhism, however, Bodhisattvas are present forms of future Buddhas. For a treatment of the evolution of the concept of Bodhisattva in Indian Buddhism see Basham 1981.

Avalokita (to be seen) and *Ísvara* (lord). Taken separately, the meanings of these two terms are clear, but when combined to form the name of the Bodhisattva, it could be translated alternately as, 'lord of what we see, lord who is seen, lord who sees, lord who surveys from above,' and 'lord who observes (the sounds) of the world' (Holt 1991, 31). The last term seems to have been translated from a variance of spelling, since Avalokiteśvara is taken to be a combination of *Avalokita* and *Svara* (voice or sound) (Chandra 1984, 189-190), which influences the Chinese rendering of 'lord who hears the voices of the world' (觀世音 *Guan-shi-yin*).⁶ Regardless of the etymologies, Avalokiteśvara's role is to survey the world in order to seek out sentient beings who might need his help. In his Bodhisattva vow, out of compassion for humanity, he will not seek his own emancipation until all beings are saved from the misery of existence.

The origin of the cult of Avalokiteśvara is shrouded in obscurity. In the beginning, Bodhisattvas were regarded as subordinate to Buddhas. Though Avalokiteśvara is one of the more important Bodhisattvas, yet his name is not mentioned in the earliest Mahayanist texts. Being called 'son of the Buddha,' he first appeared as an attendant to Amitabha, the Buddha of the Western Paradise. In the *Pureland (Sukhavati-Vyuha) Sutra*, composed around the start of the Common Era, he is mentioned together with Mahasthamaprapta – the teacher of liberation – as one of the two Bodhisattvas guiding sentient beings to the Land of Bliss (*Sukhavati* or Pure Land). The faithful devotee only needs to sincerely recite the name of Amitabha to be admitted into this paradise, however, not without passing through a number of tests to separate the great souls from the sinners. It is said that Avalokiteśvara personally guides the soul at the point of death, to navigate these challenges. In the *Contemplation on the Infinite Life (Amitayurdhyana) Sutra*, both Avalokiteśvara and Mahasthamaprapta gained significant status as objects of meditation, alongside Amitabha.⁷

Before long Avalokiteśvara became the focus of devotion as an independent deity. By the first century before the Common Era, he assumed the status of a savior in several Mahayana scriptures. One of the earliest texts to describe him, the twenty-fifth chapter of the *Lotus Sutra (Saddharma-Pundarika Sutra)*, takes him to be ruler of this universe after the death of the historical Śākyamuni and before the appearance of Maitreya the Buddha of the Future. In this sutra, he is given the epithet Samantamukha (He who looks in every direction). The mercy and power of Avalokiteśvara is attested in nine perils from which he can save humanity: [1] falling into a great fire; [2] the swift current of rivers; [3] shipwrecked on the island of

⁶ At first glance this would appear to be a wrong translation (at least according to Xuanzang) of the Sanskrit, if not for the fact that the name Avalokiteśvara occurs at least five times in a fifth-century fragment of the *Lotus Sutra* in Eastern Turkestan (Ch'en 1964, 340; Tay 1976, 148-149).

⁷ This sutra was translated into Chinese and survives only in Chinese versions without Sanskrit or Tibetan extant, thus making some scholars (Luis Gomes) question the dating.

giantesses; [4] execution by sword; [5] attack by goblins; [6] imprisoning in manacles or fetters; [7] assault by brigands; [8] temptation or lust and state of delusion; [9] desire for a male or female child or great wealth. The poetic stanzas of the chapter (*gathas*) list a somewhat expanded group of dangers, including rescue from attack by mighty spells, ghosts, demons, ferocious beasts, snakes, fires, thunderbolts, and so on.

Furthermore, in hearing, seeing, and regularly and continually thinking, he will infallibly destroy all suffering for those who suffer from birth, infirmity, disease, and wretched states of existences and hell (Hurvitz 1976, 316-19). The scripture reveals that when the devotees sincerely call upon Avalokiteśvara, he adopts many appearances of as many as thirty-three forms – from deity to human to supernatural creature – in order to deliver them.

The rise of Avalokiteśvara shows different phases of the development of Mahayana Buddhism. In the early phase, compassion (*karuna*) and wisdom (*prajñā*) formed the two important aspects of Mahayanist thought; however, the wisdom tradition was considered more important. As a result, the personification of wisdom, Mañjuśri, was raised above other bodhisattvas. But this situation did not last long. *Karuna* soon came to be regarded as an excellent means of attaining the Bodhisattva ideal, and hence its personification, Avalokiteśvara, became the supreme savior. As we shall see, the character of Avalokiteśvara absorbed the virtues and attributes of other Bodhisattvas and Buddhas in China, to such an extent that his popularity surpassed even that of the Buddha.

Early Iconography of Avalokiteśvara

The worship of Avalokiteśvara may have begun in India between the second and fourth centuries, but there is scant archeological evidence before the fifth century. A memoir by the Chinese monk-pilgrim Faxian, who traveled to India in the early fifth century (399-414), mentions him once. Within two hundred years, another monk-pilgrim Xuanzang, who came to India (629-645) to study at the famous Nalanda monastery, described the cult of Avalokiteśvara at Bodh Gaya (Hazra 1983).

Over the centuries, Avalokiteśvara was depicted in various ways. The devotion to a rescuer might be the expression of a cross-fertilization of different religious strands in North India and Central Asia, where the images of this deity first appeared. The earliest surviving pictures of Avalokiteśvara have been dated to the Gupta period (fifth to seventh century). In a mural in Cave 1 at the Ajanta cave-temple complex in Western India, the deity appears as a handsome divine being dedicated to helping. Wearing a crown, jewelry, and beautiful clothing, and holding a lotus flower in his right hand,

the deity resembles an Indian prince but for his halo.⁸ In Cave 4, a large image of the deity is carved to the rock in an upright standing position, surrounded by rectangular panels that illustrates the different perils from which the faithful will be rescued.⁹

In concert with subsequent developments in Mahayana Buddhism, Avalokiteśvara's image changed. The awesome power of this Bodhisattva was expressed through the adoption of multiple heads and multiple arms, a result possibly influenced by Tantric Buddhism. The goal of this form of Buddhism, also called Vajrayana, is to achieve liberation in a lifetime, rather than in an afterlife in the Land of Bliss. Worship involves complex rituals with *mandalas* and mantras. Artists represent the awesome power of the deities with multiple heads and multiple arms holding different objects or showing different symbolic *mudra* gestures. A dozen Tantric scriptures, preserved in Chinese translations, describe Avalokiteśvara as having one face and two, four, six, eight, or ten hands, three faces and six hands, or five faces and twelve hands. A description of the eleven-headed Avalokiteśvara is also found in artistic representation,¹⁰ though we are not sure of its scriptural origin.

Between the sixth and the ninth centuries, the cult of Avalokiteśvara spread throughout North India, Nepal, Pakistan, Central Asia, China, and Tibet. It also spread to Sri Lanka, Siam, Cambodia, Champa, and Java. Naturally, the numerous alterations to the image of this deity are observable. Despite the various appearances and modifications, the central character of the Merciful Savior remains consistent.

Introducing Avalokiteśvara into China

We do not know precisely when the cult of Avalokiteśvara was introduced into China. Most likely, it arose with the translations of the Mahayana sutras between the third and fifth centuries. Among the influential sutras of Chinese Buddhism, the *Pure Land Sutras* and the *Lotus Sutra* enjoyed enormous popularity. It is no coincident that these sutras played a crucial role in spreading the devotion to Guanyin, in a way that surpassed her cult in India and elsewhere. Avalokiteśvara was translated in Chinese as either *Guan-shi-yin* (the one who hears the cries of the world) – later shortened to *Guanyin*,¹¹ or *Guan-zi-zai* (he whose gaze is unimpeded). Apparently, the second Chinese rendering was closer to the Sanskrit original, but because

⁸ I saw this mural myself at the Ajanta caves in 2005 (Kareztzky 2004, Fig. 1.1).

⁹ Similar images can be found in Cave 26 as well as in Ellora Caves 3 and 4 (Kareztzky 2004, Fig 1.3).

¹⁰ In the artistic imagination, it takes the form of a five-layer head: three facing front, three facing right, three facing left, one facing back, and on the top is a Buddha Amitabha face.

¹¹ This contraction came about in the Tang dynasty, which prompted scholars to speculate that out of respect for the founding emperor of the Tang dynasty, Li Shi-min, the word "Shi" was dropped out. I find this explanation possible but not convincing.

Guanshiyin had been used by generations of translators since the second century, by the time the term Guanzizai appeared in Xuanzang's translation of the *Heart Sutra* (ca. 650), it never caught on in popular imagination as much the first term.

The early introduction of the name Guanshiyin is traceable to the *Chengzhu guanming dingyi jing*¹² translated by Zhiyao in 185 (Tay 1976, 150) and the *Larger Pure Land Sutra* (*Sukhavati-Vyuha Sutra*, *Wuliangshou jing*¹³) translated by Samghavarman circa 250. In the Pure Land sutra, Avalokiteśvara does not yet have an independent status, but he is described as the assistant and future heir of the Buddha Amitabha. His task is to bring people from their death bed to Amitabha's Land of Bliss (Pure Land). In the *Contemplation Pure Land Sutra* (*Amitayur-Dhyana Sutra*, *Guan wuliangshou jing*¹⁴), the devotee is asked to contemplate on Avalokiteśvara in addition to Amitabha. Here the Bodhisattva is portrayed as the best friend of those who are mindful of the Buddha Amitabha. The third Pure Land sutra *Amitabha Sutra* (*Amituo jing*¹⁵), on the other hand, makes no mention of Avalokiteśvara.

As mentioned earlier, the status of Avalokiteśvara as a compassionate deity is mentioned in the *Lotus Sutra* (*Saddharma-Pundarika Sutra*). Because of the popularity of this sutra – it was translated numerous times into Chinese, as *Zheng fahua jing* by Dharmarakṣa in 286, and the more popular version *Miaofa lianhua jing*¹⁶ by Kumarajiva in 406 (Kubo and Yuyama 2007) – Guanshiyin became known among the Chinese.¹⁷ This text claims that even when one hears of the name of Guanshiyin merely by chance, it would produce a power to free one from various afflictions. Despite the potent power ascribed to Guanshiyin, a general scholarly focus on the wisdom sutras (as for example the *Prajñāparamita*) by the Buddhist monks, eclipsed the interest in this Bodhisattva.

Gradually attention to Guanshiyin began to emerge in the late fourth century, when the 'Universal Gate' Chapter (*Pumen*, chapter 25 in Kumarajiva's translation) of the *Lotus Sutra*, was promoted as a separate text known as the *Guanyin Sutra*. Kumarajiva's explanation of 'See-World-Sound' (the literal meaning of Guanshiyin) – 'Hearing his named invoked, Avalokiteśvara instantly heeds the sound and grants the devotee deliverance' – helped to spread knowledge about Guanyin's power through

¹² Taisho No. 630.

¹³ Taisho No. 360.

¹⁴ Taisho No. 365.

¹⁵ Taisho No. 366.

¹⁶ Taisho No. 262.

¹⁷ Leon Hurvitz (1976, ix) notes that the sutra was translated at least six times into Chinese in the years 255, 286, 290, 335, 406, and 601. Of these translations, the version by Kumarajiva (406) became the standard.

multiple translations and copies of texts throughout China.¹⁸ Coincidental with the promotion of the *Guanyin Sutra* was a deterioration of the Chinese socio-political system, since the end of the Han dynasty. Incessant wars and instability made suffering real to the Chinese people. No longer an abstract philosophy or remote doctrine the Bodhisattva of compassion appealed to the people's need for safety and security, and thus devotion to Guanyin was a natural outcome. Many 'sutras' dealing with the cult worship of Guanyin also appeared since the fourth century (Paul 1983, 172). At about the same time, tales concerning Guanyin's miracles were collected and composed by monks and laypersons, testifying to the saving power of this compassionate Bodhisattva. These tales told of various circumstances where Guanyin had helped them. Not only were these tales a pedagogical tool to help spread the devotion, they were also used to argue about the 'truth' of Buddhist sutras against its detractors (Campany 1996).

Despite the wide diffusion of the *Lotus Sutra* by Kumarajiva's disciples, there was no artistic evidence of Guanyin until the sixth century. The lack of Guanyin's images paralleled the late development of the cult in India, as well as the nature of the development of Buddhism in China. Initially treated as a foreign religion and opposed by native Confucians and Taoists alike, Buddhism had to adapt to Chinese customs and cultural expressions to ensure its survival. During the formative period of Buddhism in China (from the fourth to seventh century), China was ruled by several short-lived dynasties and independent kingdoms of non-Chinese in the north, and native (Han Chinese) in the south. There was no monolithic Buddhist movement in China; instead, different texts and variant translations were espoused by separate communities. In the absence of a centralized authority, the representations and worship of Buddhist figures developed in multiple forms, depending on local influences. Magic and devotion appealed to the 'barbarian' rulers of the north, whereas competing philosophies dominated the literati of the south. In the Eastern Jin period (fifth century), Pure Land Buddhism was becoming attractive. The cult of Guanyin however was spreading independently, and seemed to be associated with the Universal Gate Chapter of the *Lotus Sutra* rather than the Pure Land sutras.

As Pure Land Buddhism began to take a central stage in China, the cult practices among the general population began to emphasize devotion to Guanyin for present benefits (that is, to save them from perils) as well as future guidance to the Land of Bliss. With the unification of the country under the Sui (581-618) and Tang (618-906) dynasties, court patronage established some conformity of religious practice and expression. Under the imperial support of the Sui and early Tang emperors, Buddhism

¹⁸ Robert Campany (1996, 83) reports that in addition to thousands of copies of artistic banners depicting Guanyin, at least 1048 copies of the *Lotus Sutra* and 200 separate copies of the *Guanshiyjin Sutra* (Universal Gate chapter of the *Lotus Sutra*) were found in a single cave in Dunhuang.

became widespread, with the number of monks, monasteries, and temples increasing to an unprecedented degree. Within a couple of hundred years, Guanyin became exceptionally popular.

The degree of popularity of Guanyin may be attested to by two principal sources: the number of texts and tales relating to the Bodhisattvas, and the cave sculptures in Western China and other locations, which have images of Guanyin as objects of worship. The number of indigenous sutras (without Sanskrit origins) dealing with the cult of Guanyin proliferated.¹⁹ The ten vows Guanyin professed as a Bodhisattva were known by this time. In these sutras, she is said to hear the prayers of the faithful, to give them blessings in this life, and was ready to transport them to the Pure Land at the hour of death. Guanyin became the good friend of those who practiced being mindful of and invoking the Buddha Amitabha's name. The Bodhisattva was also a protector in the present life, by granting those who call upon his name protection against misfortune and a long life, for Pure Land Buddhists as well as other Buddhists. Guanyin became known as the 'savior from suffering' (*Jiuku Guanyin*), a popular epithet of hers that began to appear in paintings and sculptures during the Tang period.

Non-Pure Land schools of Buddhism also mentioned Guanyin in their sutras. The *Flower Garland Sutra* (*Avatamsaka Sutra*, *Huayan jing*) and the *Heroic March Sutra* (*Surangama Sutra*, *Da Foding Shoulengyan jing* (both of the eighth century) attested to the power of Guanyin as a savior. Tantric Buddhism, which was introduced into China during the Tang dynasty, brought a number of texts and esoteric images of Guanyin. The omnipotent and omniscient display of the Bodhisattva was carried through images of the Eleven-headed Guanyin²⁰ and Thousand-armed Guanyin.²¹ The Mantra of Great Compassion was also introduced during this period, and is still recited by Buddhists in East Asia today. The mantra is believed to possess power to ward off all dangers, cut through all delusions, and guarantee rebirth in the Pure Land. Even in the Chan tradition, despite its traditional iconoclastic tendency, Guanyin had a special place. A figure of Guanyin called the White-Robed (to be discussed later) was favored in Chan monasteries, since white color symbolizes purity – the mind of enlightenment – a value Chan Schools espoused (Levering 2006). In short, the Bodhisattva appeared across major Chinese Buddhist traditions, as an embodiment of compassion and mercy.

Pilgrimages to Guanyin's sites were also popular practices that spread the devotion to Guanyin. Of the many sites connected to Guanyin in China that drew pilgrims since the middle ages, we have for example Southern Mt Wutai, the Fragrant Mountain (Xiangshan), and the Upper Tianzhu

¹⁹ For a discussion of indigenous Chinese scriptures on Guanyin see Yü 2001, 93-149.

²⁰ Dunhuang Cave 321 mural (early Tang) (Karetsky 2004, Plate 8).

²¹ Baoding Mountain, Sichuan, Cave 8 statue (Southern Song) (Karetsky 2004, Fig 3.3); Ming-era statue, Shuanglingzi Temple (Ibid., Plate 10).

Monastery in Hangzhou, and the most famous is Mount Putuo or Putuoluo (Potakala). Here exists Avalokiteśvara's residence, which was identified in the *Flower Garland Sutra* (*Avatamsaka Sutra*, *Huayan jing*). The place has been identified with many sites on the coast of South India. By the tenth century, Putuo was identified with a group of small islands near Ningpo, Zhejiang province.²² The idea of giving Guanyin a home on Chinese soil was not unique to her status, since other great Bodhisattvas also have a Chinese residence: the Wutai Mountain for Mañjuśrī (Wenshu), Omei for Samantabhadra (Puxian), and the Jihua for Ksitigarbha (Dizang). The significance of having a Chinese home is to make these Bodhisattvas more accessible to the masses through pilgrimages. It also sealed the inculturation of these Bodhisattvas, particularly of Guanyin, as one of the local deities. To a certain extent, the indigenization of Guanyin was the first step towards a total remaking of her image as a Chinese goddess, as we shall see in the artistic evidence of the post-Tang era.

Feminization of Guanyin Iconography²³

The earliest iconography of Guanyin in the caves in Western China such as Yungang, Longmen and Dunhuang, did not reveal any distinctive features. He appeared as an attendant to the Buddha of the Western Paradise, but like most other Bodhisattvas only identifiable by specific attributes, as for example having an Amitabha figure on his headdress.²⁴ By the mid-sixth century, Buddhism had already undergone the initial stages of adaptation to Chinese religious and artistic preferences. The Indian features had been transformed into a Chinese form. During this era, the most traditional portrait of Guanyin was the Padmapani, literally the 'Holder of the Lotus flower,' in Chinese 'Holy Guanyin.'

The early stage of the feminization process may be seen in the aesthetic concept of Tang Art to make the Bodhisattva more beautiful. It is essential to bear in mind Confucian strictures against nudity and female anatomy in public arts. The half-naked images of male Buddhist figures were artfully covered with jewels and scarves. His slender body stands in a graceful pose with clinging drapery and a delicate feminine face. Wearing a close-fitting dress and high waist cincture, the deity often has soft round cheeks and pursed lips.²⁵ The typical female body, however, was never clearly defined

²² In 916, the Japanese monk Egaku constructed a temple to Guanyin at Chaoyin Cave in the Zhousan archipelago during his stay in China. This place came to be known as Mt Putuo, the Chinese Potakala (Yü 2001, chapter 9).

²³ This section of this essay on the artistic depiction of Guanyin, was published as "Kuan-yin: A Case of Inculturation in Chinese Buddhism," *Asian American Theological Forum* 4/1 (Feb 28, 2017), ISSN 2174-8133. <https://aatfweb.org/2017/02/28/kuan-yin-a-case-of-inculturation-in-chinese-buddhism/>.

²⁴ Representative artworks are seen in Dunhuang Mokao Cave 251 (Van Oort 1986a, Plate IVc); Cave 14 (Van Oort 1986a, Plate XXXIIIb).

²⁵ Dunhuang Mocaocaves (Van Oort 1986a, Plate VIII).

(as for example, with breasts), except in the soft lines of the whole figures and feminine shape of the face. The feminization is not overt, for some images of the Bodhisattva still bear thin mustaches.²⁶

Applying a sexual identity to Guanyin is somewhat misdirected, for he transcends gender distinctions as do all advanced Bodhisattvas. Emphasizing the feminine features of Guanyin in Chinese arts may be an attempt to render the polymorphic nature of the deity, who can assume any appearance to help the devotee. Although the original *Lotus Sutra* mentioned sixteen forms of Avalokiteśvara (Yü 2001, 517), Kumarajiva's translation represents Avalokiteśvara in as many as 33 forms, several of which are explicitly female: nun, laywoman, merchant's wife, housewife, Brahmin woman, officer's wife, and young girl.²⁷ Note that the 33 forms of Avalokiteśvara only made sense in the Indian universe, where Hindu gods and mythical creatures were part of the folklore. Chün-fang Yü suggests that the number 33 is only symbolic and not literal, paving the way for later Chinese 33 forms of Guanyin, which were predominantly feminine (Yü 2001, 46).

These several images of Guanyin as a woman popularized by the *Lotus Sutra* would affect how artists chose to represent her. According to Chün-fang Yü (2001, 233-247), the first indigenous form of Guanyin appeared at Dunhuang around the tenth century, and was called 'Water-moon Guanyin' (Shuiyue Guanyin). In this iconic representation, Guanyin sits in the 'royal ease' position with one arm resting on the right knee, looking down on the reflection of the moon on water from her home at Mt. Putuo.²⁸ Water-moon Guanyin is favored by Chan and literati painters, since the moon on water symbolizes the empty and illusory nature of worldly phenomena. The connection of Guanyin with Mt. Putuo in the South Sea gave rise to a later tradition popularized by the sixteenth-century story *Journey to the West*, in which she came to be known as 'Guanyin of the South Sea' (Nanhai Guanyin).

Of the new forms popularized in the late Tang dynasty was the concept of a female Guanyin clad in white – the "White-robed Guanyin" (Baiyi Guanyin). The Bodhisattva is depicted in a simple white robe, covering up nearly all of the jewelry and body parts, and only a small portion of the crown

²⁶ Dunhuang Cave 276 mural (Sui) (Karetzky 2004, Plate 1); Sung painting (Van Oort 1986b, Plate II).

²⁷ The traditional thirty-three forms listed in Kumarajiva's translation are: (1) Buddha, (2) Bodhisattva, (3) Pratyeka-Buddha, (4) disciple, (5) Brahma, (6) Indra, (7) Išava, (8) Śiva, (9) emperor, (10) Vaiśravaṇa, (11) king, (12) merchant, (13) householder, (14) officer, (15) Brahman, (16) monk, (17) nun, (18) layman, (19) laywoman, (20) merchant's wife, (21) housewife, (22) officer's wife, (23) Brahmin woman, (24) young boy, (25) young girl, (26) Naga, (27) Yakṣa, (28) Gandharva, (29) Asura, (30) Garuda, (31) Kinnara, (32) Mahonara, (33) Vajrapani (Hurvitz 1976, 314-315, 405).

²⁸ Dunhuang Yu-lin grottos, Cave 237 (Sung) (Karetzky 2004, Plate 10); Early Ming stone statue (Van Oort 1986b, Plate XXVIII).

is visible. The feminine face is clear, but the bare upper chest is covered with an ornate pearl rope necklace, making it more like an androgynous figure in some portraits.²⁹ The image of the White-robed Guanyin was inspired by Pandara or Pandara-vasini, a deity of Indian Tantrism. The Chinese name is a literal translation of the Sanskrit *Pandaravasini* ('She who is clad in white').

In Tantric Buddhism, wisdom and compassion are symbolized by the male and the female. The numerous Buddhas and Bodhisattvas become associated with female consorts or counterparts (similar to the Hindu idea of *śakti*). The female consort of Avalokiteśvara in Tibetan Buddhism is called the Goddess Tara. She is said to have been born from one of the tears that he shed while compassionately observing the sufferings of humankind (Blofeld 1987, 40-42). Like Avalokiteśvara, Tara is the essence of compassion, and she is also ready to rescue her devotees from danger if they call on her for help. Early interpreters such as Henri Maspero (quoted in Ch'en 1964, 342) identified White Tara (Sita-Tara) with the White-robed Guanyin, for *Pandaravasini* is an epithet of the Tibetan White Tara. Chün-fang Yü, who follows Rolf Stein (Yu 2001, 249-251), rejects this conflation and argues that the White-robed Guanyin is a Chinese creation that took its inspiration not the actual deity, but from Tantric scriptures.

Another feminine form of Guanyin also popular among female devotees was the 'Child-sending Guanyin' (Songzi Guanyin). The idea was rooted in the Lotus Sutra in which a promise is made:

If any woman wanting to have a baby boy pays homage and makes offerings to Kuan-shi-yin Bodhisattva, she will bear a baby boy endowed with good merit and wisdom. If she wants to have a baby girl, she will bear a beautiful and handsome baby girl who has planted roots of good merit and will have the love of sentient being. (Trans. by Kubo and Yayama 2007, 310)

Guanyin's compassionate nature made her appealing to female devotees. Chinese women were married early and only prized if they bore male offspring. It is not surprising then that a large number of women worship Guanyin, praying for deliverance from adversity and the easy birth of a son. This devotion to Guanyin as a child-giver gave rise to the iconography of the 'Child-sending Guanyin.'³⁰

This form of Guanyin could be associated with fertility goddesses in ancient China, and as Kenneth Ch'en notes, the devotion remained entirely in the realm of popular religion (Ch'en 1964, 342). Although this form did not penetrate established Buddhism, yet such a syncretism was not without justification, since the Lotus Sutra taught that Guanyin could assume any form and shape to assist humanity. Guanyin eventually took a role as guardian of children in the Ming dynasty. During this period, resembling

²⁹ Anyue, Sichuan, Huayan Cave statue (Northern Sung) (Karetzky 2004, Fig 3.5). Other early images were found at Meijishan (Cave 165) in Kansu and Dazou (Cave 180) in Sichuan.

³⁰ Yu (1996) sees this form as a variation of the White-robed Guanyin.

the Western iconography of the Madonna and child, she was often shown cradling an infant, thus popularizing a form of Guanyin as a mother holding a child (Yu 2001, 258-59). This 'Mother-and-Child' Guanyin could be seen as an extension of the "Child-sending" Guanyin of the earlier era.³¹

Feminine representations of Guanyin are best seen in the 33 Sino-Japanese forms, which are dated no earlier than the Yuan dynasty (1280-1368).³² She was often depicted holding a water jar or vase of nectar with a willow branch, or sitting on a lotus flower or leaf. These forms represent certain aspects of the Bodhisattva or connect her to a particular devotion or legend. Thus for example, we find 'Guanyin of the Weeping Willow' (Number 1) representing her power to heal, 'Guanyin carrying a Fish basket' (Number 10) which represents her as sacred to fishermen, 'One-leaf Guanyin' (Number 13) represents her as protecting people from drowning, 'Moon-Water Guanyin' (Number 12) symbolizes concentration, and 'Guanyin of Power and Virtue' reminds us of the nature of the Bodhisattva.

Since the end of the Southern Song dynasty (1227-1279), the female forms of Guanyin appear to have been the dominant forms that have come down to us today. Even in the esoteric forms – the Eleven-headed Guanyin and Thousand-armed Guanyin – the male body gradually morphed into a female one. Various legends about Guanyin also gave rise to new forms, as artists tried to represent these stories for popular consumption. The 'precious scroll' (*baojuan*) literature has contributed to new images of Guanyin, such as 'Guanyin carrying a Fish-basket' (Tilan Guanyin) and 'The Wife of Mr. Ma' (Malang fu), among others.³³ Sometimes there were attendants to Guanyin: a girl is called Longnü (Dragon girl, Nagakanya) and a boy is Shancai (Good-in-talent, Sudhana) (Idema 2008, 2). These forms have arisen in China to meet the spiritual needs of the Chinese people. Guanyin's 33 manifestations in Sino-Japanese tradition represent the multiple fabric of social life, from the lowliest to the highest, from the imminent to the transcendent.

The Story of Miaoshan and the Formation of a Chinese Guanyin

The goddess tradition in Chinese religions has been noticed by scholars. However, unlike Indian or Tibetan goddesses, native Chinese goddesses such as Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu) or Nügua never attracted a sustainable cult. The absence of a strong tradition of Chinese goddesses prompts Chün-fang Yü to argue that Guanyin filled the religious vacuum left by a strong male dominance of the Chinese pantheon. Yü claims that

³¹ For iconography see Yu 2001, Figs 3.8, 3.10, 3.11, 3.12.

³² In actuality, Guanyin is represented in many more forms, but the 33 forms are taken (based on the number in the Lotus Sutra) as emanations of correspondences related to Chinese and Japanese legends. For the listing and iconography, see Frederick 1995, 156-71; Shashibala 2007, 95-99.

³³ For a discussion of these stories, see Yu 2001, 419-38.

“precisely because there were no strong goddesses around, Guanyin could undergo a sexual transformation. If there had been powerful and popular goddesses in China, Avalokiteśvara probably would not have become a goddess in China, just as he did not become a legitimizing symbol for Chinese emperors” (Yü 2001, 412-13). If Yü is correct, then one cannot discount the tales and legends of Guanyin, which were the powerful medium that contributed to the domestication of Guanyin and her transformation into a Chinese goddess. Wherever Buddhism took a strong hold, Guanyin would be a logical choice to surpass the local goddesses.

The devotion to Guanyin is found in several precious scrolls (Idema 2008). These stories, which specifically named individuals at particular places in China, gave the Bodhisattva an increasingly Chinese face. Of all the stories about Guanyin, the legend of Miaoshan entitled the ‘Precious Scroll on Fragrant-Mountain’ (Xiangshan baojuan), succeeded in establishing Guanyin as a deified Chinese princess (Dudbridge 2004; Idema 2008). The story of Miaoshan as Guanyin had been circulated in China since the eleventh century. It has been told in different versions and embellishments, including one that was recorded as the ‘Life of the Great Compassionate One’ on the stele at the Upper Tianzhu Monastery in Hangzhou (Dudbridge 2004, 24-34; Yü 2001, 495-504).

According to the story, briefly retold here, Princess Miaoshan 妙善 (Wondrously Kind) was the third daughter of a certain King Miaozhuang. Since childhood, she was devoted to Buddhism, maintaining a vegetarian diet, reading scriptures by day, and meditating at night. The king had no sons, and so he hoped to choose an heir among his sons-in-law. Unlike her two sisters Miaoshan resisted her father’s desire that she get married, and instead decided to enter a monastery. However even the hardship and austerity of monastic life did not change her resolve to relinquish her royal life. Her furious father then burned down the monastery and executed her for unfilial behavior. While her body was safeguarded by a mountain spirit, her soul went on a journey to hell, in order to get better acquainted with the sufferings of sentient beings over there. Then she came back to the earth and led the life of a hermit in the mount of Xiangshan (Fragrant Mountain), meditated for years, and attained enlightenment.

In the meantime the king suffered from an incurable illness due to his bad karma, and a monk told him that only a special medicine made from the arms and eyes of a living person who was free from anger in a faraway place, could cure him. The king dispatched his soldiers to the place foretold, got the medicine, and was healed, and in profound gratitude, he traveled to the place to give thanks to the one who had saved him, through the voluntary donation of her arms and eyes. The king recognized the eyeless and handless ascetic as being none other than his own daughter. Overwhelmed by remorse, he and his entire family converted to Buddhism. Miaoshan then displayed her true form as the ‘Thousand-armed and

thousand-eyed Guanyin' and ascended into heaven, quitting her human form. The newly devotional king decreed that a temple be built at the place to honor her.³⁴

In a later version, the connection between Miaoshan and Guanyin is made more explicit:

Guanyin [Miaoshan] ascended to the Western Paradise and entered the assembly of Buddhas. She kept perpetually open the gate of deliverance from suffering, she points out to all the way of those with affinity, she observes the cries of all the world in times present and past, she discerns the good and evil throughout the society of men. This is the reason for her title "Guanshiyin." (Dudbrige 2004, 46)

The significance of the legend of Miaoshan for the cult of Guanyin lies in the fact that it gives a Chinese origin to the beloved Bodhisattva. The story functions more than a folk tale. It exalts the noble character of a selfless Chinese woman, bringing her to the level of perfection of giving, like a Bodhisattva. Only a Bodhisattva of high realization can give away his or her body, purely without aversion. The legend of Miaoshan's metamorphosis into Guanyin converts the mythical figure of a Bodhisattva into a historical person, complete with the story of life and death. This story also gave rise to the 'birthday' of Guanyin, celebrated on the nineteenth day of the second lunar month, the date Miaoshan was reported to have become Guanyin.

This legend can also be viewed as a story of how Chinese Buddhism went through much trouble and persecution, before it was accepted by Chinese society. As Buddhism entered China, one of the earliest and major obstacles was the charge of being unfilial. To the Chinese, one's primary duty is to protect and expand the welfare of the family. By refusing to get married Miaoshan acted against societal norms, and thus was subjected to persecution and punishment. Yet like Buddhism in post-Tang China Miaoshan did not become extinct. She was transformed into a great and compassionate being, who was capable of relieving the sufferings of the living and dead. The episode in which Miaoshan went to hell to preach the dharma represents Buddhist interest in the Chinese rite of the dead – something not found in Indian Buddhism. At the end of the story, Miaoshan demonstrates that she was the exemplary Chinese daughter. Although she did not act in a way her family expected of her as a princess, yet she bore their wrongs and took upon herself the duty to care for her ailing father.

³⁴ My grandmother told this story in a similar form to me in my childhood. Apparently, the story somehow found its way into Vietnam at a very early time, and has sprung a cult to the "Third Princess" in the renowned Fragrant Pagoda in the province of Ha Tay, North Vietnam. Most Vietnamese trace the legend of Guanyin to this story of the "Third Princess" and to another indigenous story called "Quan Âm Thị Kính" (in which the female heroine went through an extraordinary ordeal of being misunderstood for her compassionate character. Only after her death her true identity as a Bodhisattva was revealed). For an account of Quan Âm Thị Kính in English, see Boucher 1999, 17-21.

By voluntarily offering her body parts for his medicine, she acted selflessly as a Bodhisattva, for whom compassion is the greatest virtue. The point of the story is to convince the hearer that being a Buddhist is compatible with being Chinese. In the end, the story serves as a pedagogical tool to dissolve the tension between Confucian and Buddhist values. Like the story of Mulian (Teiser 1988), the legend of Miaoshan demonstrates that filiality can be fulfilled through Buddhism.

The Significance of the Gender Transformation of Guanyin

To understand the popularity of Guanyin, we need to situate her transformation in the context of the cultural development of Chinese Buddhism. The story of Chinese Buddhism has often been told through the events associated with dynastic histories, the formation of different schools, or the collection and translation of sutras. A consequence of this view is that many historians take the Tang period to be the apex of Chinese Buddhism. After the great persecution of 845, it is often said that Buddhism, although never put out of existence, had declined until the revival movements in the early twentieth century (Ch'en 1964).

From a cultural point of view, however, one can take a different approach, such as one suggested by Arthur Wright. According to Wright (1957), the interaction of Buddhism and Chinese culture happened in four phases: (1) the period of preparation, 65-317; (2) the period of domestication, 317-589; (3) the period of acceptance and independent growth, 589-ca. 900; (4) the period of appropriation, ca.900 to the present. Seen from this angle, post-Tang Buddhism, instead of being characterized as declined, was a period of popularization as Buddhism became a total Chinese religion, completely blended in and was accepted as one of the Three-Teachings (*sanjiao*, that is, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism). In recent years the story has been told through the material cultures, rituals, and symbols, in which Buddhism and Chinese culture interact with one another seamlessly. Works by scholars such as Stephen Teiser (1988) and John Kieschnick (2003) represent a new direction in the study of Chinese Buddhism.³⁵ This brief study of Guanyin is another attempt to understand Chinese Buddhism through that cultural interaction.

As we have seen, the gender transformation of Guanyin is well-documented. Even the casual observer of Chinese Buddhism would readily recognize the difference between Guanyin in comparison to Avalokiteśvara. The crucial question is: what are the reasons behind the transformation? Scholars have offered various explanations for this phenomenon, including the growth of popularity of Tara, the amalgamation of Guanyin with

³⁵ Kenneth K.S. Ch'en actually used this approach in his 1973 study. If his 1964 work is an investigation of how Buddhism contributed to Chinese Culture, then his 1973 work is a reverse flow: to study how Chinese culture transformed Buddhism.

Taoist goddesses such as the Queen Mother of the West (Xiwangmu), the celebration of local cults and pilgrimage sites, the various legends of deified heroines such as Miaoshan, and the Chinese tendency to associate the virtue of compassion with women (Paul 1979, 250-52; Chamberlayne 1962).

To adequately answer this question, we need to consider some major differences in Indian and Chinese cultures, where Buddhism took root. Indian Buddhism was born in a sage culture where logic and philosophy were held in high esteem. Sanskrit and Pali, highly inflected languages with complex thought structures and sophisticated vocabulary, were found in the sutras. Scholastic monks debated the meanings of words and concepts. On the other hand in Chinese language, a mono-syllabic ideograph with a simple syntax, words can have multiple meanings depending on context and situation. Consequently, the Chinese were less interested in the abstract concept and more in its application. Their main concern was to live together in a harmonious society, where ethics and social etiquette rule the day. We see this evidence in the rendering of Avalokiteśvara into Guanshiyin. Guanzizai might be a correct translation of the Sanskrit term, but for all practical purposes, the idea of a compassionate Bodhisattva who can listen to the plea of suffering devotees was suited more to the Chinese sensibilities and imagination, than one who simply gazed on eternity.

We cannot underestimate the popular devotion that shaped the cult of Guanyin and ensured its continuity. Part of the popularity and survival of the cult of Guanyin was because it took root in the more popular indigenous form of Buddhism, the Pure Land, which survived the persecution in the Tang dynasty in a way that other philosophical schools did not. One of the main characteristics of Pure Land Buddhism is the emphasis on devotion. Guanyin is not seen only as an embodiment of an abstract idea like compassion; she is the Goddess of Mercy who can grant favors to those in need. Technically, we cannot call Guanyin a 'goddess' for this is not part of the Buddhist concept of a Bodhisattva. However, to generations of her devotees, Pusa (Bodhisattva) is a deified being, as the legend of Miaoshan attested. In the popular culture, celebrated local women who performed extraordinary acts of mercy were seen as incarnations of the deity.

Yü observes: "Of all the imported deities, Guanyin is the only one who successfully became a genuine Chinese goddess. So much so that many Chinese, if they are not familiar with Buddhism, are not even aware of her Buddhist origin" (Yu 2001, 224). How should one explain this phenomenon? This story of Guanyin can be viewed as a case study of *upaya* (skillful means), by which the message is adapted to the receptivity and understanding of its hearers. Buddhist symbols might be understood at one level in the sutra, but on another level by the ordinary folk. The transformation from the personification of *karuna* as a concept into the Goddess of Mercy as an independent deity appeals to the religious sentiment of popular religion, and enriches the symbol beyond its scope and application. Here the complex

interaction of the Chinese situation and Buddhism is at its best. The fact that China has no strong goddess combines with the Buddhist tradition of multiple manifestations of a Bodhisattva, and allows this transformation to happen.

It can also be argued that the metamorphosis of Guanyin follows the inculturation of Buddhism in China. In Indian Buddhism, wisdom is identified as feminine and compassion as masculine as José Cabezon (1992) tells us in 'Mother Wisdom, Father Love: Gender-Based Imagery in Mahayana Buddhist Thought.' However, in Chinese society, the case is reversed. To the millions of her devotees, Guanyin represents a motherly figure, the one who comforts and saves. In India and Tibet, the deity of compassion had a *śakti* (female counterpart), while in China, Guanyin is an integrated character who went through a bodily transformation. Guanyin is not a heavenly consort like other Chinese goddesses such as the Queen-mother of the West (Xiwangmu). In the Ming and Qing periods, she was referred to as Holy Mother (Shengmu). To express the ideal of compassion, is there a better image than that of a mother?

Furthermore, as Barbara Reed (1992) describes in 'The Gender Symbolism of Guanyin Bodhisattva' the sexual transformation of Guanyin is a case of assimilation of the female *yin* symbols (as for example, moon, water, vase) from the yin-yang polarity of Chinese thought. Reed sees the appeal of women in the symbol of Guanyin as a liberating force from Confucian culturally defined roles in family and marriage, as well as an alleviation of some of their sufferings. In traditional Chinese cosmology, *yin* is the feminine principle and stands for darkness and turbidity. White is the color of *yang* and stands for purity, wisdom, and perfection. Here, I argue that there is a subversive message in the widespread devotion to the White-robed Guanyin, undoubtedly the most widely worshipped form of the Bodhisattva. The status of women in China underwent a qualitative change with the subversive image of a goddess in a white robe. Femininity is seen as perfection, and as representative of wisdom.

The domestication of Guanyin also parallels the inculturation of another well-known figure of Chinese Buddhism—Maitreya Buddha (*Mile fo*) (Ch'en 1974, 7-8). Before his introduction into China, Maitreya—mentioned in the Pali sutras as a Bodhisattva in the Tushita Heaven—did not have an important role. In the fourth century, there was a Maitreya-cult, which produced a large number of Maitreya images in the caves of Yungang, Longmen, and Dunhuang.³⁶ Although the cult of Maitreya was relatively short-lived—replaced by the cults of Amitabha and Avalokiteśvara in the seventh century—it continued to drive the popular imagination, especially after he re-appeared as a fat laughing form in the thirteenth century. This Laughing Buddha or Pot-bellied Maitreya that adorns many Chinese temples and shops today was identified with a tenth-century monk named

³⁶ See for example, Van Root 1986a, Plate Va,b; Vlb; XV.

Budai 布袋, the 'Hemp bag' monk.³⁷ According to the Chinese account, Budai (or Hotei in Japanese) was a friendly monk who went around and cheered people in distress, bringing joy and good luck to those he encountered.

Since Maitreya is the embodiment of friendliness (*maitri*), it is easy to make a connection where the laughing Budai represents this pot-bellied Buddha in popular iconography. Maitreya is often portrayed with children climbing over him. All together his image represents the Chinese ideals of life, with the fat belly denoting the prosperity of the sumptuous rich people, and the many children seen as blessings of a large household. The metamorphosis of Maitreya, as in the case of Avalokiteśvara took on features that closely identified with Chinese ideals, and made them more acceptable to the population. Maitreya has been domesticated and transformed into a popular pot-bellied Mile fo who bears little resemblance to his Indian origin.

In summary, the cult of Avalokiteśvara/Guanyin as it developed in China, reveals multiple perspectives wherein the development of Chinese Buddhism can be understood. The imported figure from India adapted to the varied circumstances, imposed by historical events and religious needs of Chinese communities. At the same time, she changed the religious scene of China. Never before has there been such a powerful, accessible personal deity. She serves as a model and patron goddess for women (and some men too) at all levels of society. The multifaceted manifestations of compassion and transformations in appearance, provide us a window into the development of Chinese Buddhism and evolution of Chinese Buddhist arts. The transformation of Avalokiteśvara into Guanyin, is best understood through artistic representation and popular devotion.

In iconographic representations we see a step-by-step progression. The images evolved and the legends grew into folklore, reflecting its new home. The features become Chinese, gender permutation occurred from male to female, and a solitary figure changed into a goddess with attendants. Tibetan Buddhism and its esoteric representation of Guanyin exerted an influence at the court during the Yuan, Ming and Qing dynasties, but still the general population preferred the White-robed and other motherly images. In the end, both male and female forms prevailed, although the female form is more popular and is found almost exclusively in China's neighbors, such as Korea, Japan, and Vietnam.

From the beginning the saving power of Guanyin was emphasized, and this continued to be illustrated over the centuries. However other attributes also prevailed, and her role, from leading the dead into the Western Paradise to granting healthy sons, found a strong resonance with the central values of Chinese society. As I have discussed above, the story of Miaoshan represents the struggle of the integration of Buddhism into

³⁷ Budai was considered an avatar of Maitreya. For his image, see a Song-era painting (Van Root 1986b, Plate XVII).

Chinese culture, and as a deified Chinese woman, Guanyin embodies that integration in concrete form. With the establishment of Mt. Putuo as the Chinese Pokatala, Guanyin was no longer a foreign deity. She now had a 'home' in the soil of China.

By the sixteenth century Guanyin was a fully Chinese goddess, who was worshipped not only in Buddhist temples but also in popular shrines of folk religions. Although Guanyin has been usually identified with her Indian origin Avalokiteśvara, the Chinese transformation of this Bodhisattva has altered her characteristics beyond recognition. In popular imagination, she bears no resemblance to those early forms attested to in the sutras. She is no longer the assistant of Amitabha of the Pure Land, the thousand-armed deity of the tantric traditions, or even the saving Bodhisattva of the *Lotus Sutra*. Guanyin is a Chinese goddess known primarily through Chinese legends, miracles, arts, novels, plays, and festivals. The fact that she is seen predominantly as a female deity, does not mean that her earlier forms are completely discarded. Popular representation might depict her in female form, but to many devoted Buddhists, she is an embodiment of Buddhist virtues that transcend gender.

In the end, her multiple forms existed to serve the multiple needs of the Chinese people. Guanyin has become a symbol of Chinese adaptability of the highest Buddhist virtues and powers of mercy and compassion, that adorn shrines, temples, outdoor sanctuaries as well as domestic altars throughout China and beyond.

REFERENCES

- Basham, Arthur. 1981. "The Evolution of the Concept of the Bodhisattva Concept." In *The Bodhisattva doctrine in Buddhism*, edited by Leslie S. Kawamura, 19-60. Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press/Canadian Corporation for Studies of religion,
- Batchelor, Martine. 2004. *The Path of Compassion: The Bodhisattva Precepts of the Chinese Brahma's Net Sutra*. Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Berling, Judith A. 1980. *The Syncretic Religion of Lin Chao-en*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Blofeld, John. 1978. *Bodhisattva of Compassion: The Mystical Tradition of Guanyin*. Boulder, Col.: Shambala.
- Boutcher, Sandy. 1999. *Discovering KwanYin, Buddhist Goddess of Compassion*. Boston: Beacon Press.

- Cabezón, Jose I. 1992. "Mother Wisdom, Father Love: Gender-Based Imagery in Mahayana Buddhist Thought." In *Buddhism, Sexuality, and Gender*, edited by Jose Cabezón, 181-99. Albany, N.Y.: State of New York University Press.
- Campany, Robert F. 1996. "The Earliest Tales of the Bodhisattva Guanshiyin." In *Religions of China in Practice*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr., 82-96. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- Chamberlayne, John. 1962. "The Development of Guanyin, the Goddess of Mercy." *NUMEN*, 9 (January): 45-52.
- Chandra, Lokesh. "The Origin of Avalokita-svara." *Indologica Taurinenaia*, XIII (1985-1986): 189-202.
- Ch'en, Kenneth K.S. 1964. *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- . 1973. *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Dore, Henri. 1966. *Research into Chinese Superstitions* Vol 6. Shanghai: 1920. Reprint Taipei: Ch'eng-Wen.
- Dudbridge, Glen. 2004. *The Legend of Miaoshan*. Revised edition. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Farrer-Halls, Gill. 2002. *The Feminine Face of Buddhism*. Wheaton, Ill.: Quest Books.
- Frédéric, Louis. 1995. *Buddhism (Flammarion Iconographic Guides)*. Paris: Flammarion.
- Gomez, Luis O, trans. 1996. *Land of Bliss: The Paradise of the Buddha of Measureless Light*. Hawaii: University of Hawaii Press.
- Hazra, Kanai Lai. 1983. *Buddhism in India as Described by the Chinese Pilgrims AD 399-689*. New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharial Publishers.
- Hisao, Inagaki, trans. 1995. *The Three Pure Land Sutras*. Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research.
- Holt, John Clifford. 1991. *Buddha in the Crown: Avalokiteśvara in the Buddhist Traditions of Sri Lanka*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hurvitz, Leon, trans. 1976. *Scripture of the Lotus Blossom of the Fine Dharma*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Idema, Wilt L., trans. 2008. *Personal Salvation and Filial Piety: Two Precious Scroll Narratives of Guanyin and Her Acolytes (Kuroda Classics in East Asian Buddhism)*. Honolulu: University of Hawa'i Press.

- Jan, Yun-hua. 1981. "The Bodhisattva Idea in Chinese Literature: Typology and Significance." In *The Bodhisattva doctrine in Buddhism*, edited by Leslie S. Kawamura, 125-152. Waterloo, Ont.: Wilfrid Laurier University Press/Canadian Corporation for Studies of Religion.
- Karetzky, Patricia Eichenbaum. 2004. *Guanyin: Images of Asia*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Kieschnick, John. 2003. *The Impact of Buddhism on Chinese Material Culture*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Kinsley, David, R. 1989. *The Goddesses' Mirror: Visions of the divine from East and West*. Albany, NY: State University of New York.
- Kubo, Tsugunari, and Akira Yuyama, trans. 2007. *The Lotus Sutra*. Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research.
- Leighton, Taigen Dan. 2003. *Faces of Compassion: Classic Bodhisattva Archetypes and Their Modern Expression*. Boston: Wisdom Publications.
- Levering, Mirian. 2006. "Guanyin/Avalokitesvara in Encounter Dialogues: Creating a Place for Guanyin in Chinese Chan Buddhism." *Journal of Chinese Religions* 34 (1): 1-28.
- Paul, Diana Y. 1979. *Women in Buddhism: Images of the Feminine in Mahayana Tradition*. Berkeley: Asian Humanities Press.
- . 1983. "Kwan-yin: Savior and Savioreess in Chinese Pure Land Buddhism." In *The Book of the Goddess: Past and Present*, edited by Carl Olson, 161-175. New York: Crossroad.
- Reed, Barbara. 1992. "The Gender Symbolism of Guanyin Bodhisattva." In *Buddhism, Sexuality, and Gender*, edited by Jose Cabezon, 159-180. Albany, N.Y.: State of New York University Press.
- Rösch, Petra. 2007. *Chinese Wood Sculptures of the 11th to 13th centuries: Images of Water-moon Guanyin in Northern Chinese Temples and Western Collections*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Schopen, Gregory. 1987. "The Inscription on the Kusan Image of Amitabha and the Character of the Early Mahayana in India." *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies* (10): 99-138.
- Shashibala. 2007. "Bodhisattva in Buddhist Art and Thought." In *Buddhist Art and Thought*. New Delhi: Akshaya Prakashan.
- Tay, C. N. 1976. "Guanyin: The Cult of Half Asia." *History of Religions* 16, 2 (November): 147-177.
- Teiser, Stephen. 1988. *The Ghost Festival in Medieval China*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

- Thompson, Lawrence G. "Matsu – An Important Community Deity." in *The Chinese Way in Religion*, edited by Jordan Paper and L.G. Thompson, 54-59. Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.
- Van Oort, H.A. 1986. *The Iconography of Chinese Buddhism in Traditional China*. 2 Vols. Leiden, Netherland: Brill.
- Werner, E.T.C. 1932. *Dictionary of Chinese Mythology*. Shanghai: Kelly and Walsh, Ltd.
- Whitfield, Roderick, and Anne Farrer, eds. 1990. *Caves of the Thousand Buddhas: Chinese Arts from the Silk Route*. New York: George Braziller.
- Wright, Arthur. 1990. "Buddhism and Chinese Culture: Phases of Interaction." *Journal of Asian Studies* 16, no.1 (Nov 1957): 17-42. Reprinted in *Studies in Chinese Buddhism*, edited by Robert Somers, 1-33. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Yü, Chün-fang. 1995. "Chinese Women Pilgrims' Songs Glorifying Guanyin." In *Buddhism in Practice*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr., 176-180. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- . 1996. "A Sutra Promoting the White-Robed Guanyin as Givers of Sons." In *Religions of China in Practice*, edited by Donald S. Lopez, Jr., 82-96. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- . 2001. *Guanyin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*. New York: Columbia University Press.

An Introduction to Ciji's Ideological Characteristics of Humanistic Buddhism

Ven. Suah Kim

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to introduce Readers to the Ideological Characteristics of Humanistic Buddhism in Ciji, which is an International NGO established in 1966 by Master Zhengyan in Taiwan. I seek mainly to shed light on its fundamental Buddhist ideologies for humanistic Buddhism, as advocated by Chinese monks, Taixu and Yinshun, in the early 20th century. After describing how Master Zhengyan loyally followed the ideology of humanistic Buddhism, it will be shown why Ciji focused on the performance of altruistic and charitable activities. Ciji's basic ideology is based on four steps of reformation of the outer structure, and three critical factors of the inner.

Since the mid-1980s, Taiwanese Buddhism has undergone many forms of revitalization. Such revival has been mainly inspired by humanistic Buddhism, *Renjian fojiao*, which was developed by two 20th century reformist monks, namely, Taixu (1890-1947) and Yinshun (1906-2005). This modernized form of Buddhism first emerged in early 20th century China, and it was promulgated in Taiwan by several Buddhist groups. In Taiwan, Taixu's legacy is most clearly visible largely because of his student, Yinshun, who is highly esteemed for his rationalization of the Buddhist doctrine and articulation of humanistic Buddhism. His works have provided Taiwanese Buddhist communities with the basic ideology of humanistic Buddhism, in order to revive Taiwanese Buddhism. This is the approach of the leaders of Foguangshan, Ciji Gongde Hei (later known as Ciji), and Dharma Drum Mountain. All of these leading groups succeeded in upholding humanistic Buddhism, in order to revive Taiwanese Buddhism.

Among these leading groups, this article will introduce Ciji's fundamental ideological characteristics based on humanistic Buddhism. Due to its world-class reputation, Ciji and its leader Zhengyan have elicited the attention of many scholars, including Elise Anne DeVido, Julia Huang, and Robert Weller. Their studies describe in detail the type of organization Ciji is, focusing mainly on its organizational set-up, members, activities, and

other aspects. In particular, such scholars display an interest in its ability to attract many middle-class Taiwanese women, as well as women religious leaders in Taiwan.

Given these earlier approaches on Ciji, this article attempts to shed light on its basic Buddhist ideologies for humanistic Buddhism, by presenting Zhengyan's teachings. As C. Julia Huang pointed out, she is not only a spiritual figure but an ultimate decision-maker of the Ciji umbrella organization, and her charismatic authority is exercised at every level of Ciji (DeVido 2010, 39), an indication that her ideas determine the direction of its activities. Thus, after unveiling her ideology of humanistic Buddhism, it will eventually be revealed as to why Ciji has such unique ideological activities, unlike other Taiwanese Buddhist communities.

Hence two aspects will be discussed here: First, a brief introduction to Ciji will be presented in order to comprehend its basic structure, and second, we will take a close look at how Zhengyan followed Taixu and Yinshun's humanistic Buddhism, and the manner whereby Zhengyan applied this ideology of humanistic Buddhism to Taiwanese society.

A Brief Overview of Ciji and Principal Teachings of Leader Zhengyan

Ciji leader Zhengyan is a Taiwanese Buddhist nun as well as a disciple of Yinshun. Aside from being a female religious leader who led global charity organizations, she adhered to the ideologies of Taixu and Yinshun concerning humanistic Buddhism. Since 1966 she has led the Ciji Foundation, an International NGO whose board is composed of lay trustees. It is one of the largest civil organizations in Taiwan having a worldwide membership of over 5 million and branches all over the nation, as well as over 20 other nations. Ciji's missions include charity and disaster relief, medical care backed up by an educational system (from kindergarten to graduate school and a medical school), culture (TV stations, videos, magazines, books, and cafes), and environmental protection (DeVido 2010, 29).

Likewise in the 1960s Ciji was primarily a lay Buddhist community before expanding its scope as an NGO, particularly as a worldwide disaster relief organization. It began with 5 Buddhist nuns including Zhengyan herself and 30 Buddhist lay women, and it was termed the Fojiao Ciji Gongde Hui, on Mother's Day, May 14, 1966. Earlier studies mention two other accounts behind Zhengyan's purpose in building such a massive movement. First, she saw blood on a hospital floor. This was the result of a miscarriage by an unconscious aboriginal woman, who was rejected by the hospital because her family could not pay an initial deposit. Second, she met some missionary Catholic nuns, who criticized Buddhism for looking only at self-fulfillment while ignoring the larger problems of society. These encounters triggered Zhengyan's resolve to address these social problems,

beginning with medical care. The dynamic growth of the organization throughout the 1980s led to a boom in all types of civil organizations in Taiwan, and it eventually became the country's largest civil organization.

The term Fojiao Ciji Gongde Hui signifies a Society of Buddhist Compassionate Activity by Accumulating Merits. It aims to save human lives with a compassionate mind, through charitable activities. Ciji's name originated from the Bodhisattva Guanyin's vow, especially the Thousand-Handed and Thousand-Eyed Bodhisattva Guanyin, who can simultaneously assist numerous people in pain with her multiple hands and eyes. Zhengyan declared that when the Bodhisattva Guanyin moved an arm, a thousand arms moved, and when her eye looked at something, a thousand eyes looked. In the same way, Ciji consolidates 500 members into a single unit. Just as the Bodhisattva Guanyin, with a thousand hands and a thousand eyes, can rescue many people from suffering and disasters simultaneously, the organization comprising of 500 members plays the role of the Bodhisattva Guanyin in people's lives, and their compassionate volunteer works save people from further suffering. Unlike other secular charity groups, since the ultimate goal of the organization is to live like the Bodhisattva Guanyin, its objective is to reach out not only to the poor who are suffering from a lack of resources, but also the rich, whose minds are full of hatred, affliction, and dissatisfaction. This is because their activities are based on the fundamental Buddhist notion of the so-called four immeasurable states of mind, *si wu liang xin*, namely friendliness, compassion, joy, and equanimity. Friendliness and joy refer to providing satisfaction by teaching the rich the way to live happily, while compassion and equanimity refer to helping impoverished people. It is an essential Bodhisattva method of saving people in difficult situations, and from the problems of the human condition.

In particular, Zhengyan inspired Ciji members who were wealthy to become active Bodhisattvas, instead of simply relying on celestial beings. In Buddhist teaching, a Bodhisattva is a model who concurrently seeks to liberate self and save others from suffering. In order that Ciji members may be active Bodhisattvas, Zhengyan proposed two specific ways. One is to observe society through the eye of Bodhisattva Guanyin, and the other is to practice three ways of dealing with merits. Viewing the world through the perspective of Bodhisattva Guanyin would mean being an individual who can save the world, rather than one who needs to be saved. To sustain this attitude, Zhengyan provides members with three ways of handling merits. First, one should know the number of merits one has accumulated, second, one should try not to waste one's merits, and finally, one must cultivate merits as much as one can. She advocates this practice because she believes that if people are eager to get rid of suffering in their lives, it was possible only by their cultivating merits, and not by their simply praying to the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. As Julia Huang also pointed out, Ciji was

clearly focused on the idea of charity to improve karma (Huang 1998, 386). That is the reason why unlike most lay and clerical Buddhist movements in Taiwan or China, Ciji members spent little time reciting sutras or chanting the names of Buddhas and Bodhisattvas. Also, they did not encourage achieving perfection by the monastic way of life.

Her teaching concerning these three ways of dealing with merits can eliminate the tendency toward passive faith, which seeks only material fortune without improving spirituality, and which is widely prevalent within traditional Taiwanese society. This movement influenced the pattern of faith in Bodhisattva Guanyin in Taiwan, which thereupon gradually changed from passive to active. This phenomenon is a testament to the Chinese scholar Lee Lian's research, which dealt with the history of the transformation of Bodhisattva Guanyin in Chinese Buddhism (Han 2016). For Ciji members in particular, traditional faith limits the scope of women to their homes. Being an active Bodhisattva urges middle-class women to extend their family values and roles to the wider society, and forge a new identity as mothers to the world. Zhengyan emphasizes the fact that women have the right to work for their own families throughout their lives. Likewise, they should also be mothers to the world, in order to repay the graces all sentient beings received from their parents. This concept of being a mother to the world is a human Bodhisattva who does good deeds every day, and who is also accordingly referred to as a daily Bodhisattva.

Since Zhengyan desired to make Ciji members daily Bodhisattvas, in the early days of Ciji she suggested specific ways to practice accumulating daily merits. She distributed bamboo savings boxes to 30 members, so that they could save 50 jeon before going to market every day. When a member who did not fully understand Zhengyan's intentions asked if donating 15 won a month was the same or better than saving 50 jeon a day, she replied that by donating 50 jeon daily one could gather the hearts of loving people every day. It was one way of being a daily Bodhisattva. She encouraged Ciji members to practice a Bodhisattva activity every day, so that they could slowly but firmly change their lifestyle from passive to active.

For Ciji members, Zhengyan recommends another fundamental mode of daily practice in the performance of 10 good deeds. These deeds are the following: (1) Do not kill. (2) Do not steal. (3) Do not commit adultery. (4) Refrain from making absurd remarks. (5) Do not drink alcohol (this included refraining from chewing betel nuts). (6) Do not engage in gambling activities. (7) Wear clothes properly. (8) Practice filial piety toward parents. (9) Observe traffic laws. (10) Do not engage in political activities. In particular, men belonging to the Compassion-Honor Group (Cicheng Dui, a kind of men's auxiliary group to the commissioners that was founded in 1990) had to swear not to participate in politics (Huang 1998, 391). Keeping these 10 precepts throughout one's daily life was the most essential factor in

restoring human nature, and they were also the cornerstone for creating a civilized nation, an ultimate goal of Taixu's humanistic Buddhism.

Hence, based on the ideology of humanistic Buddhism, currently Ciji members under Zhengyan's leadership have carried out the four great projects and eight projects. The four great projects consist of charity, medical care, education, and humanities, while the eight projects consist of the four great projects, international relief, bone marrow donation, social service, and environmental protection.

How Zhengyan succeeded to the Humanistic Buddhism of Taixu and Yinshun

It is well-known that Ciji's activities are based on the ideological background of humanistic Buddhism. Elise Anne DeVido pointed out that Ciji considers humans as the core, or that the foundation is derived from Taixu's Buddhism or Buddhism for the human realm. Taixu worked hard to emphasize and express in modern ways the fact that Buddhism's inherent tendency is to consider humans as the foundation, and that at the same time it aims at liberating all sentient beings (DeVido 2010, 50). Taixu was born in the Zhejiang Province in 1890. He had agonized over the form of modern Buddhism, and concluded that Buddhist communities, either monastic or lay, should try to improve the state of the world by reforming the social environment based on appropriate Buddhist teachings. In this regard, Elise Anne DeVido pointed out that Taixu was a modernist, but not a secularist. He strove for renewal, seeking to reorient Buddhism towards engagement in the world, focusing more on the human realm and less on gods and ghosts (DeVido 2010, 95). In 1933 he published an article entitled, "How to Establish Humanistic Buddhism." His humanistic Buddhism was to emphasize the human world rather than the after-life or celestial world, in accordance with Buddhist teachings. It reforms society, enables humankind to progress, and improves the entire world (DeVido 2010, 99; Taixu Dashi 2016, 259). Yinshun, who was born in China and moved to Taiwan in 1952, followed Taixu's idea. He was Taixu's student, a graduate of one of Taixu's seminaries in China, chief editor of his *Complete Works*, and his biographer. In succeeding to Taixu's humanistic Buddhism he comprises a large and sophisticated body of scholastic material, on the ideology of humanistic Buddhism.

It appears as though Taixu's notion of humans was the core influence on Zhengyan, and eventually led her to establish Ciji. So, from this point on we shall observe the way Zhengyan adheres to Taixu and Yinshun's two strategic aspects. First, Taixu's four steps of reformation as an outer structure, and second, three critical factors as an inner direction. These outer and inner aspects are the main ideologies of humanistic Buddhism advocated by Taixu and Yinshun.

In her biography she endorsed Taixu's ideology of humanistic Buddhism, by reading his book prior to her becoming Yinshun's disciple. Moved by his book, she followed Taixu's tenets on the Chinese Buddhist Revolution faithfully. In 1928, Taixu published an article entitled, "An Instruction on the Monastics for the Revolution of Chinese Buddhism," wherein he explained in detail his tenets concerning the Revolution of Chinese Buddhism. Specifically, he indicated parts that ought to be removed and reformed, in terms of establishing a civilized Chinese society through Buddhist teachings. For him, the Revolution of Chinese Buddhism could be realized in four steps, which are as follows:

- (1) Life Buddhism must be established, and to do this we must first recognize that we are human beings, and practice good deeds with the Bodhisattva path. This way, we can eventually attain Buddhahood.
- (2) The Buddhist Monastic Community should be built in accordance with a suitable environment for a modern Chinese society.
- (3) The Lay Buddhist Community should be organized in accordance with a suitable environment for a modern Chinese society.
- (4) The 10 good deeds must be taught to those working in the fields of agriculture, industry, commerce, military, politics, and the arts, and then to the Chinese people as a whole (Won 2002, 121-122).

The Korean Buddhist scholar Won Pil-seong, indicated that these four steps essentially constitute the direction of Taixu's reformation. Among the four steps, the most important is to set up a Bodhisattva vow through learning Mahayana teachings. Taixu conceived humanistic Buddhism as a way of reforming Chinese Buddhism in the 20th century. His basic idea was to edify people by teaching Mahayana Buddhist doctrines, and making them Bodhisattva practitioners who would work for the public with compassionate minds. In his article entitled, "The Significance of Life Buddhism," he wrote:

Due to modernization, sciences, and popularization, we have to establish Mahayana Buddhism on the foundation of ultimate enlightenment. The path is to raise the Bodhi mind based on perfect understanding through the study of Mahayana Buddhist Scriptures, and to practice Bodhisattva activity. (Taixu Dashi 2016, 259)

This passage reveals clearly that his concept of humanistic Buddhism is based on Mahayana Buddhism, and that his emphasis on studying the Mahayana doctrine paves the way for a foundation of becoming a Bodhisattva, rather than accumulating cognitive knowledge.

In the same context, Zhengyan also emphasizes the practice of the Bodhisattva path in her core text, *Still Thoughts (Jingsi yu)*. She asserts that Buddhist Sutras are the Way, and the Way is the path. By relying on Buddhist teachings and sutras we should try to practice it daily, instead of merely reciting the texts (Zhengyan 2006, 10). Furthermore, while

young Buddhists seek the Buddhist truth, they are addicted to linguistic knowledge of Buddhist Sutras. If they applied their linguistic knowledge to pragmatic wisdom, it would open a thousand eyes through sound, and help a thousand hands through action. Then, it can combine both principle and phenomenon, a manifestation of the Buddhist truth (Zhengyan 2006, 156). Judging by these passages, it appears that like Taixu, Zhengyan too recommends that Ciji members should act like Bodhisattvas, but go beyond studying Buddhist texts.

According to previous researches that provided in detail the history of Ciji, although they did not pay attention to Zhengyan's intention which faithfully followed Taixu's reformation of Chinese Buddhist society, it is obvious that Zhengyan determined to follow faithfully these four steps. First, she set up her own Bodhisattva vow. After meeting a sick woman, she made up her mind to save all suffering beings. Second, she built a Buddhist monastic community with her disciples. Third, she built a lay Buddhist community, Ciji, with 5 Buddhist nuns and 30 Buddhist women. Fourth, Zhengyan and Ciji members are trying to spread the spirit of the 10 good deeds both in Taiwanese society as well as in all the world. In other words, over the course of 40 years and more, Zhengyan and Ciji members have focused on charitable works during the first 10 years, medical works 10 years later, educational works for the subsequent 10 years, and they are currently contributing to cultural and humanistic programs by spreading the spirit of the 10 good deeds.

Furthermore, for ideologies of humanistic Buddhism, except for these four steps of reformation as the outer structure, the most important things are the three steps of inner practicing direction. Taixu suggested three very critical factors that all Buddhist practitioners must cultivate and aim at, based on Mahayana doctrines of the Bodhisattva path: First, become a Bodhisattva; second, develop a compassionate mind; and third, create a Pure Land on earth, here and now.

Let us examine the first factor, namely becoming a Bodhisattva. Taixu explained that we should start by realizing that we are ordinary Bodhisattvas, that is, sentient beings. So, we need to keep practicing Bodhisattva activities until we achieve our own Buddhahood. In addition to this suggestion of Taixu, Yinshun explained why we needed to start as ordinary Bodhisattvas. In Buddhist theology, everyone, regardless of whether the person is of monastic or lay background, man or woman, rich or poor, high or low, can be a Bodhisattva. All Buddhas and Bodhisattvas start at this stage, and so do we. In this regard, Zhengyan refers to this ordinary Bodhisattva as a human Bodhisattva, and defines a human Bodhisattva as follows:

All Ciji members around the world are striving to foster human Bodhisattvas. A Bodhisattva refers to an enlightened sentient being. If you want to be a Bodhisattva, you should not be despising your own abilities. You must

respect your own ability to do good deeds. At the same time, you must be humble. Only if you believe that can you impress others, and lead them to do good deeds. (Zhengyan 2006, 10)

Zhengyan declares that a human Bodhisattva is not a statue made of earth or carved out of wood. It is a genuine Bodhisattva, one who can work, talk, eat, and travel anywhere to hear what suffering sounds like. This Bodhisattva should help others daily, and as stated above this Bodhisattva is also called a daily Bodhisattva. Thus, it is clear that whatever we call it, ordinary Bodhisattva, human Bodhisattva, or daily Bodhisattva, it refers to the same figure who seeks to be a Bodhisattva in daily life.

Second, Taixu and Yinshun indicate that the ordinary Bodhisattva, human Bodhisattva, or daily Bodhisattva is characterized by promoting altruism with a compassionate mind. Taixu emphasized that at the moment one becomes a Bodhisattva in daily life, one must try to perform acts that benefit others with a grand and enormous spirit. If, in contrast, one is in a hurry to seek liberation from birth and death for oneself, regardless that how strong one's faith may be or how long one practices, one will never be a true Bodhisattva (Won 2002, 122). In the same context, Yinshun asserted that Buddhist practitioners should value altruism the most, and should never rush their own liberation from birth and death. His article, "Humanistic Buddhism of the Right Truth in the Right Time," which appeared in his book, *Miscellany of Humanistic Buddhism*, pointed out that, "While I am studying Buddhism, I realize that Buddhist teachings always consider saving the world with a Great Compassionate Mind, and emphasize the sharing activity (*dana* in Sanskrit) among six virtues, called the Six Paramitas, which must be done during a Bodhisattva path, as most important in promoting the salvation spirit of altruism. However, I am aware that, in reality, there are very different circumstances in Chinese Buddhist society" (Yinshun 2017, 3). Because of this realization, he set the salvation spirit of altruism as the most important value in practicing humanistic Buddhism.

To inherit Yinshun's idea, Zhengyan emphasizes that the fundamental key to practicing Buddhism must be developing compassionate minds towards suffering beings. So, without developing compassionate minds, an essential part of Buddhism is missing. Let us understand what her compassionate mind is by introducing her unique poem, entitled 'Three Emptiness in the Universe, pu tian san mu.'

May there be no one in the world I do not love.
 May there be no one in the world that I do not believe.
 May there be no one in the world that I do not forgive.
 May I throw away all the anguish, resentment, and anxious mind
 May the heart of great mercy that loves all people fill the empty space
 to the full.
 (Kim 2009, 206)

The poem shows us that her spirit of the great compassionate mind originated in the spirit of having no boundaries between self and the other. She affirms that even though they may not be her relatives or friends, yet if they suffered, she also suffered. If they fell sick, she too was sick. The anguish is in their minds, and the wound is in their bodies, but their sufferings remained in her mind. This is because there were no boundaries between her and them (Zhengyan 1996). Here, it can be clearly seen that her altruism is based on the notion of no boundaries between self and the other, *tong tie da bei* as well as selflessness, *wu wo*, a core theology of Buddhism.

Thus, it can be assumed that Zhengyan's spirit of the great compassionate mind is affecting the Ciji members, as well as the basic spirit of Ciji. So, when Ciji members practice charitable activities, they should remember that they are not giving to others, but rather giving to themselves who are also referred to as 'others.' Therefore, Zhengyan recommends that they always be humble, even though they have worked for other people every day.

Finally, all the activities of the ordinary Bodhisattva are aimed at creating a Pure Land on earth. The Pure Land on earth is established as the most beautiful world in the human realm, and all Bodhisattvas are not necessary to seek a Pure Land outside our world.

Wow! A Pure Land in this world! We must make vows of mercy, diligently share, devote ourselves to prayers, and save sentient beings on a wider scale... The perfection of the Pure Land cannot be achieved without the vow of mercy... If the beginning of the vow does not start with the practice of sharing, the true big vow cannot be realized. We must make a vow of great mercy, and practice sharing as a starting point. (Taixu Dashi 2016, 358)

Taixu's final goal for humanistic Buddhism is to purify people's minds and realize the culture of the 10 good deeds in Chinese society. He believed that a civilized world was a Pure Land on earth. So, Taixu's idea as cited above, clarifies the fact that the Pure Land could be achieved when ordinary Bodhisattvas create a value of true humanity in mankind, make a vow to save sentient beings, and practice great compassion, starting with sharing the Six Paramitas.

As mentioned earlier, Ciji's main goal is to create a Pure Land in this world by practicing charitable works every day. It is based on Zhengyan's teaching of the relationship between practicing compassion and creating the Pure Land on earth, as described below:

In order to embody compassion, we must practice it with concrete actions. Look at your neighbors with compassionate eyes, shape the intangibles, put the theory into action, and always exercise the spirit of salvation of great mercy, saying, 'If we don't save them, who will?' If it can be done this way, the secular world can also become the Paradise or Pure Land. (Zhengyan 2006, 34)

Like the above passage, in *Still Thoughts*, Zhengyan has repeatedly emphasized the fact that the Pure Land, called the Western Paradise, can be realized where compassionate deeds are performed. Thus, the Ciji members do not work for their afterlife, but they work for their present life and this current world, to create the Pure Land where all beings live happily and peacefully.

Likewise, when she received her Bikkhuni precept at the Linji temple of Taibei in 1962, she already knew Taixu's humanistic Buddhism. But after she noticed a suffering woman, she decided to follow Taixu's four-step reformation of Chinese Buddhist society, with three inner directions of practicing humanistic Buddhism. Also, the Ciji members under Zhengyan's leadership are working towards realizing Taixu's ideology for humanistic Buddhism, specifically in Taiwanese society, and more broadly around the world. Currently, Ciji members under Zhengyan's leadership have carried out the four great projects and eight projects. The four great projects consist of charity, medical care, education, and humanities, while the eight projects consist of the four great projects, international relief, bone marrow donation, social service, and environmental protection.

REFERENCES

- Bingenheimer, Marcus. 2003. "Chinese Buddhism Unbound – Rebuilding and Redefining Chinese Buddhism on Taiwan." In *Buddhism in Global Perspective*, edited by Kalpakam Sankarnarayan, 122-146. Mumbai: Somaiya Publications.
- DeVido, Elise Anne. 2004. "The Infinite Worlds of Taiwanese Buddhist Nuns." *Buddhist Women and Social Justice: Ideals, Challenges, and Achievements*, edited by Karma Lekshe Tsomo, 219-231. Albany: SUNY Press.
- . 2010. *Taiwan's Buddhist Nuns*. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Han, Yunjin. 2016. "Miaoshan Story's Formation and Development in Chinese Society." PhD diss., Goryeo University in Korea.
- Huang, Chien-Yu Julia, and Robert Weller. 1998. "Merit and Mothering: Women and Social Welfare in Taiwanese Buddhism." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 57 (2): 379-396.
- Jones, Charles Brewer. 1996. *Buddhism in Taiwan: An Historical Survey*. Virginia: University of Virginia.
- Kim, Jeran. 2011. "Formation and Identification of Modern Buddhism in Taiwan – appeared on Yinshun's Humanistic Buddhism." *The Journal of Pan-Korean Philosophy* (61): 93-119.

- Kim, Taeguan. 2009. "Intention and System of Ciji Foundation." *Studies of Seon Culture* (7): 167-218.
- Tiaxu, Dashi. 2016. *Improving World by Fundamental Buddhism*. Translated by Hoanki Cho. Seoul: Bulguang Publishing.
- Won, Philseong. 2002. "Taixu and Yinshun's Reformation Thought of Chinese Buddhism and Hoedang's Thought." *The Journal of Esoteric Buddhism*, Vol 4: 119-151. The Institute of Esoteric Culture of Uidok University.
- Yinshu, Daoshi. 2017. *Miscellany of Humanistic Buddhism*. Taiwan: Yinshun Foundation.
- Zhengyan. 2007. *Still Thoughts* (Taiwan: Ciji Still Culture Publishing, 1996). Translated by Sangmi Lee and Sangwu Kim. Seoul: Hanulbuk.

The Relationship between the Finite and Infinite in the Two Gates of Religion: Kiyozawa Manshi's View of Buddhist Traditions

Yuichi Tsunoda, S.J.

In this article, I seek to elucidate the relationship between the finite and infinite in the two gates of religion, in *The Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion* by Kiyozawa Manshi (1863-1903), a prominent Buddhist philosopher who was active from around the end of the 19th to the beginning of the 20th century. He was also a Buddhist priest belonging to the Ōtani or Higashi Honganji branch of Shin-Buddhism,¹ the Buddhist school founded by Shinran (1173-1262), and one of the major schools of Pure Land Buddhism in Japan.

Kiyozawa studied Western philosophy at the Imperial University (now the University of Tokyo) from 1882 to 1888, and he was influenced by the philosophies of Rudolf Hermann Lotze (1817-1881) and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831). He applied Lotze's relational view of beings and Hegel's dialectic to an understanding of Buddhism, and created a new Buddhist philosophy by utilizing concepts of Western philosophy. Kiyozawa referred to this new Buddhist philosophy as "a philosophy of religion."

In his philosophy of religion, he endeavored to clarify the common structure of religions, despite the fact that his philosophy was deeply based on the ontological view of Buddhism. He wrote *The Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion* (in Japanese, *Shūkyō Tetsugaku Gaikotsu* 宗教哲学骸骨) in 1892.² This work happens to be one of the early attempts at expressing Buddhist thought, within the framework of Western philosophy in Japan. It was translated into English by Noguchi Zenshirō, and presented at the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago in 1893.³

¹ With regard to Kiyozawa's early life history, I referred to the following text. Mark L. Blum, "Kiyozawa Manshi: Life and Thought" in Mark L. Blum and Robert F. Rhodes eds. *Cultivating Spirituality: A Modern Shin Buddhist Anthology* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011), 55-65.

² *Ibid.*, 56.

³ *Ibid.* Noguchi's English translation is as follows: Kiyozawa Manshi, *The Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion*, trans. Noguchi Zenshirō in *Kiyozawa Manshi zenshū* 清沢満之全集 [The Complete Works of Kiyozawa Manshi], vol. 1, ed. Otani University (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoten, 2002), 109-150.

In this article, I focus on Kiyozawa's view of the "two gates" of religion in *The Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion*. The two gates signify the "self-power gate" (*jirikimon* 自力門) and the "other-power gate" (*tarikimon* 他力門), both of which arise from the Buddhist tradition in Japan. Kiyozawa discovered the differing structures of the infinite and finite in these two gates, and accordingly this article clarifies his view of the bond between the finite and the infinite in these gates, in his *Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion*.

Definitions of the Finite and Infinite in The Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion

In *The Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion*, Kiyozawa defined the concepts of finite and infinite. He held the view that all beings are finite because every being is distinguished from other beings, and limited by those beings.⁴ All finite beings in the universe form one infinite reality. Every being contains the whole reality of beings in the universe, and thus it is infinite, "for nothing exists out of the universe to limit it."⁵

According to Kiyozawa, every finite being is finite because it is always limited by other finite beings. For example, "A is finite because it is limited by B," and "B is finite because it is limited by A."⁶ Hence, "every finite is dependent on the other for its finiteness," and all finite beings are interdependent. By way of contrast, "the infinite, requiring none to limit it, is the independent."⁷

Kiyozawa also affirmed that every finite dependent being is relative, but the infinite independent being has no relationship with other beings. Thus, the infinite independent being is absolute.⁸

Moreover, there is nothing outside of the infinite, and thus the infinite being is the one reality.⁹ In contrast, finite beings are numerous, and each finite being is single. Kiyozawa distinguished "a single (being)" (*tan-itsu* 単一) from "the one (being)" (*yui-itsu* 唯一).¹⁰ "A single (being)" indicates each finite being, and each single finite being has mutually dependent relationships with all other beings, and all these finite beings form the one infinite reality.¹¹

He also asserted that "the one" infinite being is "the whole" reality of beings, even though "a single" finite being is "a part" of the one infinite

⁴ Kiyozawa Manshi, *Shūkyō tetsugaku gaikotsu* 宗教哲学骸骨 [The Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion] in *Kiyozawa Manshi zenshū* 清沢満之全集 [The Complete Works of Kiyozawa Manshi], 8. The English translations are mine.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 8. English translations in quotation marks are from Noguchi's translation. *Ibid.*, 140.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.* English translations in quotation marks are from Noguchi's translation. *Ibid.*, 139.

⁸ *Ibid.* English translations are mine.

⁹ *Ibid.* English translations are mine.

¹⁰ In Noguchi's translation, the word "*tan-itsu* 単一" is translated into "a unit." *Ibid.*, 139.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 8-9. English translations are mine.

reality.¹² Furthermore, he held that “the whole” reality is “perfect,” and “a part” of the whole reality is “imperfect.” Thus, “the infinite” reality is “perfect” and “the finite” reality is imperfect.¹³ Kiyozawa summarized the definition of finite and infinite in a diagram, as follows.

Finite=dependent=relative=single=part=imperfect
 Infinite=independent=absolute=one=whole=perfect¹⁴

Kiyozawa's definition of finite and infinite has its background in Buddhism. In the ontological view of Buddhism, each finite being has interdependent relationships with all other finite beings. A single finite being can exist or cease to exist in its relationships with all other finite beings in the “dependent origination.” Moreover, one can see the infinite reality within the interdependent relationship of all beings. Thus, Kiyozawa's analysis of the finite and infinite is deeply based on the Buddhist view of beings.

The Structure of Attaining Peace of Mind and Cultivating Virtue

Kiyozawa held that the spiritual development of our mind is based on the relationship between cause and effect. The fundamental point of religion is to attain “the infinite good effect” (*mugen-no-zenka* 無限の善果) by practicing “the infinite good cause” (*mugen-no-zen-in* 無限の善因).¹⁵ Thus, the essence of religion consists of “the stage of cause” and “the stage of effect.”¹⁶ Kiyozawa explained that “the stage of cause” in religion contains two elements, namely “peace of mind (*anjin* 安心) or faith (*shinjin* 信心),” and “cultivating virtue (*shūtoku* 修徳) or practice (*shugyō* 修行).”¹⁷

When a finite self-conscious being develops spiritually, this development is the action of attaining purpose, and thus consists of two elements, which are “the recognizing element” and “the acting element.” In “the recognizing element,” one recognizes the object. In “the acting element,” one acts in accordance with the object.¹⁸ “The recognizing element” indicates “peace of mind or faith,” and “the acting element” is “cultivating virtue or practice.”¹⁹

First, in “peace of mind or faith,” one experiences internal peace in one's mind when one recognizes the infinite being, and is convinced of attaining

¹² Ibid., 9. English translations are mine.

¹³ Ibid. English translations are mine.

¹⁴ Ibid. English translations are mine.

¹⁵ Ibid., 28. English translations are mine.

¹⁶ Ibid. English translations in quotation marks are from Noguchi's translation. Ibid., 118.

¹⁷ Ibid. English translations are mine. In Noguchi's translation, the word “*shūtoku* 修徳” is translated into “culture of virtue.” Ibid., 118.

¹⁸ Ibid. English translations are mine.

¹⁹ Ibid. English translations are mine.

the infinite reality.²⁰ Kiyozawa held that one recognizes the infinite reality in two different ways, according to the “two gates” of religion, which are the “self-power gate” (*jirikimon* 自力門) and the “other-power gate” (*tarikimon* 他力門).²¹ The “self-power gate” refers to the way of practicing religion by one’s own power. In this way, one recognizes the infinite reality as “the potential infinite” (*insei-mugen* 因性無限),²² in which one experiences the infinite reality in oneself, and express the fact that “there is nothing in the universe outside of the mind,” (*shingaimubeppou* 心外無別法).²³

By way of contrast, the “other-power gate” refers to the way of following the infinite power beyond oneself. In this way, one recognizes the infinite reality as “the actual Infinite” (*katai-mugen* 果体無限).²⁴ The reason is that in this way of life one recognizes oneself as a powerless being, and recognizes the infinite reality as the actual infinite power beyond oneself, and surrenders oneself to that power. Consequently, when one recognizes “the actual Infinite” beyond oneself, one is settled in internal peace and is convinced of the eternal salvation that is brought about by the infinite power.²⁵

Secondly, Kiyozawa clarified the content of “cultivating virtue or practice.” When one recognizes the infinite being, one proceeds to the way of practice in order to attain the infinite reality.²⁶ This is the way of “cultivating virtue or practice.” In this practice, the finite self gets over the infinite distance between the finite reality and the infinite reality, and attains the infinite reality. One cannot engage in practice unless one undergoes the infinite practice for the infinite time.²⁷ When one cultivates one’s virtues, one has to control and get rid of a “wrong recognition” and “wrong habit,” and “nourish and develop” a “right recognition” and “right habit.”²⁸

According to Kiyozawa, in the “self-power gate,” one has a power of controlling or eradicating a wrong recognition and a wrong habit, in order to attain a right recognition and a right habit of the infinite being. Thus, one cannot have true recognition of the infinite reality unless one attains the final stage of enlightenment by one’s own power.²⁹ In this way, one attains the recognition of the infinite reality by one’s own power. Therefore, one receives “the finite peace of mind,” that is attained by one’s self-power

²⁰ Ibid. English translations are mine.

²¹ Ibid. I referred to Noguchi’s translation of “the two gates.” In his translation, the two gates are “the self-exertion gate” and “the other-power gate.” Ibid., 117.

²² The word “potential Infinite” is from Noguchi’s translation. Ibid., 117.

²³ Ibid. English translations in quotation marks are from Noguchi’s translation. Ibid., 117.

²⁴ Ibid. The word “actual Infinite” is from Noguchi’s translation. Ibid., 117.

²⁵ Ibid. English translations are mine.

²⁶ Ibid., 29. English translations are mine.

²⁷ Ibid. English translations are mine.

²⁸ Ibid. I referred to Noguchi’s translation. In his translation, he used the words “(right or wrong) knowledge” and “(right or wrong) habit.” Ibid., 116.

²⁹ Ibid., 30. English translations are mine.

practices.³⁰ Moreover, the finite self tries to undertake a great practice by its own finite power. Thus, the practice of the finite self is infinite.³¹

By way of contrast, in the "other-power gate," one has no power of controlling or eradicating a wrong recognition and a wrong habit. Thus, one's right recognition and habit are nurtured and developed by the infinite power beyond oneself.³² In this way, one attains the recognition of the infinite reality by receiving faith in the infinite being.

Hence, one receives "the infinite peace of mind" that is given by the infinite power beyond oneself.³³ The practice is already completed by the infinite being. Thus, the finite-self does not need to engage in any practices by its own power, but only receives the grace of the infinite being. Thus, the practice of the finite self is "zero."³⁴

Background of the Distinction between the two Gates in Kiyozawa

In this segment, I elucidate the background of Kiyozawa's distinction of the "self-power gate" and the "other-power gate" in *The Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion*. Originally, this distinction comes from Shin-Buddhism. In *Gutoku Notes*, Shinran explains that there are two types of teachings in Mahāyāna Buddhism. These two types of teachings are the "teachings of sudden attainment," and "teachings of gradual attainment."³⁵

Likewise, in the teachings of sudden attainment, there are two types of teachings. First, there are the "real teachings of the difficult practices, the Path of Sages," that contains teachings of "Busshin" (Zen Buddhism), "Shingon" (Shingon Buddhism), "Hokke" (Tiantai Buddhism), "Kegon" (Huayan Buddhism), and so forth. Second, there is "the true and real teaching of the easy practice," which is "the Primal Vow of the Pure Land way."³⁶

Furthermore, there are "two kinds of transcendence." First, Shinran held that there is the "lengthwise transcendence" (*juchō* 豎超), which indicates the realization wherein one recognizes that "this body itself is Buddha" (*sokushin-zebutsu* 即身是仏) and "becoming Buddha with this very body," (*sokushin-jōbutsu* 即身成仏) and so forth.³⁷ In my understanding, in the

³⁰ Ibid. The phrase "the finite peace of mind" is from Noguchi's translation. Ibid., 115.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid. The phrase "the infinite peace of mind" is from Noguchi's translation. Ibid., 115.

³³ Ibid. I referred to Noguchi's translation. Ibid., 11.

³⁴ Ibid. English translations are mine.

³⁵ Shinran, *Gutoku's Notes*, trans. Dennis Hirota, in *The Collected Works of Shinran*, vol. 1 (Kyoto: Jodo Shinshū Hongwanji-Ha), 587. In Hirota's translation, "*juchō* 豎超" is "transcendence lengthwise."

³⁶ Ibid., 587.

³⁷ Ibid., 588. The original Japanese words are from Shinran, *Gutoku-shō*, in *Shinran chosaku zenshū: zen* 親鸞著作全集: 全 [The Complete Works of Shinran], ed. Kaneko Daiei (Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1964), 365.

“lengthwise transcendence,” one engages in difficult practices (meditation, contemplation, and moral practices) for a long time and overcomes many stages of self-awareness, and ultimately attains final enlightenment. When one attains final enlightenment, one experiences the infinite reality in oneself.

Second, Shinran affirmed that there is the “crosswise transcendence” (*ōchō* 横超), which indicates the “selected Primal Vow,” the “true and real fulfilled land,” and the “immediate attainment of birth” in the Pure Land.³⁸

In the tradition of Pure Land Buddhism, Dharmākara Bodhisattva took the Primal Vow in order to save all sentient beings in the Pure Land. He undertook the practices of the bodhisattva for an immeasurable period of time and finally attained enlightenment as Amitābha (Amida) Buddha and established the Pure Land.³⁹

In Shinran’s teaching, when one receives faith in Amitābha (Amida) Buddha in the present time, one is assured of birth in the Pure Land in the future. One cannot attain faith by one’s own power. One can only receive faith from the infinite power (the power of the Primal Vow of Amitābha Buddha) beyond oneself.⁴⁰

According to Shinran, in the “Pure Land path,” “transcending crosswise” is to be “mindful of the Primal Vow and becoming free of the mind of self-power.” This is the “Other Power of transcending crosswise,” which is “the single within the single,” the “sudden within the sudden,” the “true within the true,” and the “One Vehicle within the [One] Vehicle.” This is the “true essence” of the Pure Land way.⁴¹

In my view, in the “crosswise transcendence” one receives faith in the infinite power beyond oneself (“the Other Power”) and is assured of birth in the Pure Land. In this moment, one experiences immediate transcendence from the power of karmic evil without any practices of one’s own power.

³⁸ Ibid. In Hirota’s translation, “*ōchō*横超” is “transcendence crosswise.” The original Japanese words are from *ibid.*, 365.

³⁹ Hisao Inagaki, trans. *The Larger Sutra on Amitayus (The Sutra on the Buddha of Infinite Life)*, in *The Three Pure Land Sutras*, BDK English Tripitaka 12-II, III, IV (Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1995), 28-43.

⁴⁰ Shinran, *The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization of the Pure Land Way*, trans. Dennis Hirota in *The Collected Works of Shinran*, 77-80.

⁴¹ Ibid., 223. In *The True Teaching, Practice, and Realization*, quoting Shantao’s sentences, Shinran stated that there are the “Path of Sages” and the “Pure Land path” in Buddha’s teachings. The “Path of Sages” is the “path of difficult practice.” In this path, there are “Mahayana and Hinayana,” “gradual attainment and sudden attainment,” the “One Vehicle, two vehicles, and three vehicles,” the “accommodated and true,” the “exoteric and esoteric,” and the “departing lengthwise, and transcending lengthwise.” They are “self-power teachings,” and the “path of the accommodated gate of provisional means [by those] in the state of benefiting and guiding others.” In contrast, the “Pure Land path” is “the path of easy practice.” In this path, there are: “departing crosswise and transcending crosswise, temporary and true, gradual attainment and sudden attainment, auxiliary, right, and sundry practices,” and “mixed praxis and single praxis.” Ibid., 222-223.

The State of Infinite Perfection in the Two Gates of Kiyozawa

Based on Shinran's distinction between the Path of the Sages and the Path of the Pure Land, Kiyozawa explains how one can attain the "state of infinite perfection" in the two gates of religion in *The Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion*.⁴² When the finite self attains infinite reality in infinite perfection, one experiences "enlightenment" (*jōdō* 成道) in the "self-power gate," and "birth in the Pure Land" (*ōjō* 往生) in the "other-power gate."⁴³ In Kiyozawa's view, the distinction between "enlightenment" and "birth in the Pure Land" is based on the two different perspectives regarding the state of infinite perfection.

When one attains the state of infinite perfection, one passes through the "infinite course." From the perspective of time, the "infinite course" is expressed as an "infinite period of duration" (For example, it is expressed as the "three great *asamkhyeya* kalpas). This is "enlightenment" in the "self-power gate."⁴⁴

In contrast, from the perspective of space, the "infinite course" is expressed as the "infinite distance of place." (For example, it is expressed as "10000000000000 Buddha Lands"). This is "birth in the Pure Land" in "the other-power gate."⁴⁵

In this way, Kiyozawa observes enlightenment and birth in the Pure Land, from the two different perspectives in the state of infinite perfection.

Conclusion

In summary, I have explicated the relationship between the finite and infinite in the two gates of religion in *The Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion* in Kiyozawa Manshi.

Kiyozawa held that the finite is dependent, relative, single, partial, and imperfect. He also held that the infinite is independent, absolute, one, whole, and perfect. Based on these definitions of the finite and the infinite, Kiyozawa clarified the relationship between the finite and infinite in the two gates, namely "the self-power gate" (*jirikimon* 自力門) and the "other-power gate" (*tarikimon* 他力門).

In the "self-power gate," one (the finite self) recognizes the infinite reality in oneself as the "potential Infinite" (*insei-mugen* 因性無限). In this way, the finite self undertakes infinite practices by its own finite power, and attains

⁴² Kiyozawa Manshi, *Shūkyō tetsugaku gaikotsu* 宗教哲学骸骨 [The Skeleton of a Philosophy of Religion], 30-31. The word "the state of the infinite perfection" is from Noguchi's translation. Ibid., 114.

⁴³ Ibid. I referred to Noguchi's translation. Ibid., 114. In his translation, a word, "*jōdō* 成道" is "Completion," and a word, "*ōjō* 往生" is "The Going-to-be-born."

⁴⁴ Ibid., 31. I referred to Noguchi's translation. Ibid., 114.

⁴⁵ Ibid. English translations in quotation marks are from Noguchi's translation. Ibid., 114.

the “finite peace of mind.” When one attains the state of infinite perfection, one experiences “enlightenment” by passing through the infinite course. In the self-power gate, the infinite course is expressed as an infinite period duration. This gate corresponds to the Path of the Sages in the tradition of Pure Land Buddhism.

By way of contrast, in the “other-power gate,” one (the finite self) recognizes the infinite reality beyond (outside of) itself as “the actual Infinite” (*katai-mugen* 果体無限). In this way, the finite self attains the recognition of the infinite reality by receiving faith in the infinite being, and experiences the “infinite peace of mind” that is given by the infinite power beyond oneself. The practice is already completed by the infinite being, and thus the practice of the finite self is “zero.” When one attains the state of infinite perfection, one experiences “birth in the Pure Land” by passing through the infinite course. In the other-power gate, the infinite course is expressed as an infinite distance of space. This gate corresponds to the Path of Pure Land in the tradition of Pure Land Buddhism.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Blum, Mark L., and Robert F. Rhodes, eds. *Cultivating Spirituality: A Modern Shin Buddhist Anthology*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2011.
- Inagaki, Hisao, trans. *The Three Pure Land Sutras: BDK English Tripitaka*. 12-II, III, IV. Berkeley: Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 1995.
- Kiyozawa, Manshi. *Kiyozawa Manshi Zenshū* 清沢満之全集 [The Complete Works of Kiyozawa Manshi]. 9 Vols. Edited by Otani University. Tokyo: Iwanami shoten, 2002-2003.
- Shinran. *Shinran Chosaku Zenshū: Zen* 親鸞著作全集:全 [The Complete Works of Shinran]. Edited by Daiei Kaneko. Kyoto: Hōzōkan, 1964.
- Shinran. *The Collected Works of Shinran*. 2 Vols. Translated by Dennis Hirota, Hisao Inagaki, Michio Tokunaga, and Ryūshin Uryuzu with introductions, glossaries, and reading aids. Kyoto: Jodo Shinshū Hongwanji-Ha, 1997.

11

Dhamma in “The Two Extremes and The Middle Way”

Ohn Mar Thant

When we hear the phrase, “The Two Extremes and the Middle Way,” we can instantly guess that they are words derived from Buddhism. These words refer to the first sermon of the Lord Buddha that was delivered over 2560 years ago in India, and entitled the *Dhammacakkaappavattana Sutta*. In this first discourse he described the two extremes, namely, abstaining from pleasure (sensual indulgence) and refraining from pain (self-torture).

The Lord Buddha founded Dhamma, the law of nature, from Nature. It was merely the truth. We all live in this wonderful, superb, amazing world. We adore nature and are fascinated by its beauty. In a broad sense, “nature” refers to the natural, physical, material, or celestial world or universe. Many scientists, artists, and poets have expressed their thoughts on nature; they share and create laws with regard to it. The American poet Ralph Waldo Emerson, put it succinctly as follows. “Nature is a mutable cloud which is always and never the same.” William Shakespeare declared, “One touch of nature makes the whole world kin.” Lao Tzu, the ancient Chinese philosopher and founder of philosophical Taoism wrote, “Nature does not hurry, yet everything is accomplished.” The scientist Albert Einstein affirmed, “Look deep into nature, and then you will understand everything better,” and the renowned Dutch painter Rembrandt asserted, “Choose only one master—nature.” These are indeed beautiful quotes. The Lord Buddha discovered the truth of Nature. He mastered Nature and gained access to the wisdom of the universe. He taught us all about nature, and his teaching was neither an invention nor something divinely revealed to him. He proposed a universal, functional solution to a universal problem, when he lectured on the cause of suffering and abolition of suffering. (In general, the so-called “Nature” provides us with technical and intellectual knowledge from the material world, and spiritual knowledge from the mystical world).

Many people in the world are incredibly intelligent. They also created laws based on nature. We have seen leaves, fruits, flowers, and stuff falling or dropping from trees or the sky, but it never occurred to us that this would become a law. This phenomenon does not appear as wisdom, when it is realized as a law. However, when Isaac Newton saw an apple dropping, he

concluded that the apple must have been attracted to the earth, which was the reason why it fell down. This attraction, he called "gravity." Gravity attracts all massive objects, which Newton uses to describe the movement of the celestial bodies. His discovery of gravity enabled us to understand how planets move, and his discovery has become a law of universal gravitation. Similarly, we have all learned that on entering a bath filled to the brim with water, the water streams out. Even so, we never discover why anything works, or gain knowledge as a result of it. Yet, Archimedes discovered that when a human being enters a bathtub filled with water, the person's weight of the displaced water is equal to the weight of his whole body.

There is a solution for everything in Nature, but it is only discovered by a very few. All of us see the same thing, but only certain people notice it and make a law out of it. We may come to understand the reality of "nature," but the Lord Buddha states that there are two kinds of truths in this entire world, nothing more than these. They are conventional truth and ultimate truth. Ultimate truth is true at all times and in all circumstances. The reality in the universe is that only mind and matter exist; for there are no persons, beings, or things. By contrast, conventional truth is what people agree upon by consensus and hold in common. It is changeable and relative to some extent, and it is not true always and everywhere. Concepts (*pannatti*) are conventional truth. At different locations, the same object is referred to by diverse names. Water is referred to as "Mizu" in Japanese, "Acqua" in Italian, "Shui" in Chinese, "Yay" in Burmese and so on. The original perception (labelling or naming) of an object is no longer applicable, when it is broken or when it is analyzed by knowledge and divided into its constituent parts. When cloth is cut into pieces it can be converted into a variety of things, in accordance with our imagination. It can be made into a tablecloth, a coat, a shirt, or a handkerchief, because these things are no longer in the form of cloth, but in the form of other items. Thus, when an object changes from one form to another, we can no longer refer to it by its previous name. However, conventional truth is essential in receiving Dhamma, for we need it to explain the nature of Dhamma in words, that is, in conventional terms.

Dhamma is observing true reality, the fact that it is not mystical or exclusive, but as the truth of our own experience. This reality is to be discovered and seen directly by ourselves, not by placing our trust in books or teachers. It must be dealt with through "mindfulness," which is what leads our knowledge to realization. It is the presence of attentiveness or awareness, when observing something. It is the key to bring our knowledge to fruition. This kind of attention differs from the awareness experienced when crossing a road in front of a moving vehicle. The practice of mindfulness trains the mind to stay in the present moment, still and alert, observing the present moment, such as breathing in and out, or taking note of something that comes to our mind through our senses. Nothing should be judged or interpreted in any way. The purpose of mindfulness is simply to

observe whatever arises or occurs, without adding any additional thought to it. When you see a flower for example, you should note only the colours, since the mind is maintained at the level of bare focus, free of delusion and interpretation. This is referred to as the Vipassana meditation. "Vipassana" means a "special witnessing, wisdom-insight discipline," but it also refers to pure awareness, non-judgmental knowing, and an awareness of the changing nature of existence. There are no individuals, beings, or things in the universe, for only mind and matter exist. We may directly experience consciousness, mental factors such as contact, feeling, perception, volition, jealousy, attention, ignorance, envy, conceit, wrong view, greed, hate, and doubt in the ultimate truth, and Nibbana, that is, ultimate bliss. Everything that we refer to as 'mind' is made up of consciousness and mental factors.

Normally when we hear the phrase, "Two Extremes and the Middle Way," we just assume that the middle way is the point at the center of two points in the distance. We usually cannot visualize it any further. There is reality and identity in the world, and we define things by their forms and shapes. Everything has two extremes, such as greed and anger, win and lose, rich and poor, hot and cold, good and bad, fast and slow, love and hate, full and empty, light and dark, and so on. There are always two extremes in every aspect of our lives, and we have no idea how to avoid them. Indeed, both those extremes are based on the two opposing extremes of greed (*Lobha*) and anger (*Dossa*). If we recognize the fact that they are merely feelings, we will be at ease and free of all frustration. It is normal for us to crave for peace and harmony, since we dislike being in a state of discomfort. Also, the most affluent individuals have a craving for a tranquil mind, and joy in everything. While we all desire happiness and want to remain in our comfort zones, we take this matter lightly due to our ignorance of the sense of suffering and feeling (*Vedana*). With reference to how we feel, our mood swings and our behavior changes. When we think of 'wealth,' a sense of superiority emerges, and we have a tendency to look down on poverty. However, we are unaware that these are classified as "feelings." If we accept the fact that they are merely feelings and nothing more, we would not have the sensation of either admiration or contempt for them. When we recognize the two extremes of rich and poor as feelings, it means we have reached the middle path. We are unable to discover such insights of knowledge on account of our defilements, which however have left our inner world untouched in terms of expectations and dislikes. We may not observe our thoughts and feelings. Happiness and peace of mind are more of an effect than a cause. We are not very reflective, and it has never been a practice of ours to consider why we are sad or stressed.

For example, when encountering wealth and poverty, we experience feelings of pride, envy, admiration or guilt, hatred or dislike. Normally, due to ignorance, we do not consider pride to be a feeling. Shame is a feeling. Those who live in condominiums or mansions will assume they are

wealthy, while those who live in huts, sheds, or slums will conclude that they are impoverished. Truly, those who live in buildings feel more at ease and comfortable, and they enjoy this feeling. The building itself does not give them the feeling, but those who prefer a comfortable life, feel safe and at ease. Similarly, those who live in huts and shelters experience discomfort and dissatisfaction, due to a lack of space and convenience. However, when we go on vacations and visit beaches or resorts, we prefer the huts because we enjoy the breeze and natural coolness of the huts. These are all feelings that depend on how we look at things. The touch, the sensation throughout the body, signals preferences and dislikes. If we are fully mindful, our mind can be aware of all feelings. When we recognize the fact that it is merely a feeling, those two extremes of favoring or disliking vanish. It is referred to as the middle way, because it involves knowing as feeling (*Vedana*). When we can confirm the fact that it is just a feeling, we are on the Middle Way. We are not at the extreme of greed and the desire for ease, nor are we at the extreme of anger and disgust at the lack of ease. The fact of our not knowing that we have this craving or frustration is ignorance, which is the root cause of all suffering. This is the reason why we suffer as a result of our misdeeds: greed for feelings we like and anger for feelings we dislike. Our inability to obtain what we want is also suffering; separation from loved ones is also suffering; engaging with or living with one's enemies is also suffering. Feelings such as experiencing tension at work, happiness or unhappiness with those around us, dissatisfaction with unfulfilled expectations, unhealthy situations and so on, are forms of pain that are also referred to as "suffering." The Lord Buddha instructed us to attain enlightenment by the consistent practice of mindfulness. All of these things occur in life. Suffering is also a part of life. To choose the Middle Way is to liberate oneself from craving and stress. Here, we must understand the Four Noble Truths, for suffering, for the cause of suffering, for freedom from suffering, and for the way to attain freedom from suffering.

Another example is how we define hot and cold in terms of temperature. When the temperature is extremely high, we claim it is extremely hot. When the temperature is extremely low, we assume it is very cold. However, in fact, these are only temperature variations. The two extremes do not exist in reality. There is coldness and heat simply by contrast. Only the phenomenon of temperature is the existing reality. There are no extremes if we see the facts directly. Although the energy or element is affected by the conditions, the substitution of its nature takes place on its own. It is the process of the law of nature to regard them as non-self (*Anatta*).

Another example is the fact that those who love chilies or spicy food would like to have it, and those who do not would avoid it. Like and dislike are two extremes that differ depending on personal expectations and preferences. However, by becoming mindful and becoming able to analyze the feelings of craving or dislike that are associated with the sensation, we

are already on the middle path, as the attachment is no longer present. When we are able to see our desire or craving for the delight in the taste as it is, our greed naturally stops the extreme feeling of having it, and similarly, when we are able to see our dislike, which is anger or frustration as it is, we already release our anger. Mindfulness replaces the feeling of greed or anger. It is interesting, but to have this right view, we must train our mind to have the ability to analyze it through the practice of the Vipassana meditation. Having the right view is regarded as the Middle Way. We are easily on the Noble Eightfold Path when we have the right view; right thought, right speech, right action, right living, right effort, right mindfulness, and right concentration. This middle path eventually results in the end of natural craving or passion. Nibbana is attained by the annihilation of craving. We can see that mindfulness plays a significant role in mind training, because a cultured mind can build wisdom, enabling one to get enlightenment and see the reality.

The two extremes must be examined with mindfulness and equanimity in order to attain insight wisdom. This means we should be mindful of knowing how things really are. When we see them for what they truly are, we will be able to let go of our attachments. When we have released ourselves from the grip of obsession, our minds feel free and calm. We will come to realize the basic characteristics of all phenomenal existence, the doctrine of impermanence (*Anicca*), the absence of an abiding self (*Anatta*) and suffering (*dukkha*). The Lord Buddha taught us to avoid the two extremes in our practice of enlightenment, and to follow the middle path to end all kinds of sufferings. There are many ways to comprehend things; one is through mindfulness of thought, and another is through mindfulness of feeling. Another is comprehension without emotion or thinking, but rather by direct experience. It can be defined as a potent wisdom that we have grasped in a flash.

The Lord Buddha taught us the Four Noble Truths, namely mind and matter as suffering, attachment as the origin of suffering, attachment elimination as cessation (*Nibbana*), and the mindfulness-led noble eightfold factors as the path. We will realize that our existence is inevitable, and there is the necessary consequence of attachment or craving. Thus, wisdom is the ability to distinguish between right and wrong, as well as the discovery of cause and effect relationships.

We desire harmony and peace between the two extremes of joy and sorrow, but our lives are filled with anger and disappointment as we pass judgement on extremes such as love and hatred, close and far, inside and outside, low and strong, soft and rough, hot and cold, light and darkness, and so on, because we identify them as ours or as belonging to ourselves in the mind's context. For instance, we never consider why darkness exists. In fact, darkness takes the place of light, or more precisely, light is blocked. It is simply a matter of cause and effect. When we see our shadows, we believe

they are ours, never realizing that our bodies are just the shades appearing by blocking the sun and thereby creating the shadow. As we reach the shade, the shadow vanishes. It is replaced by the shade, which means there is no light to cover our bodies. However, we frequently believe that the shadows are our possessions, thinking in terms such as “my shadow” or “our shadows.” This is how we really think. In fact, the shadows are the result of the bodies blocking the sun’s rays. The Buddha, on the other hand, taught us that it is a relationship between cause and effect. This phenomenon is referred to as the “Natural Law.” There is no ownership of anything, since everything exists independently in the universe, but they are linked together by cause and effect. We are not mindful enough to see or understand more deeply in our hearts, because our eyes lack the habit of looking inward due to our ignorance or lack of knowledge. That is why through the practice of the Eightfold Noble Path, we can cultivate mindfulness and attain the wisdom of non-self-knowledge, *Anatta*.

Non-self-knowledge is difficult to comprehend. We have become accustomed to considering what we can do and how we can contribute to the well-being of our communities. We want to be happy and we do our best in the world, where modern technology has invented a variety of things that make life more comfortable and pleasant. Technical expertise has become more innovative and modernized over time, and more advanced methods are constantly being developed. On the other hand, we don’t think much, and it hasn’t become a habit of ours to wonder why we are depressed or stressed. Therefore, compared to physical knowledge, spiritual knowledge has not been studied in greater detail. We can see that people are in trouble, and they have become very stressful as a result of their inability to cope with unhappiness, loneliness, and tensions in today’s fast-paced world. We have all heard about ‘Anger Management’ or ‘Anger Therapy,’ or courses on counseling in today’s modern world, where many people are genuinely frustrated and depressed by circumstances beyond their control. The above healing techniques will help in providing a temporary solution on how to relax, identify a solution to a situation, and let go of grudges, but the source of the anger has not been completely identified. It is similar to taking Panadol or paracetamol for temporary pain relief. The Buddha’s teaching can be compared to doing a CT scan, endoscopy, colonoscopy, or MRI to examine the organs and structures inside the body. CT scan images, for example, are taken from different angles around the body and processed by a computer to create cross-sectional images (slices) of our bones, blood vessels, and soft tissues. Doctors use MRI scans to diagnose a wide variety of conditions, from torn ligaments to tumors. In our lives, our perspectives are split into two extremes. Anything that meets our six sense bases causes us to react with the objects. The six internal sense bases are the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body and mind. Sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste, and mind are the six senses (or the activity of thinking, including what is perceived via the other senses). We see men and women, day and night, mountains

and oceans through our eyes, but we never consider them to be mere colors. We name them after their shapes, and respond to them based on our preferences and dislikes. They are illusions, but we interpret them as though "our own eyes see them." Similarly, when we hear something, we make assumptions such as "that's a dog barking" or "that's a car horn," rather than just accepting it as the sound itself. Similarly, one could say the same thing about taste. Although we just perceive it as sweet, sour, or bitter, we incorporate our feelings and assume that it is sugar, lime, or bitter gourd/bitter melon, and so on. The aroma of sweetness or an unpleasant odor leads one to predict its origins, and conclude that it is rose, jasmine, or the odor of something unpleasant. When we touch something, we can tell if it is soft or hard, cold or hot, and whether we feel at ease or uncomfortable as a result of the experience, as well as whether we feel optimistic or anxious, happy or sad, wealthy or impoverished, depending on our feelings. We are, in fact, blind to their reality. We see colors with our eyes; we hear only sounds with our ears; we detect only scents with our nose; and we taste only the textures just at the tips of our tongues. We visualize them in images and get attached to them, rather than witness the reality's impermanence of arising and passing away. We must have a right view here. That is, if we pay complete attention or full awareness, we will be able to see everything as they are, including any miseries, feelings, or pleasant sensations, and we will not become absorbed in delusion.

We have attachments to sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and sensory sensations, and have likes and dislikes due to contacts with the senses, and these two extremes make up the majority of our life's stress. For example, when we smell fried chicken, some of us would like it. This is referred to as craving or greed, because we get a pleasant feeling from the smell. However, vegetarians and those who dislike chicken will find the scent offensive. They will experience an uncomfortable sensation, known as longing for the removal of that smell. We respond in two different ways. As a result, if we are not mindful and lack the wisdom to observe things as they are, we acquire a wrong view, which leads to clinging or intense attachment. We should experience with a right view, with mindfulness, and without devotion (craving/greed) or dislike (frustration/anger), not for the sake of self-control, but in order to let go of the idea of good and bad.

When experiencing negative emotions such as anger, shame, or depression, we become trapped in our sense of not being free. When we follow the right viewpoint, we realize that it's all about how we must act. We can only perform three types of actions: physical, verbal, and mental. The primary goal of practicing the Vipassana Meditation is to cultivate mindful wisdom, in all of our deeds. Without attachment, there is no pain nor suffering. Without pain, there is true bliss or a calm mind. It is the mind-training necessary to attain insight wisdom, that penetrates reality.

Therefore, Dhamma thoroughly researches and analyzes problems to ensure that its approach is problem-based. The Middle Way does not mean running away from those two extremes; neither does it imply attempting to conquer or giving in, nor does it imply grabbing or releasing it. We must be able to observe mind states objectively.

For instance, if we have a disagreement with a friend or co-worker, we have a choice as to how we behave or react in the conflict. If we make an effort to consider the other person's point of view, that is, his or her point of view, or the underlying cause of the case, there will be no trauma at our end. That is the purpose and value of the person who understands the underlying cause of the problem. We commonly refer to the Four Noble Truths as "Know, Let go, Attain, and Practice."

1. "KNOW" means "understanding the problem," knowing the feeling of stress.
2. "LET GO" means understanding the problem enables us to break the habit of quickly getting angry, fearful, and uninterested in other people's problems. As a result, we will change our bad habit of being indifferent to the problems of others. Changing a bad habit requires letting go of a resentful attitude toward others. If we continue to brood over the issue, we get caught up in it and our anger controls our mind. Letting go liberates us from our bitterness.
3. "ATTAIN" implies the fact that if negative habits are changed, everyday difficulties come to an end. We will become very peaceful and happier. When the issue is resolved, we are left with no emotional anguish. This is the attainment of a calm and happy state of mind. By removing bad habits, our minds become pure, and we have no desire to hurt others.
4. "PRACTICE REPEATEDLY" refers to the act of repeatedly doing something, such as taking an interest in a problem and analyzing it, in order to prevent a chaotic mental state. Practicing by focusing on the breath is the most effective way to observe.

That is how we bring the Four Noble Truths into daily practice. The Four Noble Truths comprise the following:

1. The Noble Truth of Suffering (*Dukha Ariya Sacca*); (physical pains or bad feelings). One must know what is suffering or what the problem is
2. The Origin of the Noble Truth of Suffering (*Dukkha Samudaya Ariya Sacca*); Any attachments that occupy the mind are the cause. The cause is ignorance, a lack of knowledge concerning craving or aversion.
3. The Noble Truth of the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukka Nirodha Ariya Sacca*); Peace is attained by letting go of greed and anger.

4. The Noble Truth of the Path to the Cessation of Suffering (*Dukkha Nirodha Gamini Padipada Ariya Sacca*); Practice of the mindful observation of all objects that come into contact with the sense bases.

When we go into the practice in detail, we have to know the process of our mind. In our knowledge, the mind first perceives the object exactly as it is, and subsequently the mind instantly contemplates it, identifying with its form and name, and then judging and responding to the likes and dislikes based on our preferences. The initial clear perception of seeing or listening is influenced by all sorts of thoughts and judgements with our own perspectives. When we hear the sound of a ringing bell, we must take note of the sound alone, without determining if it is a bell, whistle, or any other instrument. To be able to get into direct knowledge, which is the Middle Way, we must have a right view and right thought, as in the Eightfold Noble Path.

The purpose of Mindfulness is to clear our own thoughts and perspectives, bringing the experience of seeing or listening to its state of purity. The practice of Mindfulness is not so much about doing as it is of witnessing things as they are, without naming, evaluating, comparing, or imagining. When we add up our memories and categorize, judge, and mark them, they become misconceptions and delusions. When a rooster cries out, English-speaking people refer to the cry as "cock-a-doodle-doo," but Burmese people refer to it as "otte- eie- eie- eutt." In reality though we are just hearing sounds with different frequencies. Recollecting our past experiences, we conclude that we are hearing the rooster's cry and make a judgement about whether it is a pleasant or unpleasant sound. Similarly, when a baby hears a sound he will notice it, but will not know if it is a ringing bell, the sound of a drum, or the barking of a dog. In fact it is just the actual truth. He does not yet have the perception to perceive sounds in the same way as the most grownups do. Hence, we see things and form opinions about them, based on our memories. We do not grasp the whole reality, and so instead we inject our feelings into it, resulting in the formation of our preferences and dislikes, to which we immediately react by performing one of the kamma actions, either physical, verbal, or mental. We are ignorant of the fact that we need to let go of our greed to possess and our desire to think and control. Thus, desire, craving, or greed are at the root of suffering. In other words, the vital point is to abandon clinging.

Taking the two extremes into consideration, we find that there are eight global influences that have an impact on the entire world. They can drive us crazy due to our inability to cope with the inevitable circumstances. We all go through ups and downs in life, besides encountering obstacles and sorrows. The two extremes of the four earthly situations are gain and loss, popularity and humiliation, praise and blame, and pleasure and pain. If we reach those extremes, we will suffer greatly owing to our inability to cope with the stress. Gain creates within us anxiety at the prospect of

gaining the upper hand, while loss imparts bitterness within us. Having a large community often creates arrogance and haughtiness, while humiliation breeds disgrace and shame. We will be shaken when praised, and saddened when blamed and criticized. Pleasure makes us happy, while pain makes us suffer. The Buddha instructed us to identify the source of our emotions. There is an attachment to all feelings, which means there would be no feelings if there were no attachments. We have a natural tendency to develop attachments to things both good and bad. We may associate desirable objects with greed, whereas undesirable objects are associated with aversion. Since we do not view things in their true state of nature, we are unable to perceive them in that state. That is why we need to train ourselves to be mindful, by subjecting them to the two extremes. By directly comprehending and understanding everything through the perception of impermanence, dispassion, and dispossession, we will be able to let go of past experiences and wounds, and remain equanimous in all extremes. That is, we will be capable of distancing ourselves from all these extremes. We must be mindful of the fact that we are merely observers standing between those extremes, and we do not involve ourselves as participants on any side. This will enable us to understand how to let go, without being stuck in a world of opposites. This is referred to as the "Middle Way."

Conclusion

I wish to express my heartfelt appreciation to all my Christian friends for encouraging me to write this article concerning the teachings of the Lord Buddha, and also for their work of edition. I express my gratitude also for their constant reminders and motivation, with reference to this sharing. I am extremely appreciative of the friendships I have developed with Christians and Buddhists throughout my life. Christians and Buddhists share a common understanding of loving-kindness, and we all want to help one another on the path of personal transformation and spiritual maturity. Since we all strive to practice such loving-kindness to the fullest extent, I strongly believe that "Buddhists and Christians are members of the same family."

We have been taught to practice self-detachment, and to make greater efforts towards others in the form of loving-kindness. The Lord Buddha instilled within us the concept of unconditional love, and a desire to help others. We must cultivate a boundless heart for all beings in the same way as a mother would protect her only child, even at the cost of her own life. In our everyday lives, we must cultivate mindfulness and loving-kindness. It is important that we share our happiness with all living beings.

According to the Bible, "Love is patient and kind; love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude." The Bible also declares "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as Christ forgave you." When pride appears there arises disgrace, but with humility there is

wisdom. Likewise, those who are younger, should be subject to the elders. We need to clothe ourselves, all of us, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Therefore we should all cultivate this quality, in order to help others in their quest for happiness. We become more compassionate, considerate, and supportive, as we practice loving-kindness. That is the reason why I wish to emphasize the fact that we are all members of the same family, in building a healthy and peaceful world.

The Third Turning of the Wheel of Buddha's Dharma on the *Tathāgatagarbha* and the Shengtong-Rangton Conflict of Interpretations

Joseph NG Swee-Chun, S.J.

Introduction: The Superlative Teaching on the Buddha-nature

The spatio-temporal formation and dialectical development of Buddhism since the demise of Siddhartha Gautama, the historical Buddha, resulted in different schools with variations in diverse philosophical systems of thought and practice. In addition to the general division of Nikāya (traditionally known as 'Hīnayāna,' which carries derogatory connotations of inferiority), Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna traditions, according to the Sandhīnirmocanasūtra (Sūtra Elucidating the Mystery or Sūtra Unravelling the Thought), there were three turnings of the Dharma wheel by the Buddha in the course of his life. The first turning corresponds to the Nikāya, while the second and third turnings correspond to stages on the Mahāyāna path.¹ In the view of Tibetan Buddhism, the second and third turnings provide the basis of Vajrayāna. "The second turning, with its elucidation of emptiness, and the third, with its presentation of the non-conceptual wisdom mind [which is another designation for the *Tathāgatagarbha* or Buddha-nature], provides the foundation upon which alone one can engage in the Vajrayāna practices."² Furthermore, between the second and the third turnings, the latter, if taken chronologically as the final teaching of the Buddha shortly before his death, "represents the Buddha's final statement, and is to be taken as his ultimate and unsurpassable teaching."³ The essential content of the third turning, as encapsulated by Dudjom Rinpoche, is twofold: the "three essential natures" (tri-svabhava) and the Buddha-nature.

¹ Reginald A. Ray, *Indestructible Truth: The Living Spirituality of Tibetan Buddhism* (Boston & London: Shambhala, 2002), 367.

² *Ibid.*, 446. See 435 regarding some names of the Buddha-nature: "The Buddha-nature is the enlightened mind of the fully realized buddhas, known as the dharmakaya... [It] is called the Transcendence of Supreme Wisdom (Prajnaparamita). It is none other than the non-conceptual Wisdom Mind (Jnana) itself. It is also called the non-dual Wisdom Mind (Jnana), the Clear Light (prabhasvara) Nature of Mind and Dhatu (spacious expanse or element). Elsewhere it is called Dhatu and awareness inseparable, clarity and emptiness inseparable, bliss and emptiness inseparable. It is also called the Dharmata and the Tathagatagarbha."

³ *Ibid.*, 420.

... the Buddha excellently analysed all things from form to omniscience in accord with the three essential natures of the imaginary (*parikalpita*), the dependent (*paratantra*), and the absolute (*pariniṣpanna*); and having established the nature of the ground, path and result, he extensively revealed the abiding reality of the nucleus of the tathagata.⁴

In light of this, a study of the *Tathāgatagarbha*, among other aspects, is paramount in unravelling the complexities of Tibetan Buddhism. This short essay will limit itself to the different exegetical interpretations of the third turning event and the relevant *Tathāgatagarbha* literature in general by different traditions, resulting in two systems of thought—the *Shentong* (other-empty) and the *Rangtong* (self-empty)—on the teaching of the Buddha-nature.

I. *Tathāgatagarbha* Literatures and the Conflict of Interpretations

As pointed out by William Magee, modern scholarship has identified five varying lists of *Tathāgatagarbha* sutras, as found respectively in the following works: *The Sublime Science of the Great Vehicle to Salvation—Being a Manual of Buddhist Monism, the Work of Ārya Maitreya with a Commentary by Āryāsāṅga (Mahāyānottaratantraśāstra, sometimes accorded the Sanskrit name Ratnagotravibhāga)* by Eugène Obermiller, *the zhu don gngang ba* by Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltsen (*Dol-po-pa Shes-rab Rgyal-mtshan, 1292–1361*), *Essence of Other-Emptiness* by Tāranātha (1575–1634), *Extensive Explanation of the Presentation of Mantra and Sūtra* by Kay-drub Orgyenpa (1230–1312), and *Mirror of the Good Explanations Showing the Sources and Assertions of All Systems of Tenets* by Tu-gēn (1737–1802).⁵ All in all, the scriptures show definitively the foundational significance of the Buddha-nature in the soteriology of Vajrayāna. The important statement “*sarvasattvās tathāgatagarbhāḥ*,” meaning “all sentient beings contain a *Tathāgata*,” brings to light this sanguine anthropology that is rooted in the all-pervading Buddha-nature soteriology.

⁴ Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 1 (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991), 154, quoted in Reginald A. Ray, *Indestructible Truth: The Living Spirituality of Tibetan Buddhism*, 419.

⁵ See the complete lists available in William Magee, “A Tree in the West: Competing *Tathāgatagarbha* Theories in Tibet,” *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 19 中華佛學學報第19期 (2006): 460–65. Putting them together, without claiming it to be exhaustive, the *Tathāgatagarbha* literature includes: *Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra*, *Questions of King Dhāraṇīśvara Sūtra* (also known as *Teaching the Great Compassion of a One-Gone-Thus Sūtra*), *Lion’s Roar of Queen Shṛīmālā Sūtra*, *Ornament of the Wisdom Engaging the Sphere of All Buddhas Sūtra*, *Ratnadārikāpariprcchā*, *Retention for Entering into the Non-Conceptual, Great Drum Sūtra*, *Sūtra Spoken for Āṅgulimāla*, *Great Sūtra on Emptiness*, *Teaching the Inconceivable Wisdom and Qualities of the One Gone Thus Sūtra*, *Extensive Great Cloud Sūtra*, *Great Nirvāna Sūtra*, *Sūtra Unraveling the Thought*, *the Descent into Laṅkā Sūtra*, *the Heavily Adorned Array Sūtra*, *the Flower Garland Sūtra*, *Sūtra of the Matrix of One Gone Thus*, *the Cloud of Jewels Sūtra*, *the Magical Display Ascertaining Complete Peace*, *Ornament Illuminating Exalted Wisdom Sūtra*, *Sūtra Teaching Increase and Non-Diminishment*, *Buddha Garland Sūtra*, *Heap of Jewels Sūtra*, *Excellent Brilliant Appearance Sūtra*.

However, due to different exegetical perspectives, the ultimate import of these scriptural sources on the Tathāgatagarbha teaching is interpreted variedly by the different schools of Tibetan Buddhism. Basically the doctrinal conflict of interpretations is,

between those teachers and traditions which took the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrines definitively and indeed literally, and saw them as representing the final, highest, doctrinal teachings of the Buddha, and those teachers and schools which insisted that these are not as they stand literal teachings but need some sort of interpretation, and were taught by the Buddha in this form with a specific purpose in order to help particular people.⁶

In other words, the dispute between the *gzhen stong* (or *Shentong*, other-empty) and *rang stong* (or *Rangtong*, self-empty) has apparently been deeply entrenched and vigorously debated in the history of Tibetan Buddhism.⁷ The hermeneutics of *Shentong* and *Rangtong* ways of exegesis seems to be originally Tibetan, since as S. K. Hookham points out in the history of Indian Buddhism there was no mention of these two designations or definitions.⁸

II. The Shentong Definitive Doctrine on the Buddha-nature

Traditionally the *Shentong* position was strongly advocated by the Jonang School from the thirteenth century until its suppression in the seventeenth century. The Jonang School, under its charismatic founder, Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltzen, had ingeniously integrated into one system the teachings of Yogacara and Buddha-nature.⁹ In the light of this synthesis, which to a great extent is similar to the essential content of the third turning—three essential natures and Buddha-nature, it is no wonder that the *Shentong* position upholds the final and definitive teaching of the Buddha on *Tathāgatagarbha* as “an Ultimate or Absolute, an element which really intrinsically, inherently, exists...in all sentient beings and is the same, absolutely the same, in obscuration and enlightenment.”¹⁰ The assertion of a positive ultimate Buddha-nature existing within each being is described in the following way by Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltzen:

... just as a great treasure of jewels exists under the ground of a poor person's home but, being obscured by earth and rock to a depth of seven humans, is neither seen, realized, or attained, and as a consequence the person remains just in suffering, so the great treasure of the qualities of the clear light body of attributes [of a buddha] exists at all times in all beings — oneself and others —

⁶ Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 112.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁸ See Aming Tu 杜正民, “Trends and Problems in Contemporary Tathāgatagarbha Studies” 當代如來藏學的開展與問題, *Journal of The Center for Buddhist Studies* 3 佛學研究中心學報第3期 (1998): 256.

⁹ Ray, *Indestructible Truth: The Living Spirituality of Tibetan Buddhism*, 424.

¹⁰ Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, 114.

but, being obscured by adventitious defilements, is neither seen, realized, or attained and as a consequence all beings remain just in suffering.¹¹

The *Shentong* advocates do not dispute the ultimacy of the supreme teaching of the Buddha on emptiness in the second turning. However, the burning issue at hand that concerns them genuinely is the relentless negativity of the language of emptiness that could lead to a nihilistic viewpoint – “that everything is empty and meaningless, and nothing has any validity, that the spiritual path is bogus, and they [the practitioners] should turn to a life without values or just give up and die.”¹² This should serve as a persuasive evidence to support Takasaki Jikidō’s argument that “the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine arose in conscious opposition to the Mādhyamika doctrine of emptiness.”¹³ For the *Shentong* position, guided by the finality and ultimacy of the third turning, the Mādhyamika *śūnyavāda* is viewed as incomplete and provisional.¹⁴ It is vital to probe “what remains in emptiness,” in other words, to articulate emptiness in a way that is more discriminating and complete: “it shows what does not exist at all, what exists relatively, and what exists truly, namely the Buddha wisdom within.”¹⁵ Following the *Śrīmālā Sūtra*, the *Shentong*, as other-empty doctrine, teaches that the inherent Buddha-nature,

is empty of adventitious defilements and conventionalities which are intrinsically other than it, but is not empty of its own intrinsic existence and is also not empty of the Buddha qualities which are part of its own very nature.¹⁶

Tāranātha gives a detailed description of this Other Emptiness:

That thoroughly established nature is not polluted by, in brief, any appearing and consensual phenomena, whether these are called “conventionalities” or “apprehended-object and apprehending-subject” or “mistaken appearances.” Moreover, with respect to this non-pollution, it is not that [conventionalities and the element of attributes] exist individually and separately, with conventionalities existing in fact but unable to pollute the element of attributes. Rather, because conventionalities are only mistaken appearances, they – like the horns of a rabbit – are not established in the mode of subsistence, and hence [the thoroughly established nature] is not polluted in the sense that the causes of pollution do not exist.

Therefore, the thoroughly established nature, the matrix-of-one-gone-to-bliss, is never empty of its own entity but is primordially empty of others, that is,

¹¹ See Jeffery Hopkins, *Mountain Doctrine: Tibet’s Fundamental Treatise on Other-emptiness and the Buddha Matrix* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 2006), n.p., quoted in William Magee, “A Tree in the West: Competing *Tathāgatagarbha* Theories in Tibet,” 499-500.

¹² Ray, *Indestructible Truth*, 420.

¹³ Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 112, referring to J. W. de Jong, *Buddhist Studies*, ed. G. Schopen (Berkeley, CA: Asian Studies Press, 1979), 585.

¹⁴ Takasaki Jikidō, “The *Tathāgatagarbha* Theory Reconsidered: Reflections on Some Recent Issues in Japanese Buddhist Studies,” *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 27, nos. 1-2 (2000): 82.

¹⁵ Ray, *Indestructible Truth*, 420, 444.

¹⁶ Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 114.

conventionalities. Hence, the thoroughly established nature, the ultimate truth, is other-empty, not self-empty. Consequently, conventionalities, in addition to being empty of others' entities, are also empty of their own entities, and the ultimate is empty of only others' entities. Due to this, those who propound this mode are the Other-Empty Middle.¹⁷

Today, the other-empty teaching of Jonang School on the positive and ultimate existence of the innate Buddha-nature in all sentient beings have been widely accepted among non-dGe-lugs scholars and practitioners, especially those inspired by the Non-sectarian movement (the *Ris med*) developed since the early nineteenth-century. It has been observed that "many contemporary teachers of the rNying ma and bKa' brgyud schools in particular openly accept some form of other-empty teaching as the highest Buddhist doctrinal assertion."¹⁸

III. The Rangtong Interpretative Stance on the Buddha-nature

In contrast, the dGe-lugs School, following Tsongkhapa (1357–1419) its founder, and also the Sakya tradition,¹⁹ holds the *Rangtong* (self-empty) position with regard to the Tathāgatagarbha teaching. This is consistent with their foundational standpoint that the Prāsaṅgika Mādhyamika emptiness doctrine is the highest teaching of the Buddha. For the *Rangtong*, then, "the first and third turnings of the wheel of dharma are provisional, while the second turning is unsurpassable and final."²⁰ It follows that the teaching on the Buddha-nature in the third turning and all the Tathāgatagarbha literatures must be subject to interpretation according to the Mādhyamika hermeneutics that all is emptiness of inherent existence. In light of this, the *Shengtong* attribution of a positively substantial existence of the Tathāgatagarbha is no different from the non-Buddhist Self theory (*ātmavāda*).²¹

¹⁷ See Jeffrey Hopkins, *The Essence of Other-Emptiness: Tāranātha* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 2007), 101-102, quoted in William Magee, "A Tree in the West: Competing Tathāgatagarbha Theories in Tibet," 477-78.

¹⁸ Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 115. See also Ray, *Indestructible Truth*, 424.

¹⁹ See Magee, "A Tree in the West," 447, 492-94, 498. The Sakya school, following Buston (1290-1364), like the dGe-lugs school, asserts a "non-affirming negative" emptiness—a mere absence of inherent existence—as the tathāgatagarbha or Buddha matrix. For Buston, however, this Buddha matrix refers to the emptiness of inherent existence of the mind of an ordinary being or non-buddha. Nonetheless, both view such an emptiness of inherent existence as referring to the tathāgatagarbha that serves as the cause for the development of full Buddhahood.

²⁰ Ray, 444.

²¹ See Matsumoto Shirō, "The Doctrine of *Tathāgata-garbha* Is Not Buddhist," in *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: the Storm over Critical Buddhism*, ed. Jamie Hubbard and Paul Swanson, 165-73 (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997).

According to the dGe-lugs school, the Jonang, with its *Shengtong* exegesis, has misconstrued the significance of the three turnings of the Dharma Wheel based on a chronological interpretation that the third turning is final and unsurpassable. As a result, all Tathāgatagarbha sutras belonging to the third turning should be subject to literal and definitive (*nītārtha*) reading. In contrast, the *Rangtong* position is made clear by Tsongkhapa in the *The Essence of the Good Explanations*:

The three stages of wheels [of doctrine] mentioned in the *Sūtra Unravelling the Thought* are posited, not by way of the assemblies of [Buddha's] circle or by way of periods in the Teacher's life and so forth, but by way of the topics of expression.²²

In view of that the *Rangtong* position understands the Tathāgatagarbha teaching by the Buddha as a means to introduce non-Buddhists to Buddhism. In the final analysis, the Tathāgatagarbha is "none other than emptiness (*śūnyatā*) understood in its Mādhyamika sense as simply a negation, absence of intrinsic existence."²³ More precisely, the Tathāgatagarbha in this sense refers to the emptiness of inherent existence of the mind of an ordinary being or non-buddha. Moreover, this emptiness qua Tathāgatagarbha exactly enables sentient beings to change into Buddhas. Paul Williams sums up the *Rangtong* teaching on the Buddha-nature:

When the mind is defiled in the unenlightened state this emptiness is called the *tathāgatagarbha*. When the mind has become pure through following the path and attaining Buddhahood emptiness is then referred to in the dGe lugs tradition as the Buddha's Essence Body (*svabhāvikakāya*)... This also means that the *tathāgatagarbha* itself is strictly the fundamental cause of Buddhahood, and is in no way literally identical with the result, *dharmakāya* or Essence Body as the case may be, except in the sense that both defiled mind and Buddha's mind are empty of intrinsic existence.²⁴

Consistently true to its tenet of faith, for the *Rangtong* with its self-empty doctrine, whether the Tathāgatagarbha as cause or the *dharmakāya* as effect/result, they are not 'truly established' but are merely empty of intrinsic existence.

²² See Jeffrey Hopkins, *Reflections on Reality: The Three Natures and Non-Natures in the Mind-Only School: Dynamic Responses to Dzong-ka-ba's The Essence of Eloquence*, Volume 2 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 174, quoted in Magee, "A Tree in the West," 484.

²³ Williams, 113.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 113-114.

Conclusion: Free Enquiry and Making Sense of One's Preference

This essay has underscored the importance of the study of the Tathāgatagarbha teaching in Tibetan Buddhism as propounded in the third and final turning of the Dharma Wheel, and subsequently presented the two competing theories between the *Shengtong* and *Rangtong* interpretations on the meaning and significance of the Buddha-nature. The next essay may further explore the philosophical complexity underlying the Tathāgatagarbha teaching and its implications for religious and ethical practices.

Since both the *Shengtong* and *Rangtong* positions, despite their conflict of interpretations, are still very much alive in Tibetan Buddhism, it is fitting to end this essay with a conclusion that is open and inclusive of both, as Takasaki puts it, "both sides complement each other and are necessary for Buddhism as a religion."²⁵ The *Shengtong-Rangtong* debate also reflects different temperaments and priorities in philosophical reasoning and religious outlook. Thus, following the wise advice of Khenpo Tsültrim, one should freely decide on either *Shengtong* or *Rangtong* as one's basic orientation based on cogent reasoning of "what makes sense."

If through one's own analysis and reasoning, one comes to prefer one to the other, one does not necessarily have to favour the other just because it is supposed to be better. One is allowed to examine this with one's own intelligence and reasoning and come to one's own conclusions. If one happens to like and prefer the rangtong or empty-of-itself school, then that is fine. One does not have to take up the shengtong view on the basis of faith or feeling that one is supposed to. On the other hand, if one has a great confidence in the shengtong school, that is fine. One does not have to take up the rangtong position. This is to be settled on the basis of investigating it with reasoning. It is not settled by faith.²⁶

²⁵ Takasaki Jikidō, "The Tathāgatagarbha Theory Reconsidered: Reflections on Some Recent Issues in Japanese Buddhist Studies," 82. Takasaki considers that the Rangtong-Shengtong debate seems to concern "whether to put ultimate value in the Dharma or in the person of the Buddha, whether on the self-realization of the Dharma or on the salvation by the Buddha, and not on the question of which is ultimate or not, much less on the question of which is right is right or not."

²⁶ Khenpo Tsültrim Gyamtso, *A Presentation of the Two Truths in the Tree Yanas and the Mahāyāna Philosophical Traditions* (Red Feather Lakes, Colo: Rocky Mountain Shambhala Center, 1991), 167, quoted in Ray, 445. In light of this, it is pertinent to recall the Buddha's charter of free enquiry in The Kalama Sutta, Anguttara Nikāya 3.65: "Do not believe in something because it is reported. Do not believe in something because it has been practiced by generations or becomes a tradition or part of a culture. Do not believe in something because a scripture says it is so. Do not believe in something believing a god has inspired it. Do not believe in something a teacher tells you to. Do not believe in something because the authorities say it is so. Do not believe in hearsay, rumor, speculative opinion, public opinion, or mere acceptance to logic and inference alone. Help yourself, accept as completely true only that which is praised by the wise and which you test for yourself and know to be good for yourself and others."

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Jikidō, Takasaki 道高崎直. "The Tathāgatagarbha Theory Reconsidered: Reflections on Some Recent Issues in Japanese Buddhist Studies." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 27, no. 1/2 (2000): 73-83.
- Magee, William. "A Tree in the West: Competing Tathāgatagarbha Theories in Tibet." *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 19 中華佛學學報第19期 (2006): 445-511.
- Ray, Reginald A. *Indestructible Truth: The Living Spirituality of Tibetan Buddhism*. Boston and London: Shambhala, 2002.
- Shirō, Matsumoto. "The Doctrine of Tathāgata-garbha Is Not Buddhist." In *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: the Storm over Critical Buddhism*. Edited by Jamie Hubbard and Paul Swanson, 165-73. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.
- Tu, Aming 杜正民. "Trends and Problems in Contemporary Tathāgatagarbha Studies" 當代如來藏學的開展與問題. *Journal of The Center for Buddhist Studies* 3 佛學研究中心學報第 3 期 (1998): 243-280.
- Williams, Paul. *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*. 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2009.

The Shentong View on the *Tathāgatagarbha* Teaching and its Pragmatic Implications

Joseph NG Swee-Chun, S.J.

This advice by the omniscient Dōlpopa should be kept as the key point in our hearts: "If buddhahood will be reached merely as a result of having heard the term 'sugata essece,' what need to mention what will happen from actualizing that by means of faith and devotion, and meditating on it? Thus compassionate experts should teach it even if they might lose their lives and so forth, and those who strive for liberation should seek it out and listen even if they must cross a great pit of fire."

Jamgön Kongtrul¹

Introduction: The Philosophical Background on the Buddha-nature in Relation to the *Nītārtha* and *Neyārtha* Interpretations

The diversification of Buddhism into different traditions of Nikāya, Mahāyāna and Vajrayāna, from the hermeneutical point of view, is mainly due to the application of interpretative devices of *nītārtha* (definitive meaning) and *neyārtha* (indirect meaning which is to be established) to Buddhist scriptures.² One of the fundamental philosophical debates in Tibetan Buddhism is "the relationship between the concepts of *śūnyatā* and *tathāgatagarbha* emphasised in the second and third 'turnings' of the wheel of Dharma (*dharmacakra-pravartana*) respectively."³ According to the *Samdhinirmocanasūtra*, there are three turnings of the Dharma wheel by the Buddha in the course of his life. The first turning corresponds to the Nikāya,

¹ Jamgön Kongrul Lodrö Tayé ('Jam mgon Kong sprul Blo gros mtha' yas), "Guiding Instruction on the View of the Emptiness of Other" (Gzhan stong dbu ma chen po'i lta khrid rdo rje zla ba dri ma med pa'i 'od zer), in *The Collected Works of 'Jam-mgon Kong-sprul* (Rgya chen bka' mdzod), vol. 8 (Paro: Ngodup, 1976): 609, quoted in Cyrus Stearns, *The Buddha from Dōlpo: A Study of the Life and Thought of the Tibetan Master Dōlpopa Sherab Gyaltzen* (Itaca, New York: 2010), 41. Dōlpopa's original words are found in *Dōlpopa, Mountain Dharma: An Ocean of Definitive Meaning* (Ri chos nges don rgya mtsho. Jo nang dpe tshogs), Jonang Publication Series, vol. 1 (Beijing: Mi rigs dpe skrun khang, 2007), 109.

² See Kennard Lipman, "Nītārtha, Neyārtha, and Tathāgatagarbha in Tibet," *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 8 (1980): 87.

³ *Ibid.*

while the second and third turnings to stages on the Mahāyāna path.⁴ In the view of Tibetan Buddhism, the second and third turnings provide the basis of Vajrayāna.

The second turning, with its elucidation of emptiness, and the third, with its presentation of the non-conceptual wisdom mind [which is another designation for the *Tathāgatagarbha* or Buddha-nature], provide the foundation upon which alone one engages in the Vajrayāna practices.⁵

Furthermore, the philosophical subtleties of interpreting the second and third turnings according to the *nītārtha* criterion or *neyārtha* principle will result in different practical implications of Buddhist praxis. Basically, in terms of the *tathāgatagarbha* teaching, the conflict of interpretations is,

between those teachers and traditions which took the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrines definitively and indeed literally, and saw them as representing the final, highest, doctrinal teachings of the Buddha, and those teachers and schools which insisted that these are not as they stand literal teachings but need some sort of interpretation, and were taught by the Buddha in this form with a specific purpose, in order to help particular people.⁶

In other words, the dispute between the *Shentong* (*gzhen stong*, other-empty) and *Rangtong* (*rang stong*, self-empty) on the Buddha-nature, has apparently been deeply entrenched and vigorously debated in the history of Tibetan Buddhism.⁷ The hermeneutics of the *Shentong* and *Rangtong* ways of exegesis seems to be originally Tibetan, as S. K. Hookham points out that in the history of Indian Buddhism there was no mention of these two designations or definitions.⁸

⁴ Reginald A. Ray, *Indestructible Truth: The Living Spirituality of Tibetan Buddhism* (Boston & London: Shambhala, 2002), 367.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 446. See 435 regarding some names of the Buddha-nature: "The Buddha-nature is the enlightened mind of the fully realized buddhas, known as the dharmakaya. ... [It] is called the Transcendence of Supreme Wisdom (Prajnaparamita). It is none other than the non-conceptual Wisdom Mind (jnana) itself. It is also called the non-dual Wisdom Mind (jnana), the Clear Light (prabhasvara) Nature of Mind and Dhatu (spacious expanse or element). Elsewhere it is called Dhatu and awareness inseparable, clarity and emptiness inseparable, bliss and emptiness inseparable. It is also called the Dharmata and the Tathagatagarbha."

⁶ Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, 2nd ed. (London and New York: Routledge, 2009), 112.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁸ See Aming Tu 杜正民, "Trends and Problems in Contemporary Tathāgatagarbha Studies" 當代如來藏學的開展與問題, *Journal of The Center for Buddhist Studies* 3 佛學研究中心學報第3期 (1998): 256. Cf. Cyrus Stearns, *The Buddha from Dölpo: A Study of the Life and Thought of the Tibetan Master Dölpopa Sherab Gyaltsen*, 42-43. According to Stearns, apparently the very fact of the third turning that represents the definitive meaning, which was made with clear distinction between phenomena and true nature, "refutes Tibetan critics who claimed the shentong view was completely unknown in India and Tibet until the time of Dölpopa [1292-1361]." See also S. Hookham, "The Practical Implications of the Doctrine of Buddha-nature," in *Tadeusz Skorupski*, ed., *The Buddhism Forum*, Vol. II, Seminar Papers 1988-1990 (London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1991), 151, note 3. Hookham disagrees with the finding of Professor Tucci and Professor Ruegg, who generally speaking, "follow the Gelugpa line in trying to make out that the Dzogchen and the Jonangpa other-emptiness doctrine differ radically from those of other Mahāyāna schools as if a *gzhan-stong* type of model did not exist in the Mahāyāna main tradition." Both the Rangtong and the Shentong are "two apparently equally ancient, widespread and orthodox models of Buddhist thought" in Tibet and each of which has equal claim to orthodoxy. See *Ibid.*, 151.

This essay will mainly focus on the *Shentong* view on the Buddha-nature and its practical implications. Since the comprehension of the *Shentong* position is only better grasped dialectically with the view of the *Rangtong*, it is necessary to present a preliminary exposition of the *Rangtong* interpretation of the Buddha-nature.

I. The Rangtong Interpretative Stance on the Buddha-nature

The dGe-lugs School, following *Tsongkhapa* (1357–1419) its founder, and also the Sakya tradition,⁹ holds the *Rangtong* (self-empty) position with regard to the Tathāgatagarbha teaching. This is consistent with their foundational standpoint that the Prāsāngika Mādhyamika emptiness doctrine is the highest teaching of the Buddha. For the *Rangtong*, then, “the first and third turnings of the wheel of dharma are provisional, while the second turning is unsurpassable and final.”¹⁰ It follows that the teaching on the Buddha-nature in the third turning and all the Tathāgatagarbha literatures must subject to interpretation (*neyārtha*), according to the Mādhyamika hermeneutics that all is emptiness of inherent existence.¹¹

In the final analysis, the Tathāgatagarbha is “none other than emptiness (*śūnyatā*) understood in its Mādhyamika sense as simply a negation, absence of intrinsic existence.”¹² More precisely, the Tathāgatagarbha in this sense refers to the emptiness of inherent existence of the mind of an ordinary being or non-buddha. Moreover, this emptiness qua Tathāgatagarbha exactly enables sentient beings to change into Buddhas. In view of that, the *Rangtong* position understands the Tathāgatagarbha teaching by the Buddha as a means to introduce non-Buddhists to Buddhism. Paul Williams sums up the *Rangtong* teaching on the Buddha-nature:

⁹ See Magee, “A Tree in the West,” 447, 492–94, 498. The Sakya school, following Buston (1290–1364), like the dGe-lugs school, asserts a “non-affirming negative” emptiness—a mere absence of inherent existence—as the tathāgatagarbha or Buddha matrix. For Buston, however, this Buddha matrix refers to the emptiness of inherent existence of the mind of a Buddha which cannot be reasonably held to be actually present in sentient beings as they are not already perfected buddhas; whereas for Tsongkhapa of the dGe-lugs school, the Buddha matrix refers to the emptiness of inherent existence of the mind of an ordinary being or non-buddha. Nonetheless, both view such an emptiness of inherent existence as referring to the tathāgatagarbha that serves as the cause for the development of full Buddhahood.

¹⁰ Reginald A. Ray, *Indestructible Truth: The Living Spirituality of Tibetan Buddhism*, 444.

¹¹ In light of this, the Shentong attribution of a positively substantial existence of the Tathāgatagarbha, which is to be elucidated later, is no different from the non-Buddhist Self theory (*ātmanvāda*). See Matsumoto Shirō, “The Doctrine of Tathāgata-garbha is Not Buddhist,” in *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: the Storm over Critical Buddhism*, ed. Jamie Hubbard and Paul Swanson, (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 1997), 165–73. According to the dGe-lugs school, the Jonang, with its Shentong exegesis, has misconstrued the significance of the three turnings of the Dharma Wheel based on a chronological interpretation that the third turning as final and unsurpassable. As a result, all Tathāgatagarbha sutras belonging to the third turning should be subject to literal and definitive (*nīrārtha*) reading.

¹² Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, 113.

When the mind is defiled in the unenlightened state this emptiness is called the *tathāgatagarbha*. When the mind has become pure through following the path and attains Buddhahood emptiness is then referred to in the dGe lugs tradition as the Buddha's Essence Body (*svabhāvikakāya*).... This also means that the *tathāgatagarbha* itself is strictly the fundamental cause of Buddhahood, and is in no way literally identical with the result, *dharmakāya* or Essence Body as the case may be, except in the sense that both the defiled mind and Buddha's mind are empty of intrinsic existence.¹³

Consistently true to its tenet of faith, for the *Rangtong* with its self-empty doctrine, whether the *Tathāgatagarbha* as cause or the *dharmakāya* as effect/result, they are not 'truly established' but are merely empty of intrinsic existence.

II. The Shentong Definitive Doctrine on the Buddha-nature

Traditionally the *Shentong* position was strongly advocated by the Jonang School from the thirteenth century until its suppression in the seventeenth century. The view of the *Shentong* has adopted a chronological interpretation of the third turning as the final teaching of the Buddha shortly before his death, which "represents the Buddha's final statement, and is to be taken as his ultimate and unsurpassable teaching."¹⁴ This hermeneutical approach, as adopted by the *Jonang* School's charismatic founder, Dolpopa Sherab Gyaltzen, is in agreement with,

the four guidelines or points to be relied on (*catuḥpratisaraṇa*) that the Buddha prescribed in several Mahāyāna scriptures, such as the *Sūtra on the Four Reliances* (*Catuḥpratisaraṇa Sūtra*) and the *Sūtra of Definitive Commentary on the Intention* (*Samdhinirmocana Sūtra*):

Rely on the teaching, not the teacher.

Rely on the meaning, not the text.

Rely on the definitive meaning, not the provisional meaning.

Rely on primordial awareness, not consciousness.¹⁵

The essential content of the third turning, as encapsulated by Dudjom Rinpoche, is twofold: the "three essential natures" (*tri-svabhava*) and the Buddha-nature.

... [the Buddha] excellently analysed all things from form to omniscience in accord with the three essential natures of the imaginary (*parikalpita*), the dependent (*paratantra*), and the absolute (*parinispanna*); and having established

¹³ Ibid., 113-114.

¹⁴ Ray, *Indestructible Truth: The Living Spirituality of Tibetan Buddhism*, 420.

¹⁵ Stearns, *The Buddha from Dölpo*, 91. Dölpo lamented that "the Buddhist tradition as it had developed in Tibet emphasized the teachings of provisional meaning at the expense of those of definitive meaning."

the nature of the ground, path and result, he extensively revealed the abiding reality of the nucleus of the tathagata.¹⁶

This two-fold revelation of the third turning is essential to the *Shentong* definitive doctrine on the Buddha-nature. One of Dölpopa's earliest major works, *General Commentary on the Doctrine*, unambiguously affirms thus:

I bow at the feet of the masters who carefully distinguish, "All imagined and dependent phenomena are non-existent, but the fully established true nature is never non-existent," teaching what transcends existence and nonexistence, and eternalism and nihilism.¹⁷

In the final analysis, the fully established true nature or absolute reality is none other than the final and definitive teaching of the Buddha on *Tathāgatagarbha* as "an Ultimate or Absolute, an element which really intrinsically, inherently, exists... in all sentient beings and is the same, absolutely the same, in obscuration and enlightenment."¹⁸ The assertion of a positive ultimate Buddha-nature existing within each being is described in the following way by Dölpopa Sherab Gyaltzen:

... just as a great treasure of jewels exists under the ground of a poor person's home but, being obscured by earth and rock to a depth of seven humans, is neither seen, realized, or attained, and as a consequence the person remains just in suffering, so the great treasure of the qualities of the clear light body of attributes [of a buddha] exists at all times in all beings – oneself and others – but, being obscured by adventitious defilements, is neither seen, realized, or attained and as a consequence all beings remain just in suffering.¹⁹

The *Shentong* advocates do not dispute the ultimacy of the supreme teaching of the Buddha on emptiness in the second turning. However, the burning issue at hand that concerns them genuinely is the relentless negativity of the language of emptiness that could lead to a nihilistic viewpoint – "that everything is empty and meaningless, and nothing has any validity, that the spiritual path is bogus, and they [the practitioners] should turn to a life without values or just give up and die."²⁰ This should serve as a persuasive evidence to support Takasaki Jikidō's argument that "the *tathāgatagarbha* doctrine arose in conscious opposition to the Mādhyamika doctrine of

¹⁶ Dudjom Rinpoche, *The Nyingma School of Tibetan Buddhism*, vol. 1 (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1991), 154, quoted in Ray, *Indestructible Truth: The Living Spirituality of Tibetan Buddhism*, 419.

¹⁷ Quotation taken from Stearns, *The Buddha from Dölpo*, 99. For the three-nature theory, as expounded by Dölpopa, see 93-103. The extreme view of eternalism is refuted through denying the reality of both the imagined and dependent natures, and the extreme view of nihilism is refuted through the affirming of the reality of the profound and fully established nature.

¹⁸ Paul Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*, 114.

¹⁹ See Jeffery Hopkins, *Mountain Doctrine: Tibet's Fundamental Treatise on Other-emptiness and the Buddha Matrix* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 2006), n.p., quoted in William Magee, "A Tree in the West: Competing Tathāgatagarbha Theories in Tibet," 499-500.

²⁰ Ray, *Indestructible Truth*, 420.

emptiness."²¹ For the *Shentong* position, guided by the finality and ultimacy of the third turning, the Mādhyamika *śūnyavāda* is viewed as incomplete and provisional.²² It is vital to probe "what remains in emptiness," in other words, to articulate emptiness in a way that is more discriminating and complete: "it shows what does not exist at all, what exists relatively, and what exists truly, namely the Buddha wisdom within."²³ In point of fact, for the *Shentong* position, the fully established nature or absolute reality of the Buddha-nature is truly the Great Madhyamaka, the ultimate middle beyond those two extremes of eternalism and nihilism.²⁴ This Great Madhyamaka "does not leave us with a collection of emptied-out phenomena (internal and external)—but rather fulfilled, in the open and luminous clearing of Being (-as-such) and its working 'in' and 'through' us as *tathāgatagarbha*."²⁵ The important statement "*sarvasatvōs tathāgatagarbhāḥ*," meaning "all sentient beings contain a Tathāgata," brings to light this sanguine anthropology that is rooted in the all-pervading Buddha-nature soteriology.

Following the *Śrīmālā Sūtra*, the *Shentong*, as other-empty doctrine, teaches that the inherent Buddha-nature,

is empty of adventitious defilements and conventionalities which are intrinsically other than it, but is not empty of its own intrinsic existence and is also not empty of the Buddha qualities which are part of its own very nature.²⁶

Tāranātha, certainly Dōlpoṃpa's most influential heir, gives a detailed description of this Other Emptiness:

That thoroughly established nature is not polluted by, in brief, any appearing and consensual phenomena, whether these are called "conventionalities" or "apprehended-object and apprehending-subject" or "mistaken appearances." Moreover, with respect to this non-pollution, it is not that [conventionalities and the element of attributes] exist individually and separately, with conventionalities existing in fact but unable to pollute the element of attributes. Rather, because conventionalities are only mistaken appearances, they—like the horns of a rabbit—are not established in the mode of subsistence, and hence [the thoroughly established nature] is not polluted in the sense that the causes of pollution do not exist.

Therefore, the thoroughly established nature, the matrix-of-one-gone-to-bliss, is never empty of its own entity but is primordially empty of others, that is,

²¹ Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 112, referring to J. W. de Jong, *Buddhist Studies*, ed. G. Schopen (Berkeley, CA: Asian Studies Press, 1979), 585.

²² Takasaki Jikidō, "The Tathāgatagarbha Theory Reconsidered: Reflections on Some Recent Issues in Japanese Buddhist Studies," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 27, nos. 1-2 (2000): 82.

²³ Ray, *Indestructible Truth*, 420, 444.

²⁴ See Stearns, *The Buddha from Dōlpo*, 100, 102. Also 50: Stearns points out that the term "Great Madhyamaka" (dbu ma chen po) "had been used in Tibet for centuries, but are not found in any Indian scriptures or commentaries."

²⁵ Kennard Lipman, "Nītārtha, Neyārtha, and Tathāgatagarbha in Tibet," 91.

²⁶ Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 114.

conventionalities. Hence, the thoroughly established nature, the ultimate truth, is other-empty, not self-empty. Consequently, conventionalities, in addition to being empty of others' entities, are also empty of their own entities, and the ultimate is empty of only others' entities. Due to this, those who propound this mode are the Other-Empty Middle.²⁷

To sum up, the *Shentong* view is a result of the Jonang' hermeneutical solution to resolve "apparently conflicting notions about the meaning of emptiness and...its relation or identity with the Buddha-nature."²⁸ As Cyrus Kearn puts in a nutshell,

the third turning of the Dharma wheel presents the teachings on the buddha nature, or sugata essence, which are the final definitive statements on the nature of ultimate reality, the primordial ground, or basis, beyond the chain of dependent origination, which is only empty of other relative phenomena.²⁹

According to the *Shentong*, the comprehension of the absolute truth of emptiness as merely devoid of extrinsic factors or relative phenomena is a matter of great urgency to the realisation of fully perfect Buddhahood.

Relative truth is empty of self-nature and absolute truth is empty of other. If the modes of emptiness of the two truths is not understood in this way, there is a danger of denying complete buddhahood.³⁰

Today, the other-empty teaching of the Jonang School on the positive and ultimate existence of the innate Buddha-nature in all sentient beings has been widely accepted among non-dGe-lugs scholars and practitioners, especially those inspired by the Non-sectarian movement (the *Ris med*) developed since the early nineteenth-century. It has been observed that "many contemporary teachers of the rNying ma and bKa' brgyud schools in particular, openly accept some form of other-empty teaching as the highest Buddhist doctrinal assertion."³¹

²⁷ See Jeffrey Hopkins, *The Essence of Other-Emptiness: Tāranātha* (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion, 2007), 101-102, quoted in William Magee, "A Tree in the West: Competing Tathāgatarbha Theories in Tibet," 477-78.

²⁸ Stearns, *The Buddha from Dölpo*, 91.

²⁹ *Ibdi.*, 92.

³⁰ This is a quotation of Dölpo from a master called Lord Poripa. See Stearns, *The Buddha from Dölpo*, 51.

³¹ Williams, *Mahāyāna Buddhism*, 115. See also Ray, *Indestructible Truth*, 424; Stearns, *The Buddha from Dölpo*, 76-83. Stearns points out that "what is now taught as the shentong view in the Kagyü and Nyingma traditions represents a synthesis that has developed over time, primarily in order to enable Dölpo's most profound insights to be incorporated into the established doctrines of the Great Seal and the Great Perfection."

III. Pragmatic-Ethical and Social-Implications of the Tathāgatarbha Teaching

Religious philosophy has a soteriological aim; likewise, the *Shentong* hermeneutic on the Buddha-nature is essentially and deeply concerned with the realisation of radical self-transformation into Buddhahood through practice. Dölpopa strongly objects to,

the view that mere recognition of the nature of mind, or recognition of thoughts as the dharmakāya, brings about enlightenment.... Enlightenment is achieved only when the incidental obscurations are removed through the practice of the path and the eternally present ground of emptiness, the Buddha nature, is allowed to shine forth as the awakened result.³²

Sallie B. King underscores this pragmatic aspect of the Buddha-nature teaching elegantly in these words:

The identity between person and Buddha is constituted by their shared Buddha nature; this identity serves to encourage practice by virtue of its optimism. The difference between person and Buddha also is constituted by Buddha nature – the degree to which each *makes real* in practice his or her own Buddha nature; to overcome the difference, practice is absolutely necessary. The message is clear: You are Buddha, but you are not Buddha unless you practice.³³

In light of this path of transformation, the ultimate aim of the teaching found in the *Ratnagotravibhāga* seems to be more psycho-spiritual than ontological, as it points to the five specific reasons why the Buddha gave the third turning teachings on the Buddha-nature.³⁴ The purpose of the tathāgatarbha teaching is to “removes five defects which can be found (or perhaps are even encouraged) in the doctrine of universal emptiness of intrinsic existence: depression; contempt towards those who are inferior; clinging to the unreal; denial of the real; and excessive self-love.”³⁵ The assurance that all sentient beings have the immanent matrix of a fully enlightened Buddha brings hope and courage that dispel depression and faintheartedness. Knowing that the Buddha-nature as a universal ground of primordial awareness is equally present to all in worth and capacity, removes arrogance or superior complex in the practitioners. The realisation that all faults/defilements and relative phenomena are incidental or adventitious to the absolute truth of the Buddha-nature, helps one to overcome attachment

³² Stearns, 106-110.

³³ Sallie B. King, *Buddha Nature* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 82.

³⁴ See Williams, 111-12; Ray, 421-22; Hookham, “The Practical Implications of the Doctrine of Buddha-nature,” 157-58. The importance of the *Ratnagotravibhāga* in Tibet has been highlighted by Williams (p. 110), that “all discussion of the tathāgatarbha starts from the interpretation of the *Ratnagotravibhāga* and its *Vyākhyā*.”

³⁵ Williams, 112.

to the unreal or relative existence. The correct understanding of the Buddha-nature as not being devoid of the intrinsic Buddha qualities motivates one to firmly believe in the power of the Buddha-nature, and to really engage in practice so to manifest the transformed state of Buddhahood. Having faith in the Buddha-nature within all sentient beings inspires one's great compassion, which sees self and others as fundamentally and equally dignified. In short, the *tathāgatagarbha* teaching brings transformation to people the five remedies: "confidence, respect for others, *prajñā* (in the sense of not taking the unreal to be real) and *jñāna* (in the sense of knowing the real to be real), and Great Compassion."³⁶

All in all, the psycho-spiritual attitude of a person with the *Shentong* view and its corollary sanguine anthropology would be more optimistic and put emphasis on "feeling 'the presence' of Buddha in one's life, one's being and one's mind. In other words the Buddha becomes mystically accessible through faith and devotion," even in one's struggle for goodness, truth and beauty of existence.³⁷

However, is the religious poignancy of the *Shentong* doctrine of the Buddha-nature not being empty of the Buddha qualities only relevant psycho-spiritually for personal transformation? Or is it exhaustively soteriological in the narrow sense of the ultimate transformation of self into future full Buddhahood without ethical and social implications for the here and now? Michael Zimmermann draws attention to the absence of ethical implications in the early Tathāgatagarbha sūtras: "This absence of the ethical implications indicates that the (early) buddha-nature theory centered on the importance of the individual's inclusion in the 'family of the buddhas' rather than on a doctrinal basis for ethical behaviour."³⁸ There must be something more and concrete for the *tathāgatagarbha* teaching to make a difference to social responsibility, besides personal transformation.

As the rise and spread of Tibetan Buddhism become more evident in the West and also currently among Chinese believers, it is imperative for Vajrayāna Buddhism to develop a keener sense of social ethics beyond ritual consolation and meditative tranquillity. Take for example, the promotion of vegetarianism in view of the greater ecological responsibility. It is true that the dharma practitioners of the Vajrayāna tradition, including the monastic monks and nuns, are not vegetarians inside Tibet due to necessity, because of its harsh environment. However, with the diaspora of Tibetan Buddhists around the world, with its *tathāgatagarbha* teaching that all sentient beings (including animal) have the Buddha-nature deep

³⁶ Hookham, "The Practical Implications of the Doctrine of Buddha-nature," 158.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 154-55.

³⁸ Michael Zimmermann, *A Buddha Within: The Tathāgatagarbha Sūtra—The Earliest Exposition of the Buddha-Nature Teaching in India*, Bibliotheca Philologica et Philosophica Buddhica VI, Tokyo: The International Research Institute for Advanced Buddhology, Soka University, 2006), 76, quote in Williams, 105.

within, Vajrayāna Buddhists outside the Tibet could voluntarily become a leading collective force to promote vegetarianism as an ethical response to the pressing ecological crisis.

Hookham has drawn out some important socio-political implications from the other-emptiness paradigm of the Buddha-nature. Since the basic constituent necessary for achieving Buddhahood already exists in each being, this fundamental equality could inspire people to abandon “dualistic concepts of pure and impure, good and bad, etc.”³⁹

In social terms this has the disconcerting effect of putting everyone on an equal footing with equal responsibility in terms of the religious life.... Such a view is a threat to the established hierarchy of religious institutes. It is a threat to layman who wants an easy way of shifting the weight of spiritual responsibility on to someone else. It is a threat to the holders of wealth and power because they can no longer buy the goodwill of the spiritual community by supporting easily-controlled monasteries.⁴⁰

Conclusion: Towards a Positive Anthropology and Engaged Spirituality

The *Shentong* view on the universal Buddha-nature with its insistence on the positive power of the Buddha qualities could be developed further, thus contributing to positive/optimistic anthropology and engaged spirituality that will hopefully become a greater force to be reckoned with in the critique of ethical indifference and social status quo.

³⁹ Hookham, “The Practical Implications of the Doctrine of Buddha-nature,” 153.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 159-160. In view of this, Hookham points out the political history of Tibet that “not surprisingly, therefore, do we find the ruling powers of Tibet from the earliest times advocating the gradual, disciplined, monkish path associated with a self-emptiness mode.... The Nyingmapas themselves have never aspired to political prominence in Tibet and have always favoured communities of lay practitioners over large monastic institutions. The Sakyapas held political power for a long time and are famous for their constant attach on other-emptiness type doctrines. For the last few centuries the Gelugpa school has been the main wielder of political power and they too attack the other-emptiness doctrine – especially that of the Jonangpa school, which they claim to be a non-Buddhist view that will lead one to hell.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Hookham, S. "The Practical Implications of the Doctrine of Buddha-nature." In *The Buddhism Forum, Vol. II, Seminar Papers 1988-1990*, edited by Tadeusz Skorupski, 149-61. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, 1991.
- Jikidō, Takasaki 道高崎直. "The Tathāgatagarbha Theory Reconsidered: Reflections on Some Recent Issues in Japanese Buddhist Studies." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 27, no. 1/2 (2000): 73-83.
- King, Sallie B. *Buddha Nature*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991.
- Lipman, Kennard. "Nītārtha, Neyārtha, and Tathāgatagarbha in Tibet." *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 8 (1980): 87-95.
- Magee, William. "A Tree in the West: Competing Tathāgatagarbha Theories in Tibet." *Chung-Hwa Buddhist Journal* 19 中華佛學學報第 19期 (2006): 445-511.
- Ray, Reginald A. *Indestructible Truth: The Living Spirituality of Tibetan Buddhism*. Boston and London: Shambhala, 2002.
- Shirō, Matsumoto. "The Doctrine of Tathāgata-garbha Is Not Buddhist." In *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: the Storm over Critical Buddhism*. Edited by Jamie Hubbard and Paul Swanson, 165-73. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1997.
- Stearns, Cyrus. *The Buddha from Dölpo: A Study of the Life and Thought of the Tibetan Master Dölpopa SherabGyaltzen*. Itaca, New York: 2010.
- Tu, Aming 杜正民. "Trends and Problems in Contemporary Tathāgatagarbha Studies" 當代如來藏學的開展與問題. *Journal of The Center for Buddhist Studies* 3 佛學研究中心學報第 3 期(1998): 243-280.
- Williams, Paul. *Mahāyāna Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations*. 2nd ed. London and New York: Routledge, 2009.

14

The Metaxological Philosophy of Dialogue with Buddhism¹

Jarosław Duraj, S.J.

Abstract

This paper envisages a study of cross-cultural philosophy of dialogue with Buddhism in the light of metaxology, that is, the logos of *metaxy*, meaning speaking from the “in-between” or from the middle. It is a study that draws particularly on the contribution of Eric Voegelin (1901-1985) and of the role played by *metaxy* in his political philosophy. *Metaxy*, already defined by Plato as the “in-between” matrix of the human condition, is for Voegelin a powerful notion that symbolizes the intermediate state in which man experiences diverse and opposing tensions, such as the ones between immanence and transcendence or mortality and immortality. As the field of intermediation between opposing forces, man has to keep the balance of consciousness in order to differentiate the noetic and pneumatic dimensions, and so attune his life to the divine ground of being. This paper essentially offers the pragmatic relevance of *metaxy* in a cross-cultural perspective, as it also develops the “in-between” in relation to the oriental notion of the “Middle Way” (*madhyanta*) and emptiness (*śūnyatā*), present particularly in the Buddhist philosophy of Madhyamika and Yogācāra. An intercultural dialogue based on *metaxy* appears thus as capable of generating new insights, within the realms of comparative philosophy.

Keywords: In-Between, Metaxy, Metaxology, Dialogue, Buddhism, Middle Way

Introduction²

The aim of this research paper is to explore the “in-between” nature of human beings in the light of the *metaxy*³ inherited from the classics. This

¹ Paper presented during the JCAP Buddhist Studies and Dialogue Workshop in Hiroshima (August 2-6, 2018).

² These introductory notes about the philosophy of Eric Voegelin are based on my recently published book in which I explore at length the integral vision of political philosophy in the light of *metaxy*. See Jarosław Duraj, *The Role of Metaxy in the Political Philosophy of Eric Voegelin* (New York: Peter Lang, 2021).

³ The Greek term *metaxy* (μεταξύ) denotes the middle, the intermediate, the in-between or the center. The term μεταξύ is often transliterated as *mataxu*, *metaxú*, *metaxy* or *metaxý*.

text envisages a study of the “in-between” with special focus on the contemporary philosopher Eric Voegelin, and the role that Plato’s *metaxy* plays in his philosophy. Plato in his *Symposium* describes the nature of philosophizing by comparing it to the mythic Eros, who being the son of *Penia* and *Poros*, epitomizes the tension between lack and plenitude.⁴ The notion of *metaxy* as the “in-between” matrix of the human condition is a powerful concept that symbolizes the intermediate state in which man experiences diverse and opposing tensions, such as the ones between immanence and transcendence or mortality and immortality. Plato’s *metaxy* as “in-between” denotes the existential, ontological, and metaphysical tension between the extreme poles of reality, and at the metaphysical dimension *metaxy* is the realm of the divine-human mutual participation (*methexis/metalepsis*).

Voegelin in his political philosophy provides an interpretation of *metaxy* in terms of the dynamic happening taking place in the “between,” and thus becoming the condition for the possibility of the historical, social, political, ethical and religious orientation of the human person in reality. The experience of being in the context of *metaxy* reveals for Voegelin a spiritual movement and tension within consciousness, something that this philosopher designates in terms of a noetic consciousness. We can say therefore that consciousness for Voegelin constitutes the proper *locus* of the *metaxy* regardless of its plurivocal expressions. In other words, the human consciousness is situated in the reality of the “in-between,” the middle ground where the divine reality manifests itself as the origin of being.

The symbol of *metaxy* in the Western context, may have in our view, its equivalent in the notion of the Middle Way in Eastern philosophy. This way, drawing on Plato’s and Voegelin’s use of *metaxy*, we propose an examination of the very possibility of developing a metaxological hermeneutics of dialogue in a cross-cultural perspective, taking into consideration the Buddhist principle of the Middle Way and of emptiness. First, we briefly examine the main aspects of Voegelin’s philosophy, and later we apply the notion of *metaxy* into a cross-cultural perspective, in order to present the possibility of dialogue with Buddhism in the light of metaxological philosophy.

***Metaxy* in the Philosophy of Eric Voegelin**

Eric Voegelin⁵ was a German-born American political philosopher. His particular interest was the nature of human consciousness and the way it shapes the ordering of history and of political reality. He was also a fierce

⁴ Plato defines *Metaxy* in *Symposium* as the “in-between” or “middle” (*Symposium* 204a-b). He shows that a philosopher can be identified with *Eros*, the son of *Poros* (expedient) and of *Penia* (poverty). *Eros* finds itself in the between; he is intermediate “between a mortal and an immortal” (“μεταξύ ἐστὶ θεοῦ τε καὶ θνητοῦ,” *Symposium* 202e).

⁵ Erich Hermann Wilhelm Vögelin (January 3, 1901-January 19, 1985).

critic of modernity, addressing the problem of atheism, scientism and modern ideology present under the revival of diverse forms of Gnosticism. Voegelin was especially critical of ideologies such as Nazism, Marxism and Scientism. One of his principal goals was to show how the sense of order is conveyed by the experience of transcendence, which can never be fully described but only partially expressed by means of symbolic language. The transcendent order reflected in consciousness remains a basis for a specific political order. In Voegelin the philosophy of politics becomes the philosophy of consciousness. His primary concern was to engage in an open philosophical investigation concerning the truth of existence. The search for this truth, he held, should be based on resistance to prevalent ideological distortions, diagnosis of their spiritual causes, and study of their historical development. Voegelin's view is an invitation to think realistically about the world that systematically marginalizes the dimension of the spirit, and does not speak about man's true nature expressed in the form of a "quaternarian" structure of reality: God, man, world and society.

The dimension of human consciousness is considered by Voegelin as a platform for the interpretation of *metaxy*, and as the privileged *locus* for thinking of the encounter between transcendence and the human being. For Voegelin, indeed, the truth about reality appears in consciousness as the process of existential realization of the nature of being in the *metaxy*, while the encounter with the divine is described in terms of the divine-human participation. In other words, God is seen here not as an external reality, but rather as intimately close and dynamically dwelling within human beings. This divine-human mutual participation (*methexis/metalepsis*) reveals the tensional nature of *metaxy*.⁶

Voegelin discovers the basic methodological framework of his inquiry in the "quaternarian" structure of reality, what he calls the "primordial community" including God, man, world, and society. Adopting this broad perspective, Voegelin tried to set the context for his philosophical investigation of man in the historical dimension. He tried to understand the nature of human consciousness and its manifestation in the social, political, religious and historical order of reality. Voegelin realized the necessity for a return to classical thought, as the origin of reflection on order. His mediation through Greek philosophers, especially Plato and Aristotle, became the crucial methodological turning point in his research. Particularly inspiring in Voegelin's endeavor was Plato's philosophy and his concept of *metaxy*, as the locus of human-divine interaction. This gave a tremendous thrust to Voegelin's work, it became the inspiration for its further development, and

⁶ For Voegelin the "in-between" is "the tension of God seeking man, and man seeking God—the mutuality of seeking and finding one another—the meeting between man and the Beyond of his heart. Since God is present even in the confusion of the heart, preceding and motivating the search itself, the divine Beyond is at the same time a divine Within" E. Voegelin, *The Ecumenic Age*, ed. Michael Franz (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 398.

it constitutes the interpretative key for his philosophical vision. Considering his actual socio-politico-philosophical context, Voegelin saw the origin of the cultural crisis in the spiritual crisis taking place in the souls of human beings. Ultimately, any crisis was due to the rejection of transcendence on the part of man (driven by his *libido dominandi*, being the “lust for power”)⁷ that eventually resulted in a negation of God, making him redundant, or in a more sophisticated way, leading to various forms of spiritual aberrations or deformations such as Gnosticism and the different ideologies of the modern era. This diagnosis prompted Voegelin to clarify his philosophical agenda as the recovery of transcendence, since he stated clearly that the “philosophical problems of transcendence [are] the decisive problems of philosophy.”⁸ This attempt at philosophical recovery of transcendence Voegelin undertook by his return to Plato, and by reconsidering the role of *metaxy*. This concept of *metaxy* stands out among many classical terms used by Voegelin in his philosophy. It is one of his favorite symbols and signifies the “in-between” realm of subject and object, man and God, time and eternity, finiteness and infinity, mortality and immortality. The notion of *metaxy*, especially in Voegelin’s later writings, became crucial for the understanding of his vision and interpretation of reality. What is the use of the “in-between” in Voegelin’s philosophical enterprise? For him, as it was for Plato, we exist at neither of the respective poles in the tension of *metaxy*, but rather in reality between them. Voegelin thinks that it is an error to believe that we can move to a really existing endpoint in either direction. For Voegelin the poles are directions or “indices,” not objects one would be able to pull within the *metaxy*. The tendency to try to set the point of orientation in reality at one or the other of the poles, can be observed in the history of human thought in many instances. Voegelin realized that only the avoiding of this hypostatization of *metaxy* offers a way to understand reality, and also, the *malaises* and distortions of truth that human thought has suffered in history. In order to avoid any kind of ideological aberrations and distortion of truth, man has to keep the balance of consciousness, where takes place the play of opposites between the extreme poles of *metaxy*.

The “In-Between” in Cross-cultural Perspective

From the Western notion of *metaxy* we shall move now to the consideration of the Eastern notion of the “middle.” The question of the middle or “in-between” has been present in various cultures and traditions. It has been present for a long time in the philosophies and religions of Asia. Of particular importance is the concept of the Middle Way and the Golden Mean related to it. In the tradition of philosophy, especially since Aristotle, the Golden Mean

⁷ E. Voegelin, *Modernity without Restraint: The Political Religions; The New Science of Politics; and Science, Politics, and Gnosticism* (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000), 265-67.

⁸ E. Voegelin, *Anamnesis: On the Theory of History and Politics*. Translated by Gerhard Niemeyer (Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002), 6.

referred to the middle position as something preferred and desired between the two extreme tendencies of excess and of deficiency. These notions of the Middle Way and the Golden Mean epitomize universal human experience and the ethical principles that were codified and established as unchangeable paradigms of human realization, and as expressions of the order of reality. The notion of the Middle Way became more present in the religious and philosophical doctrines of the East than in those of the West. The oriental wisdom developed a profound sensibility toward the middle conditions of human life as the way for reaching happiness and order in existence. The philosophy of the Middle Way is one of the characteristics of "oriental man" and his search for order. In principle, however, the Middle Way does not have an explicit foundation in a vision of transcendence, but refers rather to the variety of existential conditions which form and deform human consciousness and life. Chinese thought often speaks about the ethos of the wise man who avoids extreme conditions, and who prefers the middle path that leads to the authentic balance of existence. The metaxological balance between the poles of reality has its equivalence in the philosophy of *dao* (道). In traditional Chinese thought, the notion of the balance between the opposite forces in reality constituting the phenomenon of Oneness, has an enormous role. The *yin-yang* (陰陽), symbolizing the "dark-bright" elements, recognizes the two sources of energy and the two poles of reality which are to be kept in perfect cosmic balance, in the life of an individual and in the social order. There must exist two contrasting realities so that the balance is possible. Yet, this has nothing to do with the dialectical dualism present in Western philosophy. When there is an overemphasis on and dominance of either *yin* or *yang*, reality loses its equilibrium and enters into disorder. This rather resembles what Nicholas of Cusa wrote about the *coincidentia oppositorum*. This coincidence of opposing *yin* and *yang*, demonstrates how seemingly opposite or contrary forces are in fact, complementary and interconnected. They are interdependent in the natural, phenomenal world, and they give rise to each other because they interrelate to one another. One cannot exist without the other. This cannot be reduced just to moral antinomies between good and evil as happened in Manichaeism. The *yin-yang* stands rather for metaphysical, ontological, and cosmic entities.

Duality or dualism is found in many belief systems of the East. The *yin* and *yang* "dualism" has been called "dualistic-monism" or "dialectical monism." *Yin* and *yang* are thought of as complementary rather than opposing forces. They interact and form a dynamic holistic system in which the totality or wholeness is greater than the assembled parts constituting it. This *yin* and *yang* philosophy sees the whole universe as both constant and cyclical at the same time. If one force dominates, it becomes later replaced by its opposing force. This dynamic cycle continues constantly and repeats itself over and over again. The *yin-yang* philosophy may include such tensions as dark and light, life and death, night and day, heaven and earth, health and sickness, and poverty and wealth. The occidental notion

of the “in-between,” regardless of its different contexts and applications from the oriental perspective, can be seen as having some resemblance to the Eastern viewpoint in the notion of the “Golden Mean” (中道 *zhongdao*). Traditional Confucian thought was founded on the belief that the order of reality is based on a dynamic movement between the opposites, one state of things (*yin*) entering gradually into its opposite condition or pole (*yang*) once it reaches the extreme state. This has been called the principle of the “Golden Mean” and it has its relevance not only for the cosmic equilibrium, but also for human life. *Zhongdao* can be illustrated by using the antinomy of autonomy and dependence. Neither the former nor the latter represents the complete picture of human reality, but autonomy and co-dependency are integral and inseparable elements of human life. The principle of the “Golden Mean” is operative in this context whenever the autonomy of being reaches its apogee and extreme state; then there will occur the turning point in which the opposing tendency will come to the fore. In analogy to the metaxological perspective, the oriental philosophy of the “Golden Mean” concludes that the nature of the human being is not reduced just to autonomy or dependency, but the person is “in-between” autonomy and dependence, while the human exercise of freedom aims to keep these two dimensions in a proper balance. The notion of the “Golden Mean” is interpreted also as the “constant mean” and “equilibrium.” It was first mentioned in the Analects of Confucius, but was later elaborated in the *Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸 *zhongyong*) by Zhu Xi (朱熹) in which one is encouraged to live in moderation; that is, man should act by striking the mean “in-between” poverty or deficiency and richness, excess or fullness. This is a tension analogous to the metaxological tension of *Eros* in Plato. This keeping the equilibrium regards also the psychological balance between various emotions and feelings. These should be kept in a proper equilibrium so that they can reach the harmony, and so that the person will not suffer from various kinds of extreme positions in life.

Towards Metaxological Dialogue with Buddhist Philosophy

We would like to apply the consideration of the “in-between” in cross-cultural perspective to one of the many possibilities of dialogue. We intend to discuss the possibility of metaxological dialogue with the Buddhist philosophy of the “in-between” or the Middle Way. Our desire is to show the possibility of encounter between Western thought as represented by Voegelin, and the tradition of the Middle Way as represented by Madhyamika Buddhism. Our proposal here focuses on the question of the *metaxy* in comparison with the Buddhist Middle Way (*madhyanta*), something that in our view has not been discussed so far. Another motivation for this looking for affinities between *metaxy* and the *madhyanta* is that Voegelin’s consideration limits itself to the Western context and does not consider the possibility of equivalence between *metaxy* and notions from other cultural backgrounds. We would

like to consider such a possibility of *metaxy-madhyanta* parallelism, and to show the limits of Voegelin's approach. We need to go beyond our proper context in order to see whether "our" notions can in some way be brought into a wider panorama of thought, so as to contribute to intercultural communication.

The metaxological dialogue in cross-cultural philosophy offers the possibility of an interesting exchange on the "in-between" constitution of reality, that has perplexed both Western philosophers and Buddhist thinkers. Buddhism, a religious and philosophical tradition that did not have a theistic paradigm at its origin, represents a challenge to Christianity and to Western philosophy. In a similar way, it was an alternative to the theistic systems of the Vedas in ancient India. Its apophatic philosophy radically questions Western metaphysical and religious foundations. Still, there are some common aspects that enable both traditions to enter into a fruitful dialogue. One of them can be found in a very sophisticated and profound ethical system. Christianity and Buddhism resemble each other in what regards the relation between epistemic and ethical dimensions. A. Pieris finds, for example, that there is a relation between the gnostic and agapeic aspect of both traditions:

I believe that there is a Christian gnosis that is necessarily agapeic; and there is also a Buddhist agape that remains gnostic. In other words, deep within each one of us there is a Buddhist and a Christian engaged in a profound encounter that each tradition—Buddhist and Christian—has registered in the doctrinal articulation of each religion's core experience. What seems impossible—the interpenetration of the two irreducibly distinct idioms—has already taken place both within Christianity and within Buddhism.⁹

Every religion, being a way to salvation, offers ultimate answers to questions of human destiny. Even though Christianity and Buddhism provide different answers, they share the same human experience of suffering and liberation. Concerning Buddhism R. Panikkar declares,

It does not want to uncondition but rather to decondition human beings; it is not concerned with reaching transcendence but with overcoming immanence; it does not care as much about God as about deconditioning us in a radical and ultimate way. We have to cease being what we are, not in order to become another thing, not even God, but in order to negate totally the human and worldly situation. Buddhism shatters the human dream of any imaginable or thinkable survival.¹⁰

⁹ A. Pieris, *Love Meets Wisdom: A Christian Experience of Buddhism* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988), 113.

¹⁰ R. Panikkar, *The Intrareligious Dialogue* (New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1999), 127.

Occidental *Metaxy* versus Oriental *Madhyanta*

One of the most promising and important aspects of dialogue between Western philosophy and Buddhism is the doctrine of the Middle Way. The philosophical tradition of *madhyanta* as represented particularly by the Madhyamaka and Yogācāra philosophy of Buddhism, in dialogue with the metaxological philosophy of the “in-between,” can shed light on both these different worldviews. The Buddhist vision of the Middle Way as between “eternalism” and “annihilationism” states that whatever exists is the result of causes, conditions, and transformations of the phenomena that subsist in the causal connectedness of dependent co-arising (*pratītyasamutpāda*, 緣起 *yuānqǐ*). Even though Buddhism believes that there is an absence of both eternal divine reality and permanent metaphysical independent substance as the foundation, it is not advocating the nihilistic nonexistence of things. It teaches the phenomena of impermanence as the underlying principle. Hence the Buddhist doctrine of “the middle” (*madhyama*) is the middle view “in-between” “eternalism” (*sassata-vāda*) and “annihilationism” (*uccheda-vāda*).¹¹

The Madhyamaka as the philosophy of the Middle Way defends a middle position between metaphysical claims that things ultimately either exist or do not exist. Madhyamaka, also known as *Śūnyavāda*, was founded by Nagarjuna, and states that all phenomena (*dharma*s) are empty (*śūnya*) of their “nature” or “substance” or “essence” (*svabhāva*). There is, therefore, nothing that would give them an independent existence, because they are dependently co-arisen. For Madhyamaka even the “emptiness” itself remains ultimately “empty” because there is not in it an independent existence. It also has no reference to a transcendental reality beyond phenomenal reality. Yet, this is not a nihilistic view because, as we stated earlier, in Buddhism there is no negation of things or phenomena and their existence. Rather, this existence is conditioned by dependent co-arising. There are two kinds of truth, according to Madhyamaka: the “conventional truth” and “ultimate truth.” What is perceived constitutes the experiential reality, not an ontological phenomenon with independent foundation. Thus, things exist only at conventional level. The truth in ultimate terms states the emptiness of things, which does not mean that nothing exists or

¹¹ “Several suttas hold up dependent origination as a ‘teaching by the middle’ (*majjhena tathāgato dhammaṃ deseti*). It is a ‘teaching by the middle’ because it transcends two extreme views that polarize philosophical reflection on the human condition. One extreme, the metaphysical thesis of eternalism (*sassatavāda*), asserts that the core of human identity is an indestructible and eternal self, whether individual or universal [...]. The other extreme, annihilationism (*ucchedavāda*), holds that at death the person is utterly annihilated [...]. Dependent origination offers a radically different perspective that transcends the two extremes. It shows that individual existence is constituted by a current of conditioned phenomena devoid of a metaphysical self yet continuing on from birth to birth as long as the causes that sustain it remain effective” Bhikkhu Bodhi, *In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pāli Canon* (Boston: Wisdom Publication, 2005), 315.

that there is “non-existence.” It is to say that phenomena are empty because they do not have an “inherent existence.” Ultimately, reality in itself cannot be rendered by concepts. This creates a natural tension, because language is necessary to convey the meaning:

This dynamic philosophical tension – a tension between the Madhyamika accounts of the limits of what can be coherently said and its analytical ostension of what cannot be said without paradox but must be understood – must constantly be borne in mind in reading the text. It is not an incoherent mysticism, but it is a logical tightrope act at the very limits of language and metaphysics.¹²

The Buddha called his path the Middle Way, because it steers clear of two extremes that man experiences at the existential level. One extreme stands in totally indulging in every sense pleasure. The other extreme is painful self-mortification. The middle path between extremes for the Buddha means that our body needs to stay healthy if it has to reach enlightenment, so there must be a balance facilitating the cultivation of mindfulness and awareness.

Recognizing all the differences between the Buddhist view of impermanent reality and Voegelin’s view of contingent existence of order in relation to the ground of being, there are some fundamental questions that need to be asked. The Buddhist theory of “dependent origination” in all its integrity calls for a solid explanation of the real underlying foundation of what exists. In the course of its history, especially in the tradition of Mahayana, Buddhism developed the concept of the Buddha-Nature, which justifies the phenomenon of being as the process of realization in which the Buddha-Dharma becomes fully manifested in human life and the whole reality. The Buddha-Nature is the universal quality of all sentient beings and, for some, all existing things to manifest the Ultimate Reality as the Dharma of which the Buddha is the realization. Thus, the Buddhist view that there is not an unchanging ground of being as the permanent absolute reality, can be found insufficient and based on an equivocal justification. It is problematic, because sooner or later Buddhists arrive at some kind of underlying metaphysical “ground” of reality present in the doctrine on the Buddha-Nature or Buddha-Essence (*Tathāgatagarbha*, “Buddha-Matrix,” “Buddha-Embryo”) within all sentient creatures. These problems are, in final analysis, the questions about the transcendental reality which justify, in our opinion, the fundamental teaching about emptiness not as a nihilistic negation of reality. Rather, the ultimate constitution of emptiness is rooted in the reality beyond, which is called the “True Suchness” (*Bhūta-tathatā*) or “body of Dharma” (*Dharmakaya*).¹³

¹² J. L. Garfield, *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 102.

¹³ “Finally, when considered by wisdom, the dharmakaya is a transcendental reality, absolutely outside this world, in which all Buddhas are one, since the transcendental world is above discriminations of any kind” E. Conze, “The Intermediary World,” *The Eastern Buddhist* 7, 2 (1974): 24.

From Voegelin's perspective it is impossible to think about the order of reality without acknowledging some kind of divine order as the ground of being. Its existence is necessary for finding the true meaning of phenomena and the hierarchy of beings. Voegelin says in this regard that "the discovery of the ground does not condemn the field of existent things to irrelevance but, on the contrary, establishes it as the reality that derives the meaning of its existence from the ground; and inversely, the *via negativa*, as it ascends over the hierarchy of being, leads toward the ground because the ground is the origin of the hierarchy."¹⁴ The search for the ground is necessarily related to the theomorphic structure of reality, which is absent in the Buddhist teaching as irrelevant to the primary problem of finding a solution to human suffering (*duhkha*). However, this poses various questions: is the phenomenon of the ground as theologically justifiable in the context of Western metaphysics to be considered the only possibility for explicit human search for order? In other words, is the pneumatic differentiation of consciousness a *sine qua non*, an exclusive way for the discovery of the divine order of reality and the personal God? Are other human attempts to search for order in reality invalid only for this reason: that they do not lead to the recognition of the theomorphic structure? Voegelin would say that they are incomplete, although sincere. The full realization of this search requires noetic and pneumatic differentiation. While we agree that this paradigm can be applied to the Western notion of order, it is probably not adequate to apply this same paradigm to the oriental perception of reality, especially to Buddhism. One cannot simply state that something is incomplete if the religious and philosophical principles of the Buddhist tradition are not founded on the premises of the pneumatic differentiation of Western Christianity. In this case, probably a more efficient way of approaching other traditions would be not by seeking theological consistency, but by considering the moral and ethical integrity as the outcome of pneumatic differentiation, as is present in Buddhism. Contrary to Voegelin, we find an equivalent noetic and pneumatic differentiation in Buddhism, which makes it a valid and superbly sophisticated paradigm of the search for order. This will manifest itself in the profound ethical system of Buddhism, in which Christianity will find its equal partner in metaxological dialogue. It is indeed fascinating to see how the two different traditions, of theistic and non-theistic origin, arrive at some conclusions which have enormous impact on the whole of humanity.

The Buddhist consideration of the "in-between" in relation to Western thought we would like to exemplify by two interesting cross-cultural studies. We find them in the scholarship of two Japanese philosophers: Watsuji Tetsurō 和辻 哲郎 (1889–1960) and Hisamatsu Shin'ichi 久松真 (1889–1980). Watsuji Tetsurō was a moral philosopher, cultural historian, and intellectual historian. He is one of the scholars who developed the

¹⁴ E. Voegelin, *The Ecumenic Age*, 397.

Buddhist philosophy of the “in-between.” For him Buddhism considers the view of independent individuality to be the source of delusion. It can be overcome if one recognizes our radical relational interconnectedness. This interrelationship is possible as various individuals constitute a network due to the “in-betweenness” in which they are mutually interrelated. In the Buddhist perspective the “in-betweenness” of the self and the other consists of the nondualistic mediation of emptiness. Heidegger, held that an “authentic” life moved towards acquiring the status of existence in contrast to the other being. For Buddhism such a life would be inauthentic because it contradicts the holistic view of human existence as “being-in-betweenness.” Watsuji Tetsurō considered this nonduality of “in-betweenness” as a proof of authenticity. An individual can reach authentic life through the act of self-negation.¹⁵ Watsuji calls betweenness the inextricable interconnection between I and Thou. My perception, my seeing and loving of Thou, is determined and interconnected with Thou loving me. He declares,

Betweenness is quite distinct from the intentionality of consciousness. Activity inherent in the consciousness of “I” is never determined by this “I” alone but is also determined by others. It is not merely a reciprocal activity in that one way conscious activities are performed one after another but, rather, that either one of them is at once determined by both sides; that is, by itself and by the other. Hence, so far as betweenness-oriented existences are concerned, each consciousness interpenetrates the other.¹⁶

In contrast to the Western view of self as possessing its intrinsic identity autonomously in relation to other human beings, Watsuji interprets the human self from the perspective of his ethical theory. According to it the notion of the human being is intended as *ningen* (人間), meaning the “middle-man” or “between persons,” because it is composed with characters for an individual (social) and middle (between). It reflects the phenomenon of the human being as placed in relationship with other beings. This is not something static, but, as constantly dynamic, it shifts the network of interhuman relations. The betweenness is not just a social or spatio-temporal dimension of human existence. It is a profoundly ethical quality of human participation in reality. Ethics for Watsuji is, in fact, the study of the human “in-betweenness.” Therefore, the essence of ethical problems is not located just in the human consciousness of an individual, with his intrinsic identity isolated from the others, but exactly “in-between” self and the others, “in-between” individual and community. Hence, the personal individuation and identity is not more important than the fact of being in interrelation with other beings. In Watsuji the “in-betweenness” is manifested as the interpenetration of human consciousness and thus it has

¹⁵ Cf. E. McCarthy, *Ethics Embodied: Rethinking Selfhood through Continental, Japanese, and Feminist Philosophies*. Lanham (MD: Lexington Books, 2010), 25.

¹⁶ T. Watsuji, *Watsuji Tetsurō's Rinrigaku: Ethics in Japan*. Translated by S. Yamamoto and Robert E. Carter. Albany (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), 69.

a broader meaning than does Husserl's intersubjectivity. The latter having its starting point in self-consciousness seems to reflect the idea of an isolated ego, while the former as "in-between," transcending a binary framework, recognizes the affinity between the self and the other in terms of psychic life, as these two psychic lives are in mutual interpenetration. One could associate I/Thou interpenetration of consciousness with the Greek concept of *perichoresis* (circuminsession).

Another example of dialogical encounter between Western philosophy and Buddhist thought we have in the scholarship of Japanese philosopher and Zen Buddhist scholar Shin'ichi Hisamatsu. One of the possibilities of metaxological dialogue has been demonstrated by K. Kramer in his comparative study on the notion of "between" as present in the writings of both Buber and Hisamatsu.¹⁷ For Buber the "between" has the status of "holy insecurity."¹⁸ The problem identified by Hisamatsu was the question of self-reflective consciousness, which, as passive, dualistically objectifies reality and clings to objects. Voegelin also faced the problem of consciousness in relation to dualism, but his perspective was that of reflective distance, by which he postulated the distance from dualistic hypostasizing applied to the poles of *metaxy*. Hisamatsu and Buber discuss the nature of self, one of the fundamental problems of philosophy. In the context of the dialogue with Buddhism, too, this can arise as a central philosophical problem which has to be treated properly and with an extreme attention and care. What we find in this dialogical perspective is that there is a tension in approaching the question of self. This reminds us about the tension of *metaxy* in which a person has to live "in-between" the polarizations of his existential experience. For Buber and Hisamatsu there is a tension in the self, in the personal "I," because we experience a divided self. One pole refers to our turned against itself internal self, and the other is the integral and holistic and actualized self.¹⁹ Because of this polarity our ordinary self and the True Self seem to be dualistically disunited. What we need is the integration of these two dimensions so that our daily life and spiritual life are in harmony. Hisamatsu also saw the problem of dualism and the need of overcoming it:

According to Hisamatsu, the split between these two I's is the root problem of human existence. Ordinary self-reflective consciousness is problematic because it locks people into dualistic prisons in which the thinker is forever outside his or her thoughts, in which the "I" who knows is forever different from the "I" that is being known. This consciousness gives rise to our perception of such dualities as self and the other, good and evil, freedom and destiny, Buddha and self.²⁰

¹⁷ K. P. Kramer, "Explorations and Responses: Cross-Reanimating Martin Buber's 'Between' and Shin'ichi Hisamatsu's 'Nothingness.'" *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 46, 3 (2011): 444-56.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 445.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 446.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 448.

How, then, to overcome this dualism? Kramer offers this analysis:

In this dualistic consciousness, the subject-knower remains separate, estranged, and alienated from the object-known (other, Buddha), as if the knower exists "inside" and everything else appears "outside." As a result of this deep seated separation from oneself, from others, and from the world, one experiences loneliness, rootlessness, and anxiety about life and death. In Hisamatsu's view, the ego-I's main problem, dualism, cannot be overcome by the ego-I. The one and only resolution to this dualistic subject-objective mode of consciousness is a radical awareness/actualization of the True Self, of Formless Self, of the not-two-ness of Buddha Nature.²¹

For Buber the "between" has ontological and existential character. This realm Buber called a "genuine third alternative" located between subjectivity and objectivity. It is a relational space where spontaneous mutuality concerns all who take part in the dialogue. Kramer concludes, however, that "[o]ne of the reasons Buber's thought has not attracted more attention internationally is precisely because the oscillating sphere of the between—Buber's central category—bears no continuity. It cannot be quantified. It cannot be measured."²² For Buber the authentic actualization of the "between" takes place in a dialogue, so the dialogue itself is a method of living in the "between." Real dialogue is possible if the act of transformation or turning around takes place. This "'[t]urning' involves a double movement: first, one turns *away from* everything that would prevent us from entering into genuine relationship with the other; second, one turns *toward* whoever or whatever presents itself to us."²³ If we allow the Buddhist view of nothingness or emptiness and Buber's notion of the "between" mutually to illuminate each other, it can help us toward a deeper understanding of the reality about which they both talk. Kramer states that "[i]n light of Hisamatsu's 'Nothingness,' for instance, Buber's 'Between' can be seen as a space of emptiness in which persons can situate themselves in freely creative interactions. In light of Buber's 'Between,' meanwhile, we can re-understand Hisamatsu's 'Nothingness' as calling for an ever-present radical responsibility to and for whomever I encounter."²⁴ On the other hand,

[s]ubstituting the characteristics of Buber's "Between" for those of Hisamatsu's "Nothingness," we can consider Buber's "Between" as without internal or external obstruction; as permeating all phenomena (whether distant or near, large or small); as impartial, accepting all things with equanimity; as not limited by anything; as formless, without material space of mental time; as pure (beyond delimitation and defilements); and as stable (unborn and undying).²⁵

²¹ Ibid., 449.

²² Ibid., 450.

²³ Ibid., 451.

²⁴ Ibid., 453.

²⁵ Ibid., 454.

The “between” in the light of “nothingness” does not negate human desire or the human ego as such. It is not a phenomenological locus or sphere that can be observed or measured. Similarly, for Voegelin the “in-between” is not just a concept or an image being the result of conjecture. Any attempt to describe and define the “in-between” will reduce it either to a subject or object. To this both Voegelin and Buber clearly objected. To such a “conceptual proliferation” and conceptual objectivization Hisamatsu objected, as well. Both “emptiness” and “between” are beyond delimitation; at the same time, they are fully present in the participatory reality of dependent-origination and the participatory *metaxy*. The “between” is fully present whenever authentic dialogue takes place, be it between human beings, between man and nature or, above all, between the Creator and the creation. Kramer concludes that

Looking at each thinker through the eyes of the other, what emerges as common between the two is that the “Between” and “Nothingness” each can only manifest when one is spontaneously, unselfconsciously present in the here-and-now. Being present, responding freely and creatively, without withholding, without distractions, without evaluating, without comparing and judging, is being responsibly responsive to whomever or whatever presents itself.²⁶

Pleromatic *Metaxy* versus Pleromatic *Śūnyatā*

The notion of *metaxy* characterized by the tension between the poles has its Buddhist equivalent in the notion of *śūnyatā*. As *metaxy* cannot be fully realized apart from the tension, so it is also with *śūnyatā* as the Middle Way that cannot be understood apart from its opposing poles of Samsara and Nirvana. These two poles are exactly opposite poles, but they are interdependent, so a proper way of approaching this reality is through the Middle Way of *śūnyatā*, which has a role similar to that of *metaxy*. There are some similarities between the Buddhist *śūnyatā* and Voegelin’s *metaxy*. In the metaxological perspective, like that of the Middle Way, we find an important characteristic of interdependence. It is visible in the role of *metaxy* as the index through which the metaxological relationality is revealed. With regard to the status of *metaxy* Voegelin talks about it as a locus, but more often he considers it in terms of an *index*. The *metaxy* is regarded as an index “for the *relation* between the temporal and eternal poles of the experience. Just as ‘temporal’ only makes sense in relation to ‘eternal,’ and ‘immanent’ in relation to ‘transcendent,’ the *metaxy* only makes sense as the experienced relation between the two poles in the noetic experience.”²⁷

²⁶ Ibid., 456.

²⁷ Peter J. Opitz and Gregor Sebba, eds., *The Philosophy of Order: Essays on History, Consciousness, and Politics* (Stuttgart: Klett Verlag, 1981), 106.

The metaxological view of interdependence between the poles of *metaxy* shows that in themselves these poles are empty when treated alone, but they gain their meaning and role once they are contrasted with their counter-tension. When treated holistically they are given their “in-between” character. This stands behind the resourcefulness one finds in the “in-between” openness. In the practice of dialogue it manifests itself as a form of self-emptying, becoming empty or making the “in-between” space for the “Other” to be manifested. The metaxological experience includes in itself the deep awareness of insufficiency and imperfection, which leads to readiness to learn and to be corrected by what may emerge in, or be spoken from, the middle. The philosophy of the “in-between” is not being afraid of going through the experience of failure as purification. Due to this experience the way of dwelling and crossing the “between” can be enriched by a luminosity in which things can shine and appear in their proper nature. This may result in seeing the richness of being through the voidness of being conventionally hidden. As W. Desmond states, this “void seems to be transfigured into the plenitude.”²⁸ In *metaxy* we can see a paradoxical and mysterious interchange between poverty and plenitude. The mediation in the “between” is not a dialogical self-mediation, but a metaxological intermediation without focus on the self and without reducing the other to the self. It is going to the other and returning to the self, but not in the same way as before, because this return is already transformed by this metaxological intermediation.

The emptiness of *metaxy* can be found to be an uncomfortable experience of void.²⁹ A man generally prefers to stay at either of the poles of *metaxy*, because he prefers clear identification and association. To remain “in-between” and to be forced to live in uncertainty, can cause impatience and anxiety. People prefer to live in secure and stable realms, without the insecurity of the metaxic tensions. The uncertainty fatigues a man and makes him anxious; hence, the tension can become unbearable, and instead of facing it one may seek refuge in what Pascal saw as *divertissement*, distraction, escapism, diversion, weariness. The middle point of *metaxy* appears to be an “empty” dimension when the polarities of the metaxic tension create a vacuum, neutralizing each other or cancelling each other out. Yet, the “in-between” is not a place of indifference in terms of the relativizing of the different perspectives. *Metaxy* has nothing to do with not taking a decision in front of the ambiguities of existential polarizations. *Metaxy* according to S. Weil is the intermediation of “representation that draws us to the non-representable.” It orients us in being, preventing us

²⁸ W. Desmond, *Perplexity and Ultimacy: Metaphysical Thoughts from the Middle* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), 256.

²⁹ “Thought is in the void beyond self-mediation, the void of that space between us and the ultimate other beyond the void, the agapeic plenitude beyond the void. This void is a space of possible destruction, but it is also the space of freedom, and the only place for us of new creation” Desmond, *Perplexity and Ultimacy: Metaphysical Thoughts from the Middle*, 257.

from grasping nothingness instead of plenitude.³⁰ The middle position is situating us in a proper perspective, allowing us to see “things as they truly are” and to become properly rooted in a divine ground of being. The “in-between” as either *metaxy* and *śūnyatā* is not a self-referencing realm depending for its nature on self-interpretation; otherwise, it would fall into the same fundamental “philosophical sin” of ideological autonomy. A person thinking from between but not depending on something bigger than himself, would manifest philosophical *hybris*. *Metaxy* and *śūnyatā* refer to the reality of the middle but also point beyond it, bridging immanence and transcendence, which are conventionally separated dimensions of the human experience. *Metaxy* and *śūnyatā* speak of the all-embracing Wholeness which justifies its own existence. For Buddhism it is important to consider the reality beyond *śūnyatā* as the Ultimate Reality (*atyanta-śūnyatā*, “ultimate emptiness”). Even though this belief is not shared by some of the Buddhist schools, Mahayana traditional belief aims at some kind of transcendent reality, not in terms of a personal absolute but rather as the plenitude of *śūnyatā* through which the Ultimate Reality, also called the Real or the Ultimate Truth – that is, the Dharma – reaches the fullness of its realization. The teaching on emptiness is directly linked with the doctrine of the dependent co-arising and “unsubstantiality of all things.”³¹ Interdependence is the fundamental term explaining the nature of *śūnyatā*. Mahayana Buddhism understands *śūnyatā* as the coming into being of things due to their interdependent origination. This is related to the Buddhist view of “no-self” or “non-ego.” With this we are arriving at what in Buddhism are called the “three marks of existence” or the characteristics of all existence and beings as taught by the Buddha, namely, suffering or unsatisfactoriness (*dukkha*), impermanence (*anicca*), and non-self (*anattā*). These three marks in Buddhism will find their principal explanation through the insight into the nature of reality as empty, that is, as devoid of substantial self-nature. From this vision there results also a new perspective on the human self as interconnected and in a permanent flux.

In psychological and religious terms meditation on emptiness is the process of liberation and release from any attachment and also from the reification of beings. Man cannot possess beings because ultimately there is nothing that can be possessed. One cannot appropriate something that cannot be grasped. What makes a person think that he possesses something is the illusion about the permanence of the grasping ego and of the things one believes it is possible to appropriate. The human ego is the “fabricated

³⁰ For Simone Weil, μεταξὺ is “[Intermédiaire]. Toute représentation qui nous tire vers le non-représentable. Nécessité de μεταξὺ pour nous empêcher de saisir le néant au lieu de l'être plein.” S. Weil, *Cahiers 2*, Tome VI (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1997), 332.

³¹ “In complete harmony with the central Buddhist intuition of *nairatmyavada*, or the doctrine of the ultimate unsubstantiality of all things, the concept of *sunyata* (vacuity, voidness, emptiness) tries to express the very essence of the absolute, the ultimate nature or reality of all things.” Panikkar, *The Intrareligious Dialogue*, 122.

ego." Buddhism is about the awakening to the empty nature of things, by which awakening the self-centered ego is liberated from the illusion about itself and from the reification of things to which it is attached. However, as we mentioned earlier, this aspect of emptiness as negation of permanent being has to be supplemented by the emptying of the idea of "emptiness" itself. This is what Buddhists call *śūnyatā-śūnyatā*, that is, the "emptiness of emptiness." The full meaning of *śūnyatā* ultimately means the negation of negation, which resembles the dialectical double negation resulting in affirmation. Without this double negation there is a danger of nihilism or even of the reification of *śūnyatā* itself. A similar danger exists in dealing with the *metaxy*, about which Voegelin often speaks. If there is a tendency to hypostatize the poles of *metaxy*, then we can very easily end up losing the true nature of being "in-between," and the notion of *metaxy* itself becomes reified.

In the Buddhist view of *śūnyatā* there is an emphasis on "great affirmation" through the "great negation" of the reification of or the attachment to things.³² This also has consequences for the apocalyptic tendencies discussed by Voegelin in the Western and oriental traditions. He sees the Buddha's experience as escapist, apocalyptic and not able to deal with the tension of reality. Actually, this view may come from a misunderstanding of the Buddha's experience of enlightenment, as we discussed already. This problem can be addressed by further explanation of *śūnyatā* and its role in Buddhist philosophy. In fact, what is understood by emptiness is in no opposition to the true nature of being, but it negates the false image of it materialized as attachment. According to the Buddhist doctrine expressed succinctly in such a text as the *Heart Sutra*, there is no dualism between "form" and "emptiness" but both are identical and they should be treated as one interdependent reality.³³ Buddhist emptiness is the dynamic field of inter-relationship between emptiness and form, concerning the world of sentient beings and the physical world as well. The emptiness here, with its double negation, leads to affirmation. In this light the Buddhist *nirvāna* should be understood not as extinction and escape from the world of samsara, that is, the phenomenal world. To say that *nirvāna* is *samsāra* and *samsāra* is *nirvāna* means that the sentient being is fully present in this world, but its new way of seeing things helps it to remain free from attachments

³² "Sunyavada is not philosophical nihilism or metaphysical agnosticism, but a positive and concrete affirmation, one of the deepest human intuitions regarding the ultimate structure of reality. It says that everything, absolutely everything, that falls under the range of our experience actual or possible is void of that (superimposed and thus only falsely appearing) consistency with which we tend to embellish our contingency." Panikkar, *The Intrareligious Dialogue*, 122.

³³ *The Heart Sutra* states: "Form is emptiness; emptiness is form. Emptiness is not other than form; form is not other than emptiness." Donald S. Jr. Lopez, *The Heart Sutra Explained: Indian and Tibetan Commentaries* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988), 19.

and false views about the nature of impermanent reality.³⁴ With this we may arrive at the possibility of dialogue between the philosophy of pleromatic *metaxy* and the philosophy of pleromatic *śūnyatā*. They both open up the dimension of plenitude. The metaxological perspective situated the creation in the interdependency of the “in-between” being, by which the potentiality of the human, with its poverty and richness, its nothingness and plenitude, can become manifested as the hyperbole of being. Notwithstanding, this cannot be grasped any longer in ontological terms, but requires hyperbolic and metaxological metaphysics. A similar dynamism we can observe in the manifestation of the Buddhist *śūnyatā*.

The Christian Pleroma speaks about the fullness of God as manifested in reality and also as the promise of fullness of life in which the human being can participate. Pleroma opens man to the vision beyond him when man becomes somebody more than he is now, that is, when his being created in God’s image comes to its full realization. This expresses the tension of his middle existence. Living in his human condition, he is at the same time called to something higher. If he remains just a man, he might easily “degenerate into a beast.” His being called to search for something greater does not come from him, but it is a divine call.³⁵ We are reflecting on two key concepts of *śūnyatā* and Pleroma as emptiness and fullness, constituting the platform for dialogue. Their radicality and importance reflect the emphasis of the religious quintessence of these religions. Both traditions have their eschatological goal in salvation, symbolized in one by Nirvana and in the other by *soteria*, but the nature of this *telos* is respectively *śūnyatā* and Pleroma. There are some contributions that each tradition can provide for the other. The Buddhist sunyatic contribution can constitute a reminder either to Christianity or any other humanistic philosophical view of the West that,

no amount of “revelation” or “reason” justifies manipulating humans under the guise of “the will of God” or the “demands of Reason” in order to steer humanity and the world to clearly defined goals. The ultimate goal is always so ineffable that it does not even exist. Buddhism is the thorough defense of the ultimate, absolutely ungraspable, mystery of existence. The mystery here is immanent.³⁶

On the other hand, the Christian pleromatic contribution can constitute a reminder to a Buddhist vision of reality and to related forms of humanism that

³⁴ It results that “nirvāna is neither a nihilistic extinction of nor a transcendent escape from the phenomenal world (*samsāra*); it is rather an enlightened manner of being-in-the-world here and now.” B.W. Davis, “The Kyoto School,” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Spring 2017), accessed February 26, 2021, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/kyoto-school/>.

³⁵ Panikkar, *The Intrareligious Dialogue*, 124.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 130-31.

no amount of self-effort and goodwill suffices to handle the human predicament adequately; we must remain constantly open to unexpected and unforeseeable eruptions of Reality itself, which Christians may want to call God or divine Providence. Christianity stands for the unselfish and authentic defense of the primordial rights of Reality, of which we are not the masters. The mystery here is transcendent.³⁷

Buddhism faces an urgent challenge to consider seriously the nature of the foundation on which the whole of being is based. Even though in Buddhism there is no doctrine of creation, there is still a need to elaborate such a vision of the ground as the foundation of reality. The fundamental philosophical principle of Buddhism expressed by the doctrine of dependent co-origination may provide a basis for such a cosmological and ontological clarification. One of the priorities of Buddhism is to fight against ignorance. A vision of reality that does not include some essential perspective on the ontological foundations of being, displays an aspect of human ignorance and lack of comprehension that should be challenged. Taking a position about these issues should naturally follow the quest for wisdom, and should be a part of the Buddhist intellectual agenda. The Buddha's attitude of silence towards the metaphysical questions can mean that these questions are not relevant to the problem of human suffering and liberation. Yet, this silence may also mean his realization that the human reason is finite and must be complemented or illuminated by a "higher" source of wisdom, be it *dharma* or *aletheia* or the divine *logos*.

Conclusion

In this article we tried to show the importance of *metaxy* in the context of possibility of a cross-cultural metaxology and a comparative philosophy of dialogue with Buddhism. The term *metaxy* is a powerful symbol representing the mystery of participation in reality. Its connotation is broad enough to include those aspects of the human experience that cannot be grasped and put either into propositions or into analytical formulations.

We considered here a possible relevance of the symbol *metaxy* to intercultural dialogue. Drawing on Eric Voegelin's metaxology, we tried to show the possibility of a pragmatic application of the notion of *metaxy* to the dialogue with Buddhism. We explored particularly the possibility of metaxological encounter with Buddhist philosophy of the Middle Way. Even though there is very little about Buddha and Buddhism in Voegelin's writings, still he considered Buddhist enlightenment to be an important phenomenon of leap and the manifestation of differentiation of consciousness in an Asian context. Yet, this differentiation was for him unsatisfactory. We find his position and analysis lacking a more generous consideration that might have transcended his Europocentric bias. Buddhist philosophy and

³⁷ Ibid., 131.

religion constitutes an extraordinary breakthrough in the history of human thought. In order to fill this gap in Voegelin's philosophy we decided to offer this discussion on Buddhism, and to present the possibility of metaxological dialogue with this rich philosophical tradition. We found it particularly important and fascinating to open the metaxological discussion to the cross-cultural dimension. It appears as though it is not enough to apply and to live the "in-between" of dialogue within one homogenous culture. The developed globalized reality, with its "global consciousness" and with the interconnections of the worlds and cultures we live in, is a phenomenon that cannot be ignored anymore. We do not live just "in-between" "philosophical Athens" and "religious Jerusalem," but "in-between" beyond and, at the same time, in a plurality of locations, be they cultural, political, technical or religious. The plurality of the "betweens" calls us beyond our homogenous cultural or religious reality toward other worlds, which also have their own cultural and religious "betweens." What we need most is to remain open toward this otherness and to enter into cross-cultural dialogue. Our effort in applying the metaxological perspective aims at elaborating on the possibility of such kind of dialogue. For this purpose, we tried to touch upon a very important and vibrant example of cross-cultural dialogue between the East and the West. Our special focus was Voegelin's metaxology and the notion of the "in-between" in relation to the Buddhist notion of the Middle Way. Regardless of the evident polarization between the East and the West, we find these two different worldviews as having a lot in common. One of these common aspects is the philosophy of the "in-between." This more comparative aspect of the article was a search for a common metaxological ground for a more productive dialogue with Buddhist philosophy. We tried to demonstrate that in Buddhism the notion of the Middle Way has also the connotation of the "in-between" (*madhyanta*) and that the Middle Way reached outstanding levels of development and luminosity within this multi-secular tradition. It is our hope that the present research will contribute to promote this proficuous dialogue with Buddhism. We believe that the metaxological perspective may open new and promising fields in the dialogical encounter between Western *metaxy* and Eastern *madhyanta*. It is a challenging but promising comparative dialogue between the Pleroma, rendered by kataphatic language in terms of surplus, abundance of meaning and plenitude of being, and the apophatic language of Buddhist "negativity" and "emptiness" (*śūnyatā*), which ultimately becomes an affirmation. In this way the hyperbolic language of plenitude and excess is contrasted with the negative language of ineffability of *śūnyatā*, which constitutes also a certain kind of plenitude. We find also in Voegelin himself an apophatic approach that deals with meontology, ineffability, mystery and perplexity, and which is also a promise of a more fruitful dialogue. Indeed, only such a dialogical encounter between two traditions can truly open the field for that eschatological teleology of fulfilment to be achieved in both pleromatic *metaxy* and pleromatic *śūnyatā*.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bodhi, Bhikkhu. *In the Buddha's Words: An Anthology of Discourses from the Pāli Canon*. Boston: Wisdom Publication, 2005.
- Bury, Robert Gregg. *The Symposium of Plato*. Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1909.
- Conze, Edward. "The Intermediary World." *The Eastern Buddhist* 7, 2 (1974): 22-31.
- Davis, Bret W. "The Kyoto School." *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, edited by Edward N. Zalta. Spring 2017. Accessed February 26, 2021. <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2017/entries/kyoto-school/>.
- Desmond, William. *Desire, Dialectic, and Otherness: An Essay on Origins*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1987.
- . *Perplexity and Ultimacy: Metaphysical Thoughts from the Middle*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995.
- Duraj, Jaroslaw. *The Role of Metaxy in the Political Philosophy of Eric Voegelin*. New York: Peter Lang, 2021.
- Garfield, Jay L. *The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- Kramer, Kenneth P. "Explorations and Responses: Cross-Reanimating Martin Buber's 'Between' and Shin'ichi Hisamatsu's 'Nothingness.'" *Journal of Ecumenical Studies* 46, 3 (2011): 444-456.
- Lopez, Donald S. Jr. *The Heart Sutra Explained: Indian and Tibetan Commentaries*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1988.
- McCarthy, Erin. *Ethics Embodied: Rethinking Selfhood through Continental, Japanese, and Feminist Philosophies*. Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2010.
- Opitz, Peter J., and Gregor Sebba, eds. *The Philosophy of Order: Essays on History, Consciousness, and Politics*. Stuttgart: Klett Verlag, 1981.
- Panikkar, Raimon. *The Intrareligious Dialogue*. New Jersey: Paulist Press, 1999.
- Pieris, Aloysius. *Love Meets Wisdom: A Christian Experience of Buddhism*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1988.
- Voegelin, Eric. *Anamnesis: On the Theory of History and Politics*. Translated by Gerhard Niemeyer. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2002.
- . *Modernity without Restraint: The Political Religions; The New Science of Politics; and Science, Politics, and Gnosticism*. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000.

———. *The Ecumenic Age*. Edited by Michael Franz. Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 2000.

Watsuji, Tetsurō. *Watsuji Tetsurō's Rinrigaku: Ethics in Japan*. Translated by S. Yamamoto and Robert E. Carter. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996.

Weil, Simone. *Cahiers 2*. Tome VI. Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1997.

Part III

Buddhist-Christian Dialogue

Jesuit-Buddhist Dialogue in Sri Lanka: From its Origins to the Present Times

Aloysius Pieris, S.J.

A revised and updated version of a paper originally written at the request of the Xavier Centre of Historical Research, Goa (India) and presented at the Jesuit Symposium held on July 12-13, 2018.

Introduction: Necessity of Being Autobiographical

It is embarrassing for me to make this presentation because I happen to be the *first Lankan Jesuit to have been missioned by Superiors to be engaged in "formal dialogue" with Buddhists*. This took place fifty and more years ago (1966) with no precedent to follow and in a tense atmosphere of suspicion and distrust. How this initiative had later developed into something beyond Buddhist-Christian dialogue is indicated towards the end of this presentation.

It is true, however, that in a predominantly Buddhist country such as ours, no Jesuit can undertake a work (including the parish apostolate) that does not touch the needs of the wider society and therefore involving some encounter with Buddhists, at least indirectly. We have today a Jesuit teaching in a State University and specializing in children's education and is therefore immersed in the Buddhist ethos. The Jesuit Social Centre and the Jesuit Academy in Galle, the Shanthi Centre in Colombo, Satyodaya in Kandy, Youth Training Centre in Cholankanda are places where Buddhists are served by the Jesuits today. All this is **the fruit of renewal launched by Vatican II** which changed the atmosphere irreversibly on this matter and hence Jesuits are on the whole dialogical in their approach to Buddhists and Buddhism, though not in any *formal sense*.

But things were not so easy over half a century ago when I was sent by Holy Obedience as the first ever Christian to study Buddhism under Monastic Tutors with a view to obtaining a Doctorate in Buddhism and thus initiate a *formal dialogue* with Buddhists and their doctrine, practice and culture. This story needs to be told if I must write anything under the title given to me by the organizers. Hence I once more apologize for the inevitably autobiographical character of this presentation.

1. Non-Jesuits in the Forefront

The first observation to be made is that *Jesuits were not the pioneers in Buddhist Christian Dialogue in Sri Lanka*. On the contrary, even the renowned Jesuit scholar Fr. S.G. Perera, s.j., a nationally recognized historian and a respected representative of the Catholic elite of the 1940s—truly a trailblazer in Catholic apologetics as required by that epoch—advocated an emphatically *anti-Buddhist species of Christian nationalism*, frequently and overtly referring to non-Christians as ‘heathens’ and other Christians as ‘heretics’ in his writings and speeches.¹ His collaborator, the Oblate Bishop Edmund Peiris, also shared his views. Even Fr Vito Perniola—admired by Buddhists for his contribution to the advancement of the knowledge of Pali (the language of the oldest version of Buddhist Scriptures)—had adopted a controversial rather than a dialogical approach towards Buddhism.²

The **credit of initiating Christian-Buddhist understanding** as a way of life (rather than as a formal commitment) in the **Catholic Church** goes to a few bold members of the *Diocesan Clergy* and two members of the *Oblates of Mary Immaculate (OMI) congregation*. They all were Jesuit Perera’s junior contemporaries, namely, Frs. Moses Perera and Cyril Edirisingha (products of the then Jesuit run Papal Seminary in Kandy and presbyters of the Jesuit-run Diocese of Galle) and Fr Sam Alexander Ranasingha (a former student of the Jesuit-run St Joseph’s Seminary, Tiruchianpalli, India and working in the Jesuit-run Trincomalee diocese). Finally there was the very colorful personality of Fr Marcelline Jayakody, OMI—poet and musician—who was hailed by the Buddhists as the *pansalē svāmi* (“the Catholic Priest of the Buddhist Monastery”). Another Oblate priest, Fr Anthony Fernando (who later quit the Oblates and left the Presbyterate) was also a pioneer in Buddhist-Christian dialogue and was responsible for establishing a Christian Culture Section originally attached to the Buddhism Section of Humanities Department in University of Kelaniya in 1976.³

The boldness and courage of these **non-Jesuits** can be gauged only against the background of the anti-Buddhist policies of the Portuguese and Dutch colonialists followed by the Buddhist-Christian controversies and animosities that marked the 19th century under the British colonial rule,⁴ with serious aftereffects in the mid-twentieth century.⁵ The *formal dialogue*

¹ Cf. Aloysius Pieris, foreword to *Historical Sketches: Ceylon Church History*, by S.G. Perera, s.j., 3rd imprint, (Colombo: Godage Brothers (Pvt) Ltd., 2013), vi-viii.

² See my comments in *Vāgdevī 21, Journal for Religious Reflection*, 11/1 (Jan 2017): 67-68.

³ N. Lowe, “Kristiani Sanskruti Adhyana Amsayē Itihāsaya,” *Krisamsā* 1, no. 1 (2013): 1-6.

⁴ Elizabeth Harris, *Theravāda Buddhism and the British Encounter: Religious, missionary and colonial experience in nineteenth century Sri Lanka* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2006); R. F. Young and G. P. V. Somaratna, *Vain debates: the Buddhist-Christian controversies of nineteenth-century Ceylon*, vol. xxiii, Publications of the De Nobili Research Library (Vienna: Institut für Indologie der Universität Wien, 1996), 236.

⁵ The passing of the *Sinhala Only Bill* in 1959 and the Nationalization of the Schools, popularly known as the “Schools Take-Over,” were mainly intended to counter the English-Speaking Christians’ domination in education.

initiatives on the part of Catholics (including inter-religious dialogue centres) appeared **only a few years after Vatican II**—more precisely in the early 1970s.⁶

The **Reformed Churches** were far ahead of the Catholic Church. After antagonizing the Buddhists by challenging them to public debates and by writing anti-Buddhist tracts in the 19th century (more about this below), the *Methodist* church learnt a lesson and turned a new leaf. The Methodist Pastor John Simon de Silva (1868-1940) inaugurated a new era of a culture-friendly ‘nationalism’ which, however, was neither Buddhism friendly nor ecumenical⁷ paralleling the Jesuit Perera’s anti-Buddhist and anti-ecumenical nationalism mentioned above. Openness to other religions is recorded first at the Centre for Religion and Society (CRS) founded in 1953 by the British Methodist Pastor Rev. Basil Jackson and reconstituted under its new name “Ecumenical Institute for Study and Dialogue” (EISD) by his successor Rev. Dr. Lynn A. de Silva—a pioneer in Buddhist-Christian dialogue; this institute continues to this day as a locus of inter-religious encounter specially under its present director, Marshal Fernando. The *Anglicans* led by Bp. Lakdasa de Mel tried to bridge the cultural gap between Christians and Buddhists while his nephew Fr Yohan Devananda established the very first Christian *ārāmaya* modelled on Buddhist monasticism. Many (not all) *Evangelical Christian Groups* seem to regard inter-religious dialogue (unless geared to eventual conversion) as a betrayal of the mission mandate of Jesus and are engaged in a very zealous conversion spree.

2. Early Jesuit Posture

Obviously the major apostolate of the Jesuits until 1970 was secondary education, in which they excelled. The majority of our students were non-Christians (Buddhists, Hindus and Muslims). Our mission policy was to serve the non-Christians and witness to Christ before them through our commitment to their education rather than indulge in proselytism as such. In letters to Rome, Jesuits had acknowledged not having converted the Buddhists in their schools. However the Jesuit ‘missionaries’ who ran parishes (and were therefore distinguished from “College Fathers”) were zealous in *trying to make converts* but never in great numbers. They did not seem to have been influenced by the dialogical approach of their aforementioned diocesan colleagues.

In this context, **inter-religious dialogue never entered the Jesuits’ mission agenda**. On the contrary **even ecumenism (inter-Church**

⁶ *Centre for Society and Religion*, Colombo (Tissa Balasuriya, OMI, 1971; *Satyodaya*, Kandy (Paul Caspersz, s.j., 1972); *Tulana*, Kelaniya (Aloysius Pieris, s.j, 1974); *Subodhi*, Piliyandala (Fr Mervyn Fernando, diocesan, 1973); *Subasetgedara*, Alukovita (Fr Michael Rodrigo, OMI) 1980; etc.

⁷ Cf. Prabo Mihindukulasuriya, “Christian Nationalism of Rev. John Simon de Silva (1868-1940),” *Journal of the Colombo Theological Seminary*, vol. XIII (2017):139-183.

dialogue) was viewed negatively. When Bp. Lakdasa de Mel (Anglican) took the bold initiative to invite Catholics for an ecumenical meeting, perhaps in the late 1940s or early 1950s, the Jesuit Vicar General of the Galle Diocese entrusted Fr. Mark Anthony Fernando, s.j. with the task of handling it and [Fr. Mark confided in me triumphantly that] he took the occasion to state clearly and bluntly that true ecumenism consists of accepting the true church which the Roman Communion alone is. If that was how Lankan Jesuits of that time viewed inter-church dialogue, we can imagine what Buddhist-Christian dialogue would have sounded in their ears!

I was a scholastic at this time and I was no different from the rest of the Jesuits until Vatican II made the breakthrough. Even as late as in 1958 when I wrote my L.Ph thesis on Buddhism, my mentor Fr Ignatius Gnanaprakasham, s.j. tried hard to convince me that my negatively critical approach towards Buddhism was not Christian; my insensitivity frustrated him.

It was in the second decade of 1960s that there was a boom in *ecumenism* in our country, with many Jesuits (M. Catalano, Joseph Ciampa, Pio Ciampa, Joe Somers, Tom Kuriacose, Paul Caspersz, and myself) among the pioneers who included also many Oblates. But *Buddhist-Christian dialogue* did not take the kick-start that characterized inter-church dialogue. **It was actually the Reformed Churches that initiated formal dialogue with non-Christians** as noted earlier. In the RC denomination I was destined to start that process. But that process was through a dark tunnel, as described below.

3. Groping through a Dark Tunnel

After my theology in Naples, following our Superior's instructions, I enrolled myself at the London University which approved the following as the topic for my PhD thesis: a comparative study of *mindfulness* in the Bible (Hebrew *zkr*) and Buddhist Scriptures (Pali *sati*). On my way to London, I was taken by Father Michael de Give, s.j. (later a Cistercian monk) to his own teacher Mgr Etienne Lamotte, the famous Buddhologist in Louvain. When I mentioned the topic of my thesis, he turned me upside down by asking me. "How can/dare you compare what you know with what you do not know? You must forget your Christianity and immerse yourself (*il faut plonger*) into Buddhism and write something from within it. Leave comparative studies to the end of your life"!

Adhering to his advice, I changed the topic of my thesis! A letter from my superiors made me change also the University! For Fr. Vito Perniola, a recognized Pali Grammarian of Italian origin, and the one who pushed me into Indological studies, had suggested to our Provincial Emmanuel Crowther that **I be called back from Europe and be advised to do my Doctoral studies in Sri Lanka under the Buddhist monks in their university.**

I interrupted my journey to London and returned to Ceylon (as our country was known then). Fr Emmanuel Crowther (a Jesuit full of Vatican II and transformed by the Jesuits' General Congregation 31) sent me to do my doctoral studies to the University of Sri Lanka Vidyodaya Campus with these memorable words, which are carved in my heart: *Son, we are sending you on uncharted ground; we cannot guide you; you will have to guide us later. So do not be afraid to make mistakes, even serious ones, but keep us informed.* Encouraged by his words I went and handed over my application for the PhD course at that University.

Alas! Something unpleasant and unexpected happened and that shocked me into a bout of despair and inertia from which I finally emerged with a new understanding of my mission. Despite having passed BA Honours examination in Pali and Sanskrit from London University with first class honours which qualified me to go for PhD without sitting for MA, the University of Sri Lanka (Vidyodaya Campus) was not at all keen to register me for the PhD, whereas a monk with a second upper class was accepted without ado. The monastic who headed the relevant Department, a person known to be fair and just, seemed nevertheless perplexed as to why I gave up such an easy chance of doing PhD in Buddhism at a Western University! What was my real motive? **For one full year and a quarter I was kept in suspense without being officially registered.** I could not use the University Library as I did not have the admission card. I had to go to the Colombo Museum Library to do my research. The irony was that I had finished a good part of the research by the time I was finally given admission to the university. It was frustrating.

But the Vice-Chancellor of the time, fortunately, was Ven. Dr Walpola Rahula Thera, a very liberal and universally recognized Monk-scholar, whom I had befriended in France thanks to that same Catholic Priest-Buddhologist, Mgr. Etienne Lamotte of Louvain. Quite gently and persuasively Venerable Rahula explained the **reason why some dons (specially in the Buddhist Department) seemed to have no faith in me or in any Christian who sought to be academically qualified in Buddhist doctrine under tutorship of Buddhist scholars!**

And what was that reason for this distrust? *All Christian Missionaries who had studied Buddhism under Buddhist monks in the past had later written and published anti-Buddhist tracts that 'proved' the falsity of the teachings of the Buddha and the superiority of Christianity. Their motive for studying Buddhism has been later revealed to have been sinister. Here below are examples:*

The first accused in the list was *Giacome Gonçalvez*, the great Oratorian Missionary from Goa. After being generously instructed in Pali and Buddhism by scholarly monks, he wrote and circulated his classic *Devavedapurāṇaya* which irritated the Buddhists so much that as soon as they managed to get a printing press in the late 1800s, they responded to

Gonçalvez' apologetics with a scurrilous attack on Christianity in a book titled *Durvādīhrdaya-vidāraṇaya*.

Note that the **JESUITS**, under whom the Oratorian missionaries in our country were educated in Goa, had inculcated in them a *solid spirituality* which made them tireless self-sacrificing missionary saints, among whom ranks St. Joseph Vaz who endeared the hearts of Buddhists by his all too visible holiness;⁸ but the post-*Tridentine theology* they were taught by the same Jesuits made some of these Goans see other religions as non-salvific; but following the example of the more advanced renaissance **JESUITS** (de Nobili, Ricci and Beschi), they made use of the *cultures* minus [the liberative core of these] *religions* to clothe Christianity with. They called it adaptation at that time; now *some* call it inculturation. But it assumed an apologetical format of evangelization that annoyed the Buddhists. One well respected Buddhist of our own time, Mr Gunaseeli Vithanage was justifiably blunt in publicly and frequently calling it the Chameleon's camouflage for pouncing on the prey – a trick for conversion.

The British Methodist missionaries, too, adopted a similar posture. The Buddhist monks trusted their Pastor Daniel John Gogerly so much that they equipped him with a profound knowledge of Pali language and Buddhist doctrine; and in return the Buddhists received a book called *Kristiyāni-Prajñaptiya*, which aimed to prove the falsity of Buddhism and the correctness of Christianity.

The following episode, the likes of which seem to have a solid historical basis⁹ and which I heard from a few academics of that time **more than justified the Buddhists' fear and suspicion about me:**

At the beginning, the Buddhist recluses welcomed British missionaries and went to the extent of offering them the preaching halls in their temples, free of charge, for catechizing Christian children; they also generously provided transport (i.e., bullock-carts) for their missionary work. Then one day, as a reciprocal gesture of friendship, the monks invited the missionaries to take part in a Buddhist ceremony. The Christian evangelists were alarmed by what they regarded as a diabolically inspired gesture of enticing them to partake in a pagan cult; and on the appointed day they entered the temple premises with printed versions of their negative view of Buddhism and the Buddha; and they distributed these leaflets just as they were welcomed with garlands. The Buddhists, to their horror, came to see for the first time the true face of missionary Christianity, with its mask removed.¹⁰

⁸ As maintained in my Foreword to *Life of Blessed Joseph Vaz, Apostle of Sri Lanka*, by S.G. Perea, 3rd reprint, (Colombo, 2005), ix-xix.

⁹ See Kitsiri Malalgoda, *Buddhism in Sinhalese Society 1750-1900: A Study of Religious Survival and Change* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976), 211-213; Elizabeth Harris, *Theravada Buddhism and the British Encounter: Religious, Missionary and Colonial Experience in Sri Lanka*, 191 ff.

¹⁰ Could this also explain why Pope John Paul II was snubbed by the monks during his visit to Sri Lanka? As they were preparing to give him a very warm welcome, his visit was heralded by the arrival of his book *On the Threshold of Hope*, in which the chapter titled "Buddha?" was a piece of anti-Buddhist apologetics based on a false interpretation of the *Dhamma*. See Aloysius Pieris, "Christian and Buddhist Responses to the Pope's Chapter on Buddhism," *Dialogue*, NS, XXII (1995): 62-95.

Hence after walking into the University in 1967 and expressing my desire to be specialized in the doctrinal intricacies of the Buddha-Dhamma, I began to realize that I was projecting before the Buddhist intelligentsia **the hostile image of a distrustful and militant Christianity** which Vatican II (1964-66) had just then disowned in favor of another image which was yet to be made visible. It became quite evident to me that **any work of dialogue and collaboration with Buddhists had to go hand in hand with the work of implementing the church-renewal ushered in by this great ecclesial event.** And that is exactly what I tried to do.

4. Eight Years of Clearing the Way (1966-1974)

While I had completed my thesis within a year and half, the granting of the doctorate dragged on for five years (1966-1971) because two supervisors died one after the other¹¹ and the third left for USA after making me revise it.¹² I begged on my fours not to impose a fourth supervisor and a third revision! I was happy that my third supervisor was brought back at the University's expense to preside over my defense, which was unexpectedly tense as it was the supervisor who cross-examined me with such ruthlessness that I came out of the defense with a feeling that I wasted my five years. On hearing it my Provincial, (by that time, Fr W. Moran) assured me that he would send me to Sorbonne to get my Doctorate.

But I soon received a confidential information from a friend in the examination department that **my thesis was sent to two external examiners in two foreign universities so that if by chance I started an anti-Buddhist campaign later, the university would not incur the blame for approving my thesis.** However I was also informed that the external examiners had expressed a very positive opinion about my research! So all trouble taken during those trying years had borne fruit. *This means that despite the historically well founded apprehensions about my motives, the university had been as cautious as it was quite fair by me;* so I declare with folded hands.

That was how I started my Christian encounter with Buddhism—**purified of the Christian biases of another era and paying an initial price for the precious grace of gaining the confidence of the Buddhists, both scholars and saints.** This is an event that lasted five years and here below are the highlights:

- (1) The departmental head and supervisor made it clear that to understand Buddhist ethico-psychology (on which I was writing my thesis) one cannot depend on "Couch-Psychology of the Christian West" but on *introspection as taught by the Buddha*. In other words, I was not qualified until I underwent that experience. The Provincial

¹¹ Venerable Dr. Kotagama Vachissara Thera and Prof. K.N. Jayatillake.

¹² Prof. Dr David Kalupahana.

Crowther's *carte blanche* came to my rescue. The only way out was *humbling oneself before meditation masters*, who "looked uneducated at first sight" (not even O Level qualification) but were wise men who, like *petthgams* (those old musty treasure chests found in our homes), contained the sacred wisdom of centuries. **Two lessons** I learnt:

[i] Humility was the only key that opened those treasure chests. I realized that it was when Jesus humbled himself before that Asian Guru by the River Jordan that he heard the mission-mandate from the Father. Perhaps the Asian Church had not yet received it—I concluded—because the Church was trying to teach without learning and speak without listening.

[ii] The second lesson was that it was my sincere efforts to *experience the liberative core of Buddhism—greedlessness, non-self—*employing *Buddhist methods* of arriving at it, that qualified me to dialogue with Buddhists. For the language of **Love** which I learned from the biblical tradition had to dialogue within me with the language of **Knowledge** which the Buddhists employ. The Biblical *agape* and Buddhist *gnosis* are two modes of human communication which must come to terms with each other in one's interior being before a Christian-Buddhist Encounter and Dialogue Centre be launched in the external forum.

(2) The Catholic Church's sense of self-sufficiency was another obstacle to overcome. *Rev. Dr Lynn A. De Silva of the Methodist Church* had already been engaged in Buddhist-Christian Dialogue for several years and on hearing of this "first Christian, a Catholic, doing his Doctorate in Buddhist studies in a Buddhist Institution", came to meet me and requested collaboration. It was I who should have gone to meet him and seek guidance. We struck a deep and lasting friendship and we indulged in *an ecumenical approach to Buddhist-Christian Understanding*, which is what I continue to this day. I collaborated with him *ecumenically* in Buddhist-Christian encounters organized at his Centre for Religion and Society (CRS) which he would later baptize as EISD (Ecumenical Institute for Study and Dialogue) and I still continue to collaborate with this Centre. The result was the launching of the Journal *Dialogue, New Series* which he and I co-founded in 1974 and co-edited till his death in 1982 and I continue as its chief editor to this day. The policy of conducting inter-religious dialogue *ecumenically* remains unchanged to this day in the Dialogue and Encounter Centre I founded in 1974 (about which see no. 4 below).

(3) During the doctoral studies here in Sri Lanka, I was fully engaged in Buddhist-Christian dialogue in many areas. Let me mention only two of them. One was in the area of Buddhist-Christian **mixed marriages**. I took pastoral care of so-called "mixed couples" both before marriage and after marriage. Unlike Hindus and Muslims, who can pray to God together with Christians, a Buddhist cannot join his or her spouse in a

common prayer. Buddhist cannot pray to the Buddha but can express a wish before his image or presence. So I translated the “Our Father” into Sinhalese using Buddhist idioms and formulating it in the benedictive mood so that a Buddhist could join the Christian partner in making this common prayer (expressed in the form of a wish rather than a direct request) – the one before the Buddha image and the other before God. Ven. Dr W. Rahula Thera’s *nihil obstat* was sought before popularizing this common recital. Another area was my engagement with **slum dwellers** in a very poor area in Colombo, where (Tamil speaking) *Muslims, Buddhists and Hindus with a handful of Christians were struggling together to overcome their poverty*. There, inter-religious dialogue was a necessity for their sheer survival and I got a group of young Christian and Buddhist medical students to engage in *saucy-dāna* (health service) during the week-ends so as to educate them in the *dialogue of life* as practiced by these destitute people.

(4) In 1971, the final year of my Doctoral Studies our nation experienced the first ever **island-wide armed insurrection of Marxist inspiration organized mainly by the Sinhala Buddhist youth** a few of whom I had already met and befriended at the same university, for this university was one of the cradles of the insurrectionists. Their grievances were valid but what intrigued me was why these Buddhist youth sought the help of Marxism to remedy social evils rather than resort to the Salvific Message of the Buddha. This led me much later (from 1974 onwards) to launch out on a project of **studying the social doctrine of the Buddha** and sharing with groups of rural Buddhist youth as part of my mission.¹³

But there was an initial obstacle: My Jesuit superiors had clearly set out my future mission as a globe-trotting Indologist-cum-Theologian serving the international academe with my base in the Faculty of the Gregorian University in Rome and serving also as a visiting lecturer in EAPI of the Ateneo de Manila University in Philippines. I was, therefore, struggling to resolve the conflict between (a) “obedience to my superiors” who had such plans for me (b) “obedience to the signs of the times” which would have me work among the Buddhist youth here in our country. Fr Conget, our Tertian Instructor gave me the best advice possible: Obey the Superiors first and then question their decision.

After a semester of teaching in Rome (1972-73) and a similar experience in Manila, I presented my case to the Superiors: that I would continue to serve the international academe as an Asian Christian contributing to the universal church the insights of Eastern religions but with my

¹³ In this mission I was very much inspired and assisted by the monk-scholar, the late Ven. Dr Kakapalliye Anuruddha Thera whose PhD thesis (presented at the Lancaster university) was on the Social Doctrine of the Buddha.

base here in our country in a Buddhist ethos rather than in Rome where I would lose my Asian roots and thus fail in the mission the Superiors have entrusted to me. After a year of discernment, the superiors decided in favour of my proposal. I retained my annual Manila engagement (36 hours in 2 weeks) and dropped the Roman one (24 lectures in six months). This way I could spend the greater part of the year in Sri Lanka!

Thus in 1974, I started the “Tulana” Research Centre for Encounter and Dialogue in a Buddhist ethos close to the Kelaniya University (See our website www.tulana.org). It was shifted in 1980 to a large spacious property thanks to a handsome donation received from Fr Pedro Arrupe, our General, in response to a request made by the then Provincial Fr Thomas Kuriacose. The Provincial’s written mandate to start this centre clearly indicated that *a new model of an apostolic community* was expected of me. Today three highly qualified laypersons, who have renounced lucrative jobs and positions to work with me, are the three pillars of Tulana.¹⁴ They join me in earning our living, organizing our multiple apostolic activities and maintaining the Centre.

5. Buddhist-Christian Dialogue at “Tulana”: a Summary

(1) RESEARCH AND PUBLICATIONS

Sri Lanka for Buddhists, in one sense, is like Rome for Christians: monks from other Buddhist countries come to our universities to get their academic degrees in Buddhism. For there is here a longstanding tradition of scholarly research. Option for remaining in villages (*grāmahavāsī*) to study the Dhamma and impart it to the people – over that of *solely* living in the forests (*vanavāsī*) engaged in meditation – determined the character of Sri Lankan Buddhism.

Hence serving the Buddhist academe became for me a priority.

- (a) I was invited by Miss Horner of the Pali Text Society to edit and translate the Pali work *Paramatthamañjūsā*, a conceptually abstruse and linguistically convoluted sub-commentary (which was the basis of my doctoral research). This engagement in what might become my *magnum opus* (if time permits) stimulated me (thanks to many questions this complex text raises about different aspects of Buddhism) to publish a whole heap of research papers in Buddhist Philosophy in recognized journals.
- (b) The first anthology of such articles (*Studies in the Philosophy and Literature of Pali Abhidhammika Buddhism*, Colombo, 2014) was well received in university circles specially after the most world-renowned Buddhist scholar, Ananda P. Guruge, acknowledged in his Foreword that he found in it answers to questions that bothered him for years! The second

¹⁴ Sheila Fernando, Robert Cruz and Nimal Pieris. Fr Dilan Perera, s.j. is destined to join Tulana as the *Director Operis* after his higher biblical studies in Rome.

anthology of already published articles are now being assembled to be eventually published in two volumes. This contribution of mine to Buddhist Studies was officially recognized by the University of Kelaniya by granting me a D.Lit (*honoris causa*).

- (c) I am also a visiting lecturer in that university. Till a replacement was found, I had been the external examiner for MA students of the Pali and Buddhist University and second examiner for Hebrew and Greek for Christian Culture Department of the Kelaniya University. I was also the first to introduce a course on *Comparative Study of Religions* in the Pali and Buddhist University and a summary of that course has been published as Chapter VII in my book *Prophetic Humour in Buddhism and Christianity: Doing Inter-Religious Studies in the Reverential Mode*, EISD, Colombo, 2005, pp.105-134.
- (d) We at Tulana edit **two international journals**: [i] *Dialogue, New Series*, which Rev. Dr Lynn de Silva and I started editing in 1974, is continued to this day (even after the former's demise eight years later, i.e., in 1982) and is a globally patronized journal fostering Buddhist-Christian dialogue and now catering also to dialogue with Hinduism and Islam; [ii] *Vāgdevī, Journal of Religious Reflection* also edited and published by us in our own Tulana Media Unit (TMU, for which see no. 5 below).
- (e) We have *three libraries*. One of them, a small one, which I inherited from the Jesuits, namely [i] the "S.G. Perera Memorial Library" on the **History of the Country**; the other two, very much bigger, I had built over the years: [ii] one on **Indology** (Indic languages, religions, philosophies, history, literature, arts, etc.), amply perused by students, lecturers and Buddhist monks from the Buddhism and Pali section of the Kelaniya University. FR FRANCIS D'SA of the Goa-Pune Province is gratefully remembered for his generosity in providing many Sanskrit originals and several secondary sources as well as English translations of Hindu classics. [iii] The other is on **Western Thought**, including Hebrew-Greek Scriptures, biblical studies, Christian Culture (arts, languages, theology, philosophy, history), etc. This third library is also perused by the students of the Western Civilization and Christian Culture Department of the Kelaniya University.

(2) BUDDHIST-CHRISTIAN ENCOUNTERS

Tulana is a venue for Buddhists and Christians meeting, not only at the academic level of research and study, but at the level of religious experience and spiritual guidance. As mentioned earlier these encounters are *ecumenically* organized ventures. Inter-ecclesial unity is forged in the process of many churches joining in the common mission of inter-religious dialogue. I have named this *trans-ecclesial ecumenism*, i.e., churches meeting together without losing their respective ecclesial identities but facing together the realities of Asia—Buddhism being one of them. This is the

ecumenical context in which we conduct most of our inter-faith and inter-ethnic encounters. In fact we keep close collaborative contact with main line churches as well as with the various evangelical groups.

(3) INTER-ETHNIC RECONCILIATION

In the current situation of the country specially after the ethnic-war, any dialogue with any group of religionists, *a fortiori* the Buddhist who constitute the majority, necessarily includes clearing misapprehensions and promoting mutual understanding. As mentioned above, we join the other churches in organizing (at our Centre) sessions for ethnic groups to meet one another in an atmosphere of openness. In fact our Tulana centre is the only Jesuit institution where men and women from all the major *religious, ethnic and linguistic groups* from all over the country are brought for reconciliatory sessions – of course, thanks to the collaboration of non-RC churches, specially the Methodists and Anglicans.

In fact there used to be, every second Sunday of the month, a skype conference which provides an update (with political analysis) on the current global and local aspects of the North-South (Tamil-Sinhala) conflict and the true path towards its resolution.

(4) (BIBLICAL) SCRIPTURE STUDY

Every Wednesday evening I used to conduct a Scripture Study Session on the coming Sunday's Readings. Pastors and lay persons from other Christian denominations too attend these weekly sessions. The Tulana Media Unit (TMU) – another department of our Tulana Centre, for which see below – records them. About 350 audio-versions reach members of both the clergy and the laity by Saturday. Many priests told me that they use them for their Sunday sermons. Due a spell of ill-health followed by Easter Attacks on Churches and the Pandemic, this service has been temporarily suspended.

(5) MEDIA APOSTOLATE

The Tulana Media Unit (TMU) commenced operations in 1995 when Robert Crusz joined the Tulana Community after living and working in the U.K. for 21 years in a grass-roots based production workshop which produced critical documentaries for television, and feature films based on issues related to the lives of immigrant communities living in Europe and North America. The workshop also conducted media education and training for young people in the UK and abroad. It was because of this experience that I invited Robert Crusz to establish the TMU through which he continues with this combination of media production and Media Education work in video, radio, drama and publishing with the Sri Lanka Jesuit Scholastics, local schools, sub-urban and rural young men and women, producing a range of video films and documentaries, radio programmes and publications on issues relevant to the Sri Lanka situation. The TMU has acted as a host

institution for the Sri Lanka Fulbright Visiting Scholars Programme on two occasions to date. Both Robert Cruz and the assistant director of the TMU, Dulhan Silva have been invited by Yale University, in New Haven, USA, to conduct workshops and collaborative programmes in community video, and to date two of our video film students have been international award winners for their short films. The TMU has kept record of our activities (Buddhist-Christians encounters, inter-ethnic reconciliation workshops, multi-religious seminars—which bring adherents of all the four religions: Buddhists, Muslims, Christians and Hindus, sessions on justice issues, ecological concerns etc.).

(6) CHRIST AND CHRISTIANITY SEEN BY BUDDHIST ARTISTS

I have engaged nationally and internationally recognized Buddhist artists in the creative task of telling the Christians through their medium of communication what they think of Christ. Whereas evangelization traditionally consists of telling the Buddhist who Christ is, we at Tulana reverse the process: we invite the Buddhists to tell us who Christ is—as they perceive Him. Sometime I give them a text and ask them to interpret it. These artistic creations, which educate Christians to see their religion from another perspective, are available in our website.

Another powerful example is the Passion Play composed by a nationally esteemed Buddhist Litterateur¹⁵ It is a unique Sinhala classic which (at the author's request) I edited posthumously with blessings and financial assistance of the State Ministry of Culture. I also published this same author's Christmas Play which was written at my personal request. I got its lyrics put into music by the most famous Buddhist folk-musician of our nation.¹⁶ During Advent and Christmas one year, the National Radio serialized it as a *read* (rather than acted) play—with lyrics sung by a choir trained by the composer himself. It is a species of non-colonial Christianity which we wish to see in Asia!

(7) CENTRE FOR EDUCATION OF HEARING IMPAIRED CHILDREN (CEHIC)

Founded by Sr Greta Nalawatta PHS with the sole collaboration of our Tulana Centre, the CEHIC has become, *inter alia*, a model of inter-religious (particularly Buddhist-Christian) collaboration. (See its website: www.cehicsrilanka.org). It is where “the deaf hear and the mute talk” thanks to the (time-consuming, energy-consuming and money-consuming method of deaf education known as) *auditory-verbal training* which the Sister and the staff trained by her give the children from the age of eight months so as to integrate them into normal schools at the age of five. Some of our children have graduated and are graduating from universities (a first in our

¹⁵ Shree Charles de Siva, a member of the editorial boards of the Sinhala Encyclopedia

¹⁶ Mr. Rohana Baddage.

country's history). Since the education is given *free of charge* (in keeping with the original Ignatian principle of serving *rudes ac pueros* ([poor] rural children), Sister and I have to be begging for money from *Christian-Western sources* and indirectly *risk having the major say in money-matters over and above the Buddhist majority*. We **avoided this risk** in the following manner:

We incarnated a new model of inter-religious collaboration wherein aid from a Catholic country is administered in such a way *that money power does not rest solely in the hands of the Christian founders of the project* (Sister, me and the late Mr Irvin Basnayaka). From 1982 onwards I traversed a difficult path, through trial and error, to find the correct formula. The constitution, which I got lawyers to draft and legally passed avoids both the private-owned and state-owned models; rather it has created a *community school owned by the parents and* (the three of) **us** so that money is administered by a Trust Board, of which Sister and I are "equal partners" with the parents, the majority of whom are non-Christians. Though we are responsible for begging for financial assistance and procuring them—Misereor helped us with the building—we (the three Catholic founders) have to ask permission from the Board of Trustees for any expenses we wish to incur for some work. Thus by renouncing **POWER** that comes from **MONEY**, we Christians have gained the **AUTHORITY** that comes from **GOD**. The Buddhists who form the majority in this *community school* are not threatened by our Christian initiatives. Furthermore we encourage celebration of Buddhist feasts in the school with Christian collaboration. In fact our policy has received unstinted endorsement from the Buddhist prelate, Venerable Velivityave Kusaladhamma Thera who has been collaborating with us as Patron and Trust Board Member. This is *a well tested model*, which we can now recommend to Christian minorities engaged in social work and justice movements among a Buddhist majority.

Buddhist Catholics in the Philippines: Chinese Buddhism Encounters Filipino Catholicism

Aristotle Dy, S.J.

Abstract

As Spanish colonization ended in the Philippines, there is evidence of the ethnic Chinese there gathering in private homes to carry out devotions to the Bodhisattva Guanyin. These seeds of Chinese Buddhism in the Philippines bore fruit as temples began to be built during the American colonial period, and peaked in the decades following the Second World War. Based on fieldwork (before the Covid-19 pandemic) and the review of available literature, this article traces the development of Chinese Buddhism in the Philippines up to the 21st century, and argues that it developed uniquely in a predominantly Catholic context. Typical of Chinese religious culture, Chinese Buddhism in the Philippines entered into dialogue with Catholicism and gave rise to syncretic practices that characterize 21st century religious pluralism.

Introduction

In 1890, a man surnamed Chen brought a statue of Guanyin, the Buddhist Bodhisattva, from her spiritual home in China, Mt. Putuo, to Manila. The Spanish had been in power in the Philippines for more than three hundred years, and Catholicism was the state religion, but the man opened a private shrine for Guanyin on Lohagi Street, near the San Fernando Bridge in Binondo. Devotees quietly visited the shrine for fifty years, and the statue came to be known as the Lohagi Guanyin, an efficacious intercessor for her spiritual children. There were no Buddhist monastics to organize services, but the devotees nurtured the shrine and moved it to another location on Espeleta Street during the Second World War. The Lohagi Guanyin stayed there until 1981, when another man also surnamed Chen had the inspiration to build a proper temple with a monastic community. The new temple was named Wan Tong Temple 圓通寺, after one of Guanyin's many titles, and the Reverend Ruijin 瑞今法師 became the founding abbot.

For 130 years, this shrine to Guanyin in the predominantly Catholic Philippines has served as the focal point of fellowship and spiritual practice for many Chinese Buddhists in the country. The story is replicated many

times over in Buddhist communities in other parts of Metropolitan Manila and throughout the islands, as Chinese people yearned to observe the religion of their ancestors. Especially for the first generation of Chinese migrants, having a place for Buddhist devotions, or the observance of Chinese religion, served more than spiritual purposes.

In this paper, I wish to provide a general introduction to Chinese Buddhism in the Philippines, and focus on the ways by which it adapted and entered into dialogue with Catholicism. I will show that the Philippine adaptation of Chinese Buddhism is an expansion of Chinese religious culture to include Catholicism.

Chinese Buddhism in the Philippines

Historical Background

Buddhist temples in the Philippine islands were built only during the American period (1899-1946) in the first half of the twentieth century, but in the late nineteenth century, as noted in the introduction, devotional communities were already gathering privately around statues of Guanyin that lay Buddhists brought to the Philippines from China. Though there were no public temples, certain families would welcome friends and neighbors to make offerings and prayers at the shrines they had put up in their homes (Shi C.Y. 1990, 9).

Aside from the Guanyin statue at the Wan Tong Temple, another statue, brought to the country in 1881, was the center of community devotions that eventually became the Holy Buddhist Temple 觀音寺, also in Metro Manila. In the southern Philippine city of Zamboanga, a Guanyin statue is dated 1886¹ and it is to this statue that the Hoc Chuan Temple 福泉寺 traces its roots.

It was only natural for Chinese Buddhist devotees to gather privately during the Spanish period, because the Spanish authorities who Christianized the islands did not allow the construction of “pagan” temples (Beyer 1921, 925). Due to the Spanish policy of segregation, the Chinese, that is, those who did not become Christians, were able to preserve their religious customs and traditions only privately.

Religious freedom, introduced by the Americans at the turn of the twentieth century, made it possible for Chinese Buddhists to practice their faith more openly. The private devotion to Guanyin initiated by lay

¹ Edgar Wickberg (1965, 188) dates the Hoc Chuan temple, which he transliterates from Mandarin as Fu Chuan temple, even earlier to 1881. Lui Chi Tien (Felix 1969, 206, 208), writing in 1969, cites a speech published in the 23 December 1939 *Fookien Times* newspaper that makes a passing reference to Buddhist religious associations as one of many kinds of overseas Chinese institutions before World War II.

Buddhists was the basis for the construction of temples, especially after the Second World War.

Felicidad Chan Sycip, in a 1957 thesis, outlines the Buddhist temples existing at that time (Sycip 1957, 20). From her field research, it is known that in 1931, Mr. Te Shiam founded the Guanyin Tong 觀音堂 in Manila, and offered his family shrine for common worship around the image of Guanyin. He and his fellow Buddhists formed the Chinese-Buddhist Society in the Philippines, and purchased a plot of land in Narra Street for the purpose of building a temple. The Seng Guan Temple 信願寺 was built in 1937, and the Ven. Xingyuan 性願 was invited to come from China to serve as the congregation's first abbot. He is considered the founder of Chinese Buddhism in the Philippines, since formal Buddhist teaching through the *sangha* began only with his arrival, while all the efforts prior to his arrival can be considered popular religion.

The temple survived the war, but not a fire in 1949 that gutted the temple's wooden buildings. The fire did not damage the large statues of the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and the devotees considered this miraculous. They spent the next two years building a sturdier concrete structure. More buildings were constructed in the succeeding years, by which time Xingyuan had invited several more monks from Xiamen to join him in Manila.

Xingyuan was abbot until 1948, when he asked Ruijin to take over as abbot and he concentrated on building the Hwa Chong Temple 華藏寺 in Malabon.

At least five other temples were built in Manila in the 1950s. Outside Manila and aside from Zamboanga, temples were built between the 1930s and the 1950s in Bacolod, Baguio, Cabanatuan, Cebu, and Davao. In major cities like Manila, Cebu, and Davao, there is more than one temple, due to special circumstances that led monastics or lay Buddhists to found new temples.

Most of these temples enshrine the images of Guanyin, especially worshipped by women, and the Three Precious Ones (Sanbao 三寶), of Shakyamuni Buddha or Shijiamounifo 釋迦牟尼佛 in the middle of the main hall, flanked by Amitabha Buddha or Amitufo 阿彌陀佛 and Bhaysajyaguru Buddha or Yaoshifo 藥世佛.

The bigger temples like Seng Guan have a hall where the soul tablets of the deceased believers are kept. These are small, wooden tokens inscribed with the name of the deceased, where part of the soul is believed to reside. The temple's founder is also given a place of honor in the ancestral hall.

Religious Life in the Temples

For Buddhism to flourish, it is believed that the three precious "jewels" – the Buddha, the Dharma, and the Sangha must be present. Therefore, Chinese

Buddhism is considered to have formally started in the Philippines only when the first monk, Xingyuan, arrived in 1937.

Xingyuan, when he was invited to come to Manila, was at the Nanputuo Temple in Xiamen, South Fujian. Since the vast majority of Chinese in the Philippines are from South Fujian, it was but natural to look there for a monk who could come and propagate Buddhism. This had the clear advantage of language, for Xingyuan and the monks he recruited could speak the South Fujianese dialect (a.k.a. Hokkien or Minnanhua 閩南話) of the Chinese in the Philippines. Over time, monks from other parts of China found their way to the Philippines, but their inability to speak Hokkien presented a significant obstacle to their activities.

Ordained nuns were a rarity if not non-existent in South Fujian in the early twentieth century, but there was a special class of women that devoted their lives to Buddhist practice. They were known as *caigu* 菜姑, lay women, either virgins or widows, who did not shave their heads but lived in the temples and spent their lives leading chanting services, maintaining temple facilities, or doing domestic work. These women did not have the formal status of monastics. Strictly speaking, despite their celibacy and temple way of life, they were still considered householders or lay believers in the Buddhist community. Such women, often the relatives of monks who had come to the Philippines, came to the Philippines as well to help manage the temples. Some of them founded their own temples and eventually sought formal ordination as nuns by going to Taiwan or elsewhere for training.

The process of becoming a monastic was very fluid for most of the twentieth century. One usually sought out a Shifu 師父 or Master who would accept to train him or her. Training consisted of learning how to chant sutras, spiritual self-cultivation, and monastic life in the temple. Formal studies in a Buddhist institute became a realistic option in China only in the late twentieth century, thanks in large part to the advocacy of reformist monks like Taixu 太虛. Even then, such formal training was not imposed on all monastics.

Of those who came to the Philippines, the majority of monastic men and women engaged in the ritualistic life of the temple. Morning and evening prayers were done together in the temple, but the rest of the day was devoted to self-cultivation, domestic work, or the organization of chanting services for the lay faithful. Most of the time, these services were to pray for the deceased members of Chinese families.

A few monks were formally educated in Buddhist institutes in China or Taiwan, and they tried to promote Buddhist teachings through talks, retreats, and the publication of commentaries on important sutras.²

² Examples of Buddhist literature produced in the Philippines include the voluminous works of Shi Weici and Shi Zili. Space limitations prevent a listing of these works in the References.

It can be said, therefore, that while the monastics who came to the Philippines were contemporaries of the reform movement in Chinese Buddhism, very few of them had enough Buddhist training to establish a reformed form of Chinese Buddhism in the Philippines. The monastics mostly engaged in ritualistic Buddhism to serve the needs of the Chinese, while formal study and propagation of the Dharma was engaged in by very few.

In all cases, the monastics spoke only Chinese, either Mandarin or Hokkien, and this limited their activities to the Chinese community. This would change only in the 1990s, with the arrival of Chinese Buddhist groups from Taiwan.

The first and the fifteenth of the lunar month are the traditional devotion days in Chinese religion. On these days, lay Buddhists go to temples and make their private devotions, consisting of lighting incense or adding oil to the lamps. Donations can be deposited in designated boxes, or registered in the temple office.

Many temples organize a service that lasts for one hour in the mid-morning, inclusive of chanting and circumambulating while reciting the name of a Buddha or Bodhisattva. A brief talk and a vegetarian lunch served to all the attendees follow. The temple prepares the lunch using temple funds, or lay members make donations towards the meal or celebrate important occasions by sponsoring the meal. Such donations are considered ways of earning spiritual merit.

Important Buddhist feasts are marked in the same way, the only change being in the text chanted, and the scale of the celebration. The most popular feasts, all following the lunar calendar, are:

- New Year's day, also known as Maitreya's birthday.
- New Year Blessing / Chanting One Thousand Buddha-Names.
- Guanyin feasts on the 19th of the 2nd, 6th, and 9th months.
- The Buddha's Birthday, a.k.a. Vesak, on the 8th day of the 4th month.
- Yulanben Festival in the seventh month, usually three days of chanting services for one's ancestors and for the "hungry ghosts."
- Year-end Thanksgiving Services

Some temples hold weekly services to accommodate the local lifestyle which, following Christian practice, devotes time during the weekend to a communal service. At Seng Guan Temple, conventionally considered the main temple for Chinese Buddhism in the Philippines, there is a Sunday morning service that lasts one hour and is attended by an average of 150 devotees.

The modern movements from Taiwan (Foguangshan 佛光山 and Zhongtaishan 中台山) hold their weekly service on Saturday evening.

The Buddhist liturgy as adapted in the Philippines has a structure that begins with calling particular Buddhas to be present, and ends with the transference of merit by recalling the purpose of each chanting service. In general, texts used by Chinese Buddhists in the Philippines are either sutras from the Chinese Buddhist canon, or spells that are believed to have the power to protect the believer or ward off evil. Following are the most common texts³ I have encountered in the Philippines:

- Universal Door of Guanshiyin Bodhisattva (from the Lotus Sutra).
- Great Compassion Spell
- Suramgama Spell
- Heart Sutra
- Medicine Buddha Sutra
- Amitabha Sutra
- Names of the Buddhas

These texts are chanted within a service organized by the monastic community, most often for the purpose of acquiring blessings and healing. As mentioned earlier, this is done on Sundays or on the first and fifteenth of the lunar month. Whenever a service is done around lunchtime, there is always a ritual observed for making offerings to the wandering spirits.

On special feast days, there are more particular texts used, especially for the crossing over of the dead and the wandering spirits.

Two of the temples in Manila—Seng Guan and Thousand Buddha—have meditation groups or *jingxiuban* 靜修班 that meet weekly. In both places, there is a two-hour session that includes sitting meditation, circumambulation, and a short talk by a monastic or one of the senior lay members. Both groups have an active membership of between twenty and thirty, much less than the believers who attend chanting services.

As can be expected of any religion, there are different levels of spiritual practice in Chinese Buddhism. While Chan and Pure Land beliefs clearly dominate in the Chinese Buddhist temples of the Philippines, there are varying degrees of faith and understanding.

The most basic level of belief, with the largest numbers of people participating, involves devotions during the first and fifteenth of the lunar month. People go to the temples for a few minutes of prayer ritualized by the lighting of incense and the offerings of food. If they have concerns in their personal life or in their livelihood, they may make use of the Guanyin oracle sticks and the crescent moon-shaped divination tablets. Such divination practices are not Buddhist, as many monastics have told me, but they are tolerated in the temples because the devotees need them. In

³ It is beyond the scope of this paper to discuss the quality of religious life in the temples as indicated by the use of these texts, but the desire for blessings and a good rebirth, repentance, and faith in Guanyin are some obvious themes. See Reis-Habito (1991) and Yü (2001) for significant studies of Guanyin.

time, the monastics hope that these believers can be weaned away from folk practices and led to a deeper understanding of Buddhism. For the time being, out of fear of losing the devotees, such practices are accommodated. The exception to this practice are the Taiwanese movements promoting humanistic Buddhism, whose temples do not allow folk practices like divination and the burning of spirit money.

Aside from popular devotions on designated days, lay believers or householders approach the monastic community for special needs, especially when there is a death in the family. A number of monastics from the temple of choice are invited to conduct chanting services at the wake or funeral. These rituals take up much of the monastics' time, and also provide the temple with steady income. The monastics may also be invited to bless homes, businesses, and marriages, but the funerary rituals are easily the most requested service.

In every temple, there is a small core of more committed believers. In the Philippines, a predominantly Catholic country, most of those who practice popular Buddhism are also baptized Catholics who may go to church regularly. This is the phenomenon of religious syncretism. But there are also Buddhists who practice only Buddhism, even if they have studied at Christian schools or received baptism. These are the ones who have sought deeper practice, more than just lighting incense regularly. They attend chanting or meditation services, listen to lectures, and learn a lot of Buddhism from self-study and dialogue with the monastics. These are the faithful devotees who do not go to Christian churches or practice other forms of Chinese popular religion, although they may fail in this respect (for example, use divination instruments) when faced with a desperate situation. Still, this class of believers, although small, would represent the deepest level of practice in the Philippines.

Starting in the 1990s, humanistic Buddhism from Taiwan has gained a foothold in the Chinese Buddhist community of the Philippines. Foguangshan, Ciji 慈濟, and Zhongtaishan are all active in varying degrees, and are able to attract non-Chinese to their activities.

The Ocean Sky Chan Monastery, a branch of Zhongtaishan, has a unique approach to promoting Chan meditation. The small, modern temple offers meditation classes in English and Chinese, and these have been popular with the general public. The temple also offers Chinese language, art, calligraphy, and vegetarian cooking classes, with a special summer camp for children held every year. All activities are free of charge and participants make donations according to their ability to pay.

These efforts to bring Buddhism beyond the Chinese community are indicative of a hopeful future for Buddhism in the Philippines. The form of this Buddhism is still noticeably Chinese, but over time, it could develop into a unique form of Filipino Buddhism.

Education and Culture

The lay societies at Seng Guan Temple organized Buddhist schools like Po Hian 普賢 School in Manila (1947), with a branch in Cebu (1955) and known in English as Samantabhadra Institute. The Seng Guan congregation also established the Philippine Academy of Sakya (1960), which has become famous for training its students in mathematics. It has a branch in the Davao Long Hua Temple 龍華寺. In 1997, Guangchun 廣純 and Guangxue 廣學 of the Thousand Buddha Temple founded the Philippine Buddhacare Academy.

All these schools are located in the vicinity of the temples that founded them, but all have become independent institutions. All follow the basic curriculum mandated by the Philippine government, but also require study of the Chinese language for two hours each day. Once a week, there is a Buddhist religion class usually taught by a monastic using Chinese as the medium of instruction. School events always include brief Buddhist chants or invocations.

Through Chinese language lessons that emphasize Confucian teachings, and Buddhist religion classes, the Buddhist schools are helping to preserve Chinese language and culture. The programs are also promoting Buddhism among the younger generations of Chinese Filipinos. This is in fact the stated aim of the schools – promoting Chinese language and culture along with Buddhism – but the assumption has always been that the schools attract a majority of Chinese students. This is no longer the case. When the schools were established, there was less intermarriage between Chinese and native Filipinos, and each school maintained a distinctly Chinese sub-culture. This was complemented by family life, where the Hokkien dialect was spoken at home.

With the passage of time, however, there has been more intermarriage and assimilation into Philippine society. The result is that the children who attend Buddhist schools often do not have a strong Chinese cultural background. Only half or less of the student population of these schools still speak any form of Chinese at home. This presents a major challenge for the schools' objective of imparting Chinese language and Buddhist teachings to the students.

Further, changes in the Philippine education landscape have made it difficult for the schools to operate viably. All have declining enrollment. The Philippine Buddhacare Academy closed in 2014.

As a way of supplementing the work of the schools, Seng Guan Temple's lay society offers lessons in Chinese language and Buddhism on Sundays. There are three age groups being served, and the teachers are all lay volunteers who are themselves devout Buddhists. During the summer, Seng Guan and other temples organize camps that last for one to four weeks, all incorporating Chinese language and arts and Buddhist teachings into the program.

In Chinese Buddhism, the publication of Buddhist materials is a popular way of earning merit. In the Philippines, not only are there textbooks prepared and published by monks for use in the Buddhist schools, but also magazines and sutras are constantly being printed and distributed for free. Most of the temples have a small corner with shelves full of various materials printed by devotees who want to promote a certain text or practice. For example, there are always copies of the Universal Door of Guanshiyin Bodhisattva and the Great Compassion Spell available. Of the longer texts, those related to Amitabha Buddha and Earth Store Bodhisattva (Ksitigarbha) are quite popular.

Chinese-Filipino Buddhists who were born in the Philippines have established new organizations that aim to promote Buddhism using the English language. These are not formally connected with any temple community, but carry out activities such as Dharma talks in English and the promotion of Buddhism in mainstream society. The Universal Wisdom Foundation, for example, organizes regular lectures at their headquarters and was responsible for having the Buddha's birthday featured in a series of postage stamps. Another example is the Philippine Amitabha Society, which promotes Pure Land and Confucian teachings through programs conducted in both Chinese and English. These organizations are similar to the Buddhist associations that emerged in Singapore and Malaysia, as new generations of Chinese Buddhists emerged. They are less sectarian in their approach and are creating a new form of Buddhism for modern times.

The published version of my doctoral dissertation (Dy 2015) provides a more detailed description and analysis of Chinese Buddhism in the Philippines. In the next section, I will focus on the encounter with Catholicism to address the special audience of this book.

Chinese Buddhism and Catholic Christianity

As mentioned earlier, Chinese Buddhism adapted to the Catholic Philippines through practices such as following Christian timelines for weekly religious services, and establishing sectarian schools. Conversations with my informants revealed more ideas about the relationship between Chinese Buddhism and Catholicism, laying bare the reality of syncretism in Chinese religions. In this section, I will describe syncretism as a tool in studying religions, and provide examples from the encounter between Chinese Buddhism and Catholicism. The most obvious example is in the parallels drawn between Guanyin and the Virgin Mary.

The Chinese Filipino Guanyin

Of the various titles of Guanyin, that of the South Seas Guanyin 南海觀音 has been the most popular in the Philippines. The histories, names, and practices of several temples in the Philippines are direct references to the

South Seas Guanyin of Mount Putuo, and this is not surprising given the close proximity of South Fujian to the mountain. Both are located on the southeastern coast of China. When I visited Mount Putuo in May 2011, I noticed that many if not most groups of pilgrims were from South Fujian. The Chinese who brought statues of Guanyin from Mount Putuo to the Philippines in the late 19th and early 20th century are part of a tradition that is still alive today. The link is between Mount Putuo and South Fujian, and then further between South Fujian and the Philippines and other countries of Southeast Asia.

The transformation of Avalokiteśvara into the Chinese Guanyin is a fascinating topic, well-documented and researched by Yü (2001) and others. Field data among the Chinese in the Philippines confirms Guanyin's popularity in the Buddhist communities I visited, not to mention Daoist and popular temples where she is also greatly venerated. The Philippines being a predominantly Catholic country, however, sets the scene for a unique appropriation of Guanyin. Some of my informants sought to explain Guanyin by saying that she was the "Chinese Virgin Mary." They note that both are maternal and compassionate figures and are therefore "the same" in that they serve the same function of heeding the cries and supplications of their spiritual children. Both are also known to assist those who desire to have children, since both have titles or images where they carry a baby boy. In fact, there is evidence that the image of a Child-giving Guanyin was influenced by depictions of the Madonna of Humility brought to China by Franciscans in the late 13th century (Arnold 1999, 142). By the time the Jesuits started their mission in China in the late 16th century, the Child-giving Guanyin was already a popular image and many Chinese confused the Madonna and Child paintings that the Jesuits brought with Guanyin (Clarke 2009, 10). It must also be noted that conflating goddesses is not uncommon in Chinese religion.⁴

In religious iconography, Chuanmiao (2008, 85) notes that some images of Guanyin in the Philippines were probably influenced by images of the Virgin Mary, such as the marble Guanyin image at the Fa Tzang Temple in Bacolod City. Quoting the Universal Gate chapter of the Lotus Sutra, he explains the likeness to the Virgin Mary in terms of Guanyin's ability to manifest herself in a way that is accessible to the people. The mutually overlapping iconography, however, has a historical precedent in the late Yuan dynasty (1271-1368), as Lauren Arnold (1999, 143) has demonstrated.

In Buddhist-Christian dialogue, the link between the two female figures has also been explored. Maria Reis-Habito (1993) compares the two figures in terms of their respective scriptural references, histories, and roles in popular piety. So great is the identification of the two that during the Christian persecution in Japan, images of the Virgin Mary were hidden

⁴ For examples from folk Chinese Buddhism, see Overmyer (1976, 130-44).

inside images of Kannon (Guanyin in Japanese) so that the Catholics could continue to venerate Mary under the guise of Guanyin (Reis-Habito 1993, 61; Midori 2009). She then came to be known as Maria Kannon.

In the Philippines, the two images have not been merged, as they were in Japan, but it is not uncommon to find a home altar, or a shrine in a folk temple⁵ where Guanyin and Mary images stand side by side. The influence of Mary is therefore not only in iconography, but on the level of popular piety. There is syncretism at play here. The inclusion of Mary in the Chinese Buddhist pantheon because of her similarities with Guanyin, albeit only on the popular level, is a unique religious adaptation of Chinese Buddhism in the Philippines.

The links that have been drawn between Guanyin and the Virgin Mary among Chinese Buddhists in the Philippines demonstrate the readiness of Chinese believers to incorporate foreign elements into their practice of a Chinese religion. In the Chinese Buddhist context of the Philippines, this has been called syncretism, and is not limited to the attitude to Catholic deities like the Virgin Mary. Within Chinese Buddhism, there are also practices that are not considered Buddhist, but nevertheless tolerated, such as the oracle sticks discussed above. Can this be considered syncretism? What does the term mean anyway?

Syncretism as a dynamic process

Syncretism sadly has a negative connotation. It is often taken to mean the popular and incoherent fusion of elements from different religious traditions, as against orthodox beliefs and practices (Stewart and Shaw 1994, 1). Since it is an important term in the study of religions and in my consideration of Chinese Buddhism, a brief presentation of the history of the term in religious studies is necessary here.

Michael Pye, writing on syncretism in 1971 and again in 1994, traces the development of the term's use. He begins his 1971 article by referring to a lecture by J.H. Kamstra on the importance of syncretism in the phenomenology of religion, and notes that the term was first used by Plutarch to mean "to come to concord, just as the Cretans do when threatened by a common enemy" (Pye 1971, 83). Theologians of the 17th century began to give it a pejorative meaning, but Kamstra proposed the following definition, "the coexistence of elements foreign to each other within a specific religion, whether or not these elements originate in other religions or for example in social structures (Ibid.)."

⁵ I observed the practice of honoring Guanyin and Mary on the same altar in my own family's home, and many others'. The Chong Hock Temple inside the Chinese Cemetery and the Daoist Santo Singkong Temple, both in Manila, feature Mary together with Guanyin and other Chinese deities.

Kamstra's definition treats syncretism as a neutral process, and both he and Pye acknowledge G. Van der Leeuw, writing in 1938, as the first to write extensively on the "dynamics of religion," recognizing that religions are changing all the time, and so too are the different elements found in different religions (Ibid., 85-86). Kamstra then calls it "syncretism from within" when "elements continue to exist within a religion even though they have really lost their original meanings (Ibid., 86)." Because of this dynamic process in the phenomenology of religion, Pye returns to theology and builds on the notion of the coexistence of elements foreign to each other. Using his fieldwork in Japan on Buddhist-Shinto rites as an example, he describes as "ambiguous" the meanings of various elements under consideration (Ibid., 90), even if there may be a coherent religious pattern. He proposes that all religious traditions have some form of syncretism, defined as "the temporary ambiguous coexistence of elements from diverse religious and other contexts within a coherent religious pattern (Ibid., 93)." The "ambiguous coexistence" is temporary because the ambiguity works itself towards a resolution, determining the direction taken by syncretism.⁶

Returning to the topic in 1994 after more than 20 years, Pye notes how the term, though used in different ways by anthropologists and theologians, has become an important analytical tool in the study of religions. The term has been "operationalized in order to facilitate the analysis of dynamic religious processes which in fact take place. It is no longer used to imply a reprehensible diminution or jumbling up of religion; in other words, description and analysis replace theological judgment" (Pye 1994, 219).

The positive implication of the development in meaning is that syncretism is no longer viewed as a loose and unthinking "mere mixture" of elements, or as necessarily a synthesis, where a conclusion, usually in the direction of assimilation into the dominant tradition, has been reached. The direction in a syncretistic situation is open-ended. The dynamics of coexistence of diverse elements can be resolved in at least three directions. There is assimilation when the weaker elements are absorbed by the dominant tradition, or there can be dissolution when a separate identity is reasserted because the divergent meanings of disparate elements have been clarified. Finally, a new religion can be created by way of a synthesis. Pye again uses a Buddhist-Shinto example to illustrate his theoretical framework, concluding that "the fascination of a syncretistic situation lies in its still unresolved dynamics" (Ibid., 228).

Accepting that syncretism is a viable analytical tool in the study of religions, further elaborations have been attempted in diverse situations. Leopold and Jensen (2004) have compiled 19 articles that detail the use of the term in theological and anthropological discourse. Historical and

⁶ Berling (1980, 9) defines syncretism as a process of selection and reconciliation, highlighting the fact that Chinese religions haven been unfairly described as randomly syncretic.

theoretical studies are complemented by the application of the term in different contexts in Africa and the Caribbean. In his contribution, Stewart (2004, 278) defines syncretism similarly to Pye as the “momentary state of mixture between two or more different religions” that can lead in any direction. I have used Pye because his examples from Japanese religion are closer to the Chinese Buddhist phenomena that I have studied.

A special issue of the *Asian Journal of Social Science* (2009) is devoted to the examination of the utility and adequacy of syncretism as a term for studying everyday religiosity in Asia (Goh 2009a, 5), and contains studies that explore the dynamics of syncretism. For example, there are the assumptions of coherence/symbolic unity or harmonious interaction in a religious system, and the dichotomies between canonical and customary, modern and folk, great and little. This special issue enriches the discourse on syncretism by applying the term to diverse ethnographic data. The treatment by Jean DeBernardi of syncretic processes at play in case studies in China and Taiwan, was particularly helpful in analyzing my own field data.

In Chinese religion, there have been historical and contemporary attempts to synthesize Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism into a syncretic religion of China. Such was the religion founded by Lin Zhao'en in the 16th century (Berling 1980; Dean 1998), which privileged Confucian values while venerating Confucius, Laozi, and the Buddha on the same altar (Brook 1993b; DeBernardi 2009, 140). In contemporary times, the Red Swastika Society and Yiguandao 一貫道 network worship the founders of great religions while emphasizing Daoist forms of spiritual practice (Ibid.; Soo 1997). It has been pointed out, however, that such efforts were in fact instances of joint worship on the popular level, without the doctrinal synthesis that syncretism implies (Brook 1993b).

Chinese religion cannot be reduced to the synthesis of Confucianism, Daoism, and Buddhism. Such neat conceptions fail to account for many aspects of Chinese popular religion. In recent years, there has been greater effort to acknowledge Chinese religion as a category in its own right, although there are many difficulties with identifying the unique element in it because of its syncretic nature. As well, for too long a time, Western scholars chose to focus on elite representations of the three great traditions and dismissed popular religion as superstitious (Wong 2011).

Using syncretism as an analytical tool, it can be demonstrated historically that Buddhism combined early Buddhist beliefs with indigenous Chinese elements and created a synthesis that resulted in the “new religion” of Chinese Buddhism. As a dynamic process, syncretism never ceases to be operative,⁷ and varied forms of Buddhism are the result of syncretistic

⁷ For some classic studies on syncretism in the gradual development of Chinese Buddhism, see Kenneth Chen's (1973) study on the Chinese transformation of Buddhism, Sharf (2002a, 2002b) on Chinese Buddhism, especially the syncretism of Chan and Pure Land practices, and Sheng Yen (2007), who answers common questions on orthodox Chinese Buddhism. Jungnok Park (2012) focuses on the idea of a soul in Chinese Buddhism, demonstrating how translators of Buddhist texts adapted their work to the Chinese audience.

processes. In fact, this is true of other ethnic Buddhisms as well. Donald Swearer (1989), writing about folk Buddhism, provides examples from Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Japan where indigenous beliefs and practices were appropriated into the Buddhist system. This included the continued invocation of local guardian spirits at temples, a practice that finds its parallel in the four protector kings that guard Chinese Buddhist temples (Epstein 2003, 178).⁸

Chinese Buddhism continues to interact with elements from Chinese popular religion. At every time and place, people negotiate the meanings behind their beliefs and practices. This is the process that I have observed in the Chinese Buddhism of the Philippines. The syncretism of Buddhism with Chinese elements such as the value of filial piety and the transformation of Avalokiteśvara into the female Guanyin led to a unique and coherent fusion of horizons in China.

In the Philippines, the coexistence of Buddhism with Daoism, Chinese popular religion, and the dominant Christianity of the country, exhibits the dynamic of syncretism. Keeping my focus on what I have observed through fieldwork, let me provide two examples of syncretism in Chinese Buddhism, following Pye's (1971, 1994) and DeBernardi's (2009) use of the term.

Examples of symbolic amity and symbolic encompassment

As mentioned earlier, Pye sees syncretism as an open-ended process. In a movement towards a resolution, DeBernardi adds more nuanced possibilities to Pye's assimilation, subordination, and synthesis. Rather than focus on doctrinal issues, she concerns herself with syncretism in space, ritual performance, and imagination. She provides the following description of syncretic fusion or the syncretism process.

When syncretism is an active process, religious practitioners self-consciously join together elements derived from different religious traditions. Where awareness of the multiple sources remains active I regard these as symbolic expression of *syncretic amity*, and distinguish them from *symbolic encompassment*, which is the practice of incorporating elements of another religious tradition in a subordinate symbolic role. (DeBernardi 2009, 141)

The first example is the "syncretic amity" between Guanyin and the Virgin Mary, which I began to describe earlier. When these two images are closely identified or venerated on the same altar, there is no doubt that there is still "awareness of multiple sources." The iconography alone is evidence that the two images come from different traditions, as Guanyin looks thoroughly Chinese or East Asian and Mary's features are those of a sharp-

8 The four kings are associated with each of the cardinal directions, and occupy the lowest of the six desire heavens. They are known in Chinese as the Sitian Wang 四天王, and are described in the Kṣitigarbha Sutra. Their statues can be found right after the main entrance of bigger Buddhist temples in China. Temples in the Philippines generally do not have space for their statues, except in miniature form, as in the Hwat Kong Temple.

nosed Westerner. When I probed my informants further on the relationship behind the two, they could not say much more than that Guanyin is the Buddhist Mary. Interestingly, I did not hear the reverse description of Mary being the Christian Guanyin, except from the scholar monk Chuanmiao (2008, 85) who suggested that Mary is a “skillful means” manifestation of Guanyin. Among the lay devotees, however, the great similarities in the qualities of Mary and Guanyin were enough to justify their common veneration. The renowned theologian Peter Phan has observed that it is quite common for Asian Catholics to regard Guanyin as “the equivalent of Mother Mary” (Phan 2017, 102).

The second example is the birthday celebration of Śakra, ruler of the *Trayastrimśa* Heaven in Mahāyāna Buddhist cosmology. In this particular cosmology, there are “innumerable world systems” and humans belong to a “single world system” at the center of which is Mt. Sumeru (Kloetzli 1987, 2027). The single world system is further divided into four “continents” in the four directions of the compass, and the human world can be found in the south. Vertically, the system has three realms: desire, form, and non-form. The latter two realms are immaterial, while material beings reside in the realm of desire (Ibid.), which is further subdivided into the commonly known six realms of gods, humans, titans, hungry ghosts, animals, and hell beings.

The gods reside in six hierarchical heavens, and the *Trayastrimśa* heaven has thirty-three celestial beings ruled by Śakra, believed to be connected to the human realm.⁹ Śakra is known in Chinese as Dishitian 帝釋天¹⁰ or Tiangong 天公 in popular religion, where Tiangong is conflated with the Jade Emperor 玉皇大帝, (*Yu Huang Dadi*) who rules over all the gods. Because of this god’s link to the human world, he is the object of thanksgiving and worship. In Buddhism he is seen as a protector of the Dharma, and is depicted requesting the Buddha to share the Dharma with all sentient beings.¹¹

Tiangong’s birthday is marked on the ninth day of the lunar New Year. At Seng Guan Temple, I witnessed this feast being accommodated in the temple. As the Buddhist liturgy of chanting the names of 3000 Buddhas for the beginning of the year was scheduled on three days including Tiangong’s birthday, the popular feast would be marked in a Buddhist context. Although Tiangong has a Buddhist appropriation as a protector of the Dharma, the ceremonies of that day were focused on the Buddhas. While the chanting of the Buddha names took place in one hall, the temple provided a separate hall and many tables for individuals to use in making

⁹ Descriptions of Śakra can be found in the Kṣitigarbha Sutra and the *Śūraṅgama Sūtra*. See also the entry on the “Six Desire Heavens” in Epstein’s (2003) *Buddhism A to Z*.

¹⁰ See the entry on Dishitian in the Foguang Dictionary (Shi Xingyun 1988, 3776).

¹¹ For an example of this kind of artwork, and the Chinese Buddhist names of gods appropriated from Vedic religion, see <http://jadeturtlerecords.blogspot.co.uk/2011/02/sakra.html> (last accessed 5 May 2021).

their offerings to Tiangong and performing other rituals to cast off evil or transfer them to “others,” represented by small paper cut-outs of human figures. It was also common to see shirts being “blessed” over the incense and then brought home for family members to wear. This particular ritual could be the subject of a specialized study. I mention it only as an example of a Chinese folk religious practice that is accommodated in the major Buddhist temple of Manila.

In this case, symbolic encompassment has already taken place. Like the protector gods found at the doors of many Chinese Buddhist temples, Tiangong has been subordinated into the Buddhist system as part of what Pye might call a synthesis in Chinese Buddhism.

The rituals associated with Tiangong are also relevant to the fusion of beliefs with Christianity. One well-read informant who was educated in Christian schools told me that Tiangong is the equivalent of the Christian God (known in Chinese as *Tianzhu* 天主 or *Shangdi* 上帝), and since there are still many heavens and Buddha-lands “above” Tiangong, then the Christian God is actually quite limited, i.e., not the all-powerful Creator that he is made out to be. This interpretation can be traced back to Zhuhong, a Buddhist revivalist who responded to the claims of the Jesuit missionaries in China in the 16th century (Zürcher 2001, 158, 165).

The founder of Fagushan, Master Shengyan, puts the Christian God a few levels up, as ruler of the Great Brahma Heaven in the realm of form (Sheng Yen 2007, 42). These are clearly Buddhist attempts to “contain” the Christian God, and if successful, can resolve the syncretism in favor of symbolic encompassment, but it is doubtful that a critical mass of Buddhist leaders will openly confront Christianity in this way.

The syncretism or fusion of beliefs goes on only in the attitudes of those who wish to justify simultaneous Buddhist and Christian practices. While some Buddhists may try to locate the Christian God in Buddhist cosmology, those who practice both Buddhist and Christian rituals take comfort in being able to worship the “same” God in both traditions. They are happy to see no conflict between the two religions.

In the two examples I just presented, the dynamic process behind syncretism is manifested. There can be syncretic amity, as with the links between Guanyin and the Virgin Mary; or symbolic encompassment, as in the case of Tiangong becoming a protector of the Dharma. Syncretism can therefore apply to a range of phenomena and is not limited to its historical connotation of being a loose and incoherent fusion of diverse religious elements. There are syncretistic processes that define the adaptation of Buddhism in every place and time.

Conclusion

The number of Chinese temples in the Philippines is truly remarkable given the less than ten percent of Chinese Filipinos who identify themselves as Buddhists. In many cases, the temple and school ministries are maintained by a small group of faithful disciples, and others who may practice syncretist religion but contribute generously to Buddhist causes. Schools and charity clinics operated by these temples serve the community at large. It remains to be seen what will happen to these temples as the first and second generation Chinese who helped found them die out, and contemporary Buddhist movements attract the support of the new generations of Chinese. I interviewed more than twenty Buddhists, both monastics and laity, and only one dared say that Chinese Buddhism, at least in the traditional, non-Taiwanese temples, would die a natural death. The rest refused to make any prediction. "It's hard to say," was the common response. "It all depends on affinity or yuan 緣."

In analyzing Chinese Buddhism in the Philippines, it is important to be aware of the lens with which one sees the phenomenon.

Richard King (1999), among others,¹² has shown how much of Western discourse on the religions of Asia were framed using Christian categories during the colonial era. He has reviewed the scholarship on the concepts of 'religion' and 'world religions' and shown the extent of Western and Christian bias in them. As a Christian studying Buddhism, I have experienced the need to return to this insight repeatedly, and this is evidence of the deep roots of my Christian presuppositions.

Though I am ethnically Chinese and exposed to the rituals of Chinese religions, my formal religious instruction was in the Catholic faith. Western models of education prevailed throughout all my studies. As I approach Buddhism academically, therefore, my Catholic and Western presuppositions are always operative, and it takes a very conscious effort not to impose these on Buddhist phenomena.

Chinese people who practice popular religion have often told me that Catholicism and Buddhism are very similar or even "the same." As mentioned earlier, some say that Catholic devotion to the Mary, the mother of Jesus, is just like Buddhist devotion to Guanyin. They have very similar qualities and even resemble each other in iconography.

There is no doubt that these two female objects of devotion inspire similar emotions and attitudes in their devotees, but studying their historical

¹² See also Fabian (1983), Asad (1993), and McCutcheon (1997) for general discourses on the anthropology of religion. Southwold (1983) focuses on Sinhalese Buddhism as a case study of the anthropological approach to religion where text and context must be considered together. Paper (1994, 24) critiques the imposition of Christian categories on the study of Chinese religions and underlines, echoing Watson (1988, 4), the primacy of performance over belief and the offering of food as a common denominator in Chinese religions.

backgrounds reveals major differences as well. Complex religious traditions have unfolded for both Mary and Guanyin, and these can be taken at face value rather than judged and compared.

Richard King (1999, 39) cites a conversation between the German writer Bichsel and a Balinese Hindu. The German asked the Balinese whether he believed the story of Prince Rama was true. The Balinese answered in the affirmative, but in the course of the conversation, said he was not sure if Prince Rama ever lived, yet the story was true regardless. In contrast, the Balinese observed that Christians consider it important that their God, Jesus Christ, walked the earth, but this belief did not seem to translate into obvious piety and devotion.

For the Balinese believer, the truth of religion is in its capacity to inspire a certain way of living. He perceived the Christian as being too concerned with historical facts, an emphasis that was not obviously important to the non-Christian.

This story illustrates my own tendency to evaluate Buddhism using a Christian framework. This is precisely the insight that has emerged from the acknowledgement of Orientalism, that Westerners or Western-educated people have studied Asia with a set of assumptions which should now be acknowledged and challenged. The religions of Asia must be studied on their own merits, and not evaluated using a Western Christian benchmark. Stephan Feuchtwang makes this point when he says that the assumption of coherence must be set aside in studies of Chinese religion, and ethnography allowed to stand on its own rather than submit to a quest for coherence.¹³

While trying to be self-conscious, therefore, about my personal Christian and Western mindset, I find it helpful to view Chinese Buddhism in the Philippines in terms of Robert Redfield's (1956) classic characterization of culture as having both Great and Little Traditions. There is abundant evidence of both in the Buddhism of the Philippines. I use the dichotomy of great/little only as a heuristic device to describe my fieldwork.¹⁴ Unlike Redfield who used it to distinguish urban from rural practices of religion,

¹³ Feuchtwang (2010) presents his theories of religion, charisma, and ghosts after a long career studying Chinese religion. The call to constant openness to what is revealed during research was also made by Jonathan Smith (1978) when he said that maps are not equivalent to the territories they cover, and there is always the danger of being attached to one's maps. To highlight the constant flux in territories, Sam Gill (1998) suggests journey or story as more dynamic metaphors for the study of religion. Smith (1978) and Fitzgerald (1997) also detail the difficulty of defining religion, even as they affirm its necessity as an analytical concept. Talking about Chinese Studies more generally, Miranda Brown (2006) points out the inadequacy of psychic unity and essentialism as ways of thinking about East-West differences. All these studies share the key insight of taking any religious phenomena on its own terms rather than forcing the phenomena into preconceived categories.

¹⁴ Similarly, although they were dealing with predominantly Buddhist societies, Obeyesekere (1963) and Kirsch (1977) study Sinhalese and Thai Buddhism, respectively, as complex realities with "Great" and "Little" dimensions. Their studies are also cited by Swearer (1989) as examples of folk Buddhism.

and departing from similar frameworks that come from an elite perspective, I subscribe to the “third stage” of examining Chinese religion (Bell 1989, 39). While the first stage framed Chinese religion in terms of dichotomies between elite and folk, great and little, or urban and rural, the second stage¹⁵ acknowledged unities that crossed such clean-cut boundaries. The term ‘popular religion’ thus came into use to describe practices that could be observed across social and other divides. In time, ‘popular religion’ as a category was refined further, giving rise to the third stage that describes religious phenomena as “religious cultures.”¹⁶

Seeing Chinese Buddhism in the Philippines as a religious culture and using the convenient tool of Great/Little traditions, the unique context of the Philippines can be highlighted. Indeed, the phenomenon of textuality is something that cuts across all levels of religious practice and is by no means limited to the monastic or lay elite. The same can be said of the attitude of syncretic amity towards Guanyin and Mary, and the diverse dynamics of syncretism. Practices that are labeled ‘popular’ or ‘folk’ are immediately suspect, but need not be so. A Chinese Buddhist religious culture leaves room for various heuristic devices¹⁷ to be employed without taking narrow positions.

On the side of the Great Tradition of Chinese Buddhism in the Philippines are the teachings preserved in the sacred texts of Chinese Buddhism, chanted more than studied in the Philippines, and shared with Chinese Buddhism throughout the world. Included here are the texts and practices that are rooted in the Pure Land and Chan traditions that have developed in China over the centuries, and kept alive in the religious life of Chinese Buddhists everywhere, not least the overseas Chinese communities.

In the Philippines, devotion to Guanyin and the aspiration to be reborn in the Pure Land explains the popularity of related texts and canonical materials. Texts such as the Universal Door and the Great Compassion Spell are reproduced, explained, and chanted; the name of Amitābha Buddha is never far from the lips of believers; sets of canonical texts rest on many a bookshelf. All this firmly roots Chinese Buddhism in the Philippines in the Great Tradition of Chinese Buddhism.

¹⁵ Jochim (1988) writes about the unities in defining the poles of Chinese religion and can be located in this second stage.

¹⁶ Catherine Bell (1989) takes her discussion of the three stages from the earlier work of Natalie Davis, “Some Tasks and Themes in the Study of Popular Religion,” in *The Pursuit of Holiness in Late Medieval and Renaissance Religion*, ed. Charles Trinkaus and Heiko A. Oberman (Leiden: Brill, 1974), 307-36.

¹⁷ David Faure (1987, 353), examining space and place in Chinese religious traditions, warns against the perils of disregarding earlier paradigms—“The “great versus little traditions” paradigm, as used here, does not then refer to a real opposition between two juridically or socially distinct parties but, rather, to different perceptions, different and unequal uses of the same space.”

The difference between lay and monastic Buddhism in the Philippines also follows the same pattern as in Chinese Buddhism. Zürcher (1993, 16), comparing the spread of Buddhism and Christianity in China, observed that against the latter's strategy of guided propagation from an orthodox center, Buddhism spread through the spontaneous diffusion of monasteries. The Buddhist monastics then became available to local believers for ritual services, and this transformed the local religious culture. In a similar way, there was already popular Chinese religion in the Philippines before the arrival of Buddhist monastics, but once temples were built and the monastics became available for ritual services, spiritual needs such as prayers for the dead could be undertaken in a Buddhist way. The Buddhist temple then became a privileged setting for the assertion of Chinese and Buddhist identity.

The Little Tradition refers to the adaptations of Chinese Buddhism to the Philippine setting. These can point to institutional adaptations, such as the timing and structure of dharma assemblies. Earlier, we observed how chanted texts are abbreviated and the number of chanting days reduced to levels manageable for the devotees. We saw how activities are scheduled during Christian holy days, and how Guanyin is viewed vis-à-vis the predominant Catholicism of the country, and different dynamics of syncretism. These are formal adaptations of the Great Tradition of Chinese Buddhism to the Philippine locale.

There are also popular or folk elements in the Little Tradition. Examples of these are the prevalence of divination practices at the temples, especially the use of the Guanyin oracle sticks; funerary rituals like the burning of material objects to accompany the deceased, monetary contributions to register the names of the deceased during chanting; the temple as a venue for key moments in the mourning period observed by families; and the Buddhist observance of generic Chinese religious festivals like the birthday of Tiangong.

What is observable in the Philippines is a stable practice of Chinese Buddhism that is clearly linked to a Great Tradition, but also realistically adapted to the local setting. Existing in a predominantly Christian environment, the Great Tradition is appropriated in Little Traditions that are observed at different levels. Institutional Buddhism followed the Christian pace of life and organized its religious services following Christian timeframes, without moving the observance of Buddhist feast days. The weekend services were set up to give lay people more opportunities for spiritual practice, but the Buddhist feast days continue to be marked, no matter the size of the congregation when these fall on working days, as they often do.

On the popular level, Chinese Filipinos practiced their own Little Tradition of incorporating Catholicism into their Buddhist religious

spectrum. Some informants described themselves to me as 'Buddhist Catholics' because they participated in the ritual life of both religions. They did not bother with possible theological inconsistencies and rationalized their practice by saying that both or even all religions are 'good' anyway. In Europe and North America, a parallel phenomenon has emerged in the practice of 'double belonging,' highlighted by Paul Knitter (2009) when he described his Christian practice as heavily influenced by Buddhism.¹⁸

The religious practice that develops in every place is a Little Tradition that appropriates for itself certain elements from the Great Tradition. What characterizes contemporary religion is the readiness of people to cross sectarian lines and use beliefs and practices from different traditions, and not necessarily in an undisciplined way. Such is the richness of Chinese religious culture in the Philippines, that the syncretism of Chinese religion can be expanded to include Christian elements. If we think about Chinese Buddhism in the Philippines as a religious field, it can be described as having many grids where Great and Little Traditions interact.

In this paper, we have situated Chinese Buddhism in the Philippines alongside the broader Chinese religious field of the Chinese-Filipino community. We explored the themes of devotion to Guanyin and syncretism as the specific ways in which Chinese Buddhism adapted to the Philippine context, and helped the ethnic Chinese to assert a unique Chinese and Buddhist identity in the predominantly Catholic context of the country.

While syncretism within Chinese religions is a commonplace, the Philippine experience seems unique in the syncretism between Chinese religions and Catholic Christianity.

¹⁸ See also Rose Drew's (2011) exploration of Buddhist-Christian dual belonging.

REFERENCES

- Amaladoss, M. 2017. *Interreligious Encounters: Opportunities and Challenges*. Edited by J. Tan. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Ang-See, T., ed. 2005. *Tsinoy: the Story of the Chinese in Philippine Life*. Manila: Kaisa Para sa Kaunlaran.
- Arnold, L. 1999. *Princely Gifts and Papal Treasures: The Franciscan Mission to China and its Influence on the Art of the West 1250-1350*. San Francisco: Desiderata Press.
- Asad, T. 1993. *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and reasons of power in Christianity and Islam*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Ashiwa, Y., and D. L. Wank. 2005. "The Globalization of Chinese Buddhism: Clergy and Devotee Networks in the Twentieth Century." *International Journal of Asian Studies* 2 (2): 217-237.
- Bakker, J.W.M. 1976. "Contemporary Buddhism in Indonesia." In *Buddhism in the Modern World*, edited by H. Dumoulin, 147-153. New York: Collier Books.
- Baumann, M. 2004. "A diachronic view of diaspora, the significance of religion, and Hindu Trinidadians." In *Diaspora, Identity, and Religion: New directions in theory and research*, edited by W. Kokot, K. Tölölyan, and C. Alfonso. New York: Routledge.
- Bell, C. 1989. "Religion and Chinese Culture: Toward an Assessment of 'Popular Religion.'" *History of Religions* 29 (1): 35-57.
- Berling, J. 1980. *The Syncretic Religion of Lin Chao-en*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Beyer, H.O. 1921. "The Philippines before Magellan II: Early Chinese Relations with Malay Lands." *Asia* (21): 924-928, 964, 966, 968, 970.
- Brook, T. 1993. "Rethinking Syncretism: The Unity of the Three Teachings and their Joint Worship in Late Imperial China." *Journal of Chinese Religion* (21): 13-44.
- Brown, I. 2004. "The Revival of Buddhism in Modern Indonesia." In *Hinduism in Modern Indonesia: a minority religion between local, national, and global interests*, edited by M. Ramstedt, 45-55. London and New York: RoutledgeCurzon.
- Brown, M. 2006. "Neither 'Primitives' nor 'Others', but somehow not quite like 'Us': The fortunes of psychic unity and essentialism in Chinese Studies." *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient* 49 (2): 219-252.

- Chandler, S. 2004. *Establishing a Pure Land on Earth: the Foguang Buddhist Perspective on Modernization and Globalization*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press.
- Chen, K. 1964. *Buddhism in China: A Historical Survey*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- . 1973. *The Chinese Transformation of Buddhism*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Chu, R. 2010. *Chinese and Chinese Mestizos of Manila: Family, Identity, and Culture, 1860s-1930s*. Leiden and Boston: Brill.
- Clammer, J.R. 2002. *Diaspora and Identity: The Sociology of Culture in Southeast Asia*. Selangor Darul Ehsan, Malaysia: Pelanduk Publications.
- . 2009. *Diaspora and Belief: Globalisation, Religion, and Identity in Postcolonial Asia*. New Delhi: Shipra Publications.
- Clammer, J.R., ed. 1983. *Studies in Chinese Folk Religion in Singapore and Malaysia*. National University of Singapore.
- Clarke, J. 2009. "Our Lady of China: Marian Devotion and the Jesuits." *Studies in the Spirituality of Jesuits* 41 (3): 1-47.
- Cohen, M. 1994. "Being Chinese." In *The Living Tree: The Changing Meaning of Being Chinese Today*, edited by Wei-ming Tu, 88-108. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Dean, K. 1998. *Lord of the Three in One: The Spread of a Cult in Southeast China*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- De Bernardi, J. 2001. "The Localization of Christianity among Chinese in Singapore and Malaysia." In *Chinese Populations in Contemporary Southeast Asian Societies: Identities, Interdependence and International Influence*, edited by M.J. Armstrong, R.W. Armstrong, and K. Mulliner, 123-150. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon.
- . 2004. *Rites of Belonging: Memory, Modernity, and Identity in a Malaysian Chinese Community*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- . 2009. "Wudang Mountain and Mount Zion in Taiwan: Syncretic Processes in Space, Ritual Performance, and Imagination." *Asian Journal of Social Science* (37): 138-162.
- Drew, R. 2011. *Buddhist and Christian? An Exploration of Dual Belonging*. New York: Routledge.
- Dy, A. 2005. *Building a Bridge: Catholic Christianity meets Chinese-Filipino Culture*. Quezon City, Philippines: Jesuit Communications.
- . 2015. *Chinese Buddhism in Catholic Philippines: Syncretism as Identity*. Mandaluyong City, Philippines: Anvil.

- Elder, G.G. 1982. "Ritual and Chinese Ethnicity in Mahachai, Thailand." PhD thesis, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.
- Epstein, R. 2003. *Buddhism A to Z*. Burlingame, CA: Buddhist Text Translation Society.
- Fabian, J. 1983. *Time and the Other: How anthropology makes its object*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Faure, B. 1987. "Space and Place in Chinese Religious Traditions." *History of Religions*: 337-356.
- Felix, A. 1969. *The Chinese in the Philippines 1770-1898*. Manila: Solidaridad Publishing House.
- Feuchtwang, S. 2001. *Popular Religion in China: The Imperial Metaphor*. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon.
- . 2010. *The Anthropology of Religion, Charisma and Ghosts: Chinese Lessons for Adequate Theory*. Berlin and New York: De Gruyter.
- Fitzgerald, T. 1997. "A critique of 'Religion' as a cross-cultural category." *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion* 9 (2): 91-110.
- Gill, S. 1998. "Territory." In *Critical Terms in Religious Studies*, edited by Mark Taylor. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Goh, D. 2009. "Introduction: Religious Syncretism and Everyday Religiosity in Asia." *Asian Journal of Social Science* (37): 5-6.
- Jochim, C. 1988. "'Great' and 'Little,' 'Grid' and 'Group': Defining the Poles of the Elite-Popular Continuum in Chinese Religion." *Journal of Chinese Religions* (16): 18-42.
- King, R. 1999. *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and 'The Mystic East'*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Kirsch, A. 1977. "Complexity in the Thai religious system: An Interpretation." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 36 (2): 241-66.
- Kloetzli, W. R. 2005. "Cosmology: Buddhist Cosmology." *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 2nd ed. Vol. 4. London and Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA.
- Knitter, P. 2009. *Without Buddha I could not be a Christian*. Oxford: Oneworld.
- Kuah-Pearce, K.E. 2008. "Diversities and Unities: Towards a Reformist Buddhism in Singapore" and "Delivering Welfare Services in Singapore: A Strategic Partnership between Buddhism and the State." In *Religious Diversity in Singapore*, edited by A.E. Lai, 195-214. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Lee, G.K., ed. 2006. *Demarcating Ethnicity in New Nations: Cases of the Chinese in Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia*. Singapore: Konrad Adenauer Stiftung and Singapore Society of Asian Studies.

- Leopold, A., and J. Jensen. 2004. *Syncretism in Religion: A Reader*. London: Equinox.
- Liow, W.K. 1989. "Buddhist Temples and Associations in Penang, 1845-1948." *Journal of the Malaysian Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society* 62 (1): 57-87.
- McCarthy, C. 1974. "The Chinese in the Philippines." In *Philippine-Chinese Profile: Essays and Studies*, edited by C. McCarthy. Manila: Pagkakaisa sa Pag-unlad Inc.
- McCutcheon, R. 1997. *Manufacturing Religion: The Discourse on Sui Generis Religion and the Politics of Nostalgia*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Midori, W. 2009. "The Iconography of the Virgin Mary in Japan and its Transformation: Chinese Buddhist Sculpture and Maria Kannon." In *Christianity and Cultures: Japan and China in Comparison 1543-1644*, edited by M. Ucerler and J. Antoni, 229-248. Rome: Institutum Historicum Societatis Iesu.
- Nagata, J. 1994. "Limits to Indigenization of Buddhism in Malaysia with a Focus on the Religious Community in Penang." In *Dimensions of Tradition and Development in Malaysia*, edited by R. Talib and C. B. Tan, 307-345. Petaling Jaya: Pelanduk Publications.
- Obeyesekere, G. 1963. "The Great Tradition and the Little in the Perspective of Sinhalese Buddhism." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 22 (2): 139-53.
- Overmyer, D. 1976. *Folk Buddhist Religion: Dissenting Sects in Late Traditional China*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.
- Paper, J. 1994. *The Spirits are Drunk*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Park, J. 2012. *How Buddhism Acquired a Soul on the Way to China*. Sheffield: Equinox Publishing.
- Phan, P. 2017. *The Joy of Religious Pluralism: A Personal Journey*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books.
- Pye, M. 1971. "Syncretism and Ambiguity." *Numen* 18 (2): 83-93.
- . 1994. "Syncretism versus Synthesis." *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion* 6 (3): 217-229.
- Rawski, E. 1988. "A Historian's Approach to Chinese Death Ritual" and "The Imperial Way of Death: Ming and Ch'ing Emperors and Death Ritual." In *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, edited by J. Watson and E. Rawski. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Raguin, Y. 1992. "Dialogue with Chinese Buddhism." *Tripod* (68): 15-29.

- Redfield, R. 1956. *Peasant Society and Culture: An Anthropological Approach Civilization*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Reis-Habito, M. 1991. "The Repentance Ritual of the Thousand-armed Guanyin." *Studies in Central and East Asian Religions* (4): 42-51.
- Shao, J. 2001. "A Channel of Blessings in God's Hands: Chinese Protestant Churches in the Philippines." In *Chapters in Philippine Church History*, edited by A. Kwantes. Manila: OMF Literature.
- Sharf, R. 2002a. *Coming to Terms with Chinese Buddhism*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- . 2002b. "On Pure Land Buddhism and Ch'an/Pure Land Syncretism in Medieval China." *T'oung Pao* (88): 282-331.
- Sheng Yen. 2007. *Orthodox Chinese Buddhism: A Contemporary Chan Master's Answers to Common Questions*. Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books.
- Shi, C.Y. 1990. *A Survey of Philippine Buddhism*. Manila: Philippine Seng Guan Temple.
- Smith, J. 1978. *Map is not Territory*. Leiden: Brill.
- Soo, K.W. 1997. "A Study of the Yiguan Dao (Unity Sect) and its Development in Peninsular Malaysia." PhD diss., University of British Columbia.
- Southwold, M. 1983. *Buddhism in life: The Anthropological Study of Religion and the Sinhalese Practice of Buddhism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Stewart, C. 2004. "Relocating Syncretism in Social Science Discourse." In *Syncretism in Religion: A Reader*, edited by Anita Maria Leopold and Jeppe Sinding Jensen, 264-285. London: Equinox.
- Stewart, C., and R. Shaw, eds. 1994. *Syncretism/Anti-syncretism: The politics of religious synthesis*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Suryadinata, L. 2005. "Buddhism and Confucianism in Contemporary Indonesia." In *Chinese Indonesians: Remembering, Distorting, Forgetting*, edited by T. Lindsey and H. Pausacker, 77-94. Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.
- Swearer, D.K. 1989. "Folk Buddhism." In *Buddhism in Asian History*, edited by Joseph M. Kitagawa and Mark D. Cummings, 351-357. New York: Macmillan.
- Sycip, F.C. 1957. *Chinese Buddhism in Manila: A Case Study of the Social Structure of the Seng Guan Temple Congregation*. Quezon City: University of the Philippines.

- Tan, C.B. 1995. "The Study of Chinese Religions in Southeast Asia: Some Views." In *Southeast Asian Chinese: The Socio-Cultural Dimension*, edited by Leo Suryadinata, 139-165. Singapore: Times Academic Press.
- . 2001. "Chinese in Southeast Asia and Identities in a Changing Global Context." In *Chinese Populations in Contemporary Southeast Asian Societies: Identities, Interdependence and International Influence*, edited by M. Jocelyn Armstrong, R. Warwick Armstrong, and Ken Mulliner, 210-236. Richmond, Surrey: Curzon Press.
- Watson, J. 1988. "The Structure of Chinese Funerary Rites: Elementary Forms, Ritual Sequence, and the Primacy of Performance." In *Death Ritual in Late Imperial and Modern China*, edited by J. Watson and E. Rawski. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Wee, V. 1976. "'Buddhism' in Singapore." In *Singapore: Society in Transition*, edited by R. Hassan, 155-188. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Weightman, G.H. 1960. "The Philippine Chinese: A Cultural History of a Marginal Trading Community," PhD thesis, Cornell University Graduate School.
- Wickberg, E. 1998. "Chinese Organizations in Philippine Cities since the Second World War," In *The Chinese Diaspora: Selected Essays*, Vol. 1, edited by L. C. Wang and G. W. Wang, 174-194. Singapore: Times Academic Press.
- . 1965. *The Chinese in Philippine Life: 1850-1898*. New Haven: Yale University Press.
- Williams, P. 2002. *The Unexpected Way: On Converting from Buddhism to Catholicism*. Edinburgh and New York: T&T Clark.
- Wolf, A., ed. 1974. *Religion and Ritual in Chinese Society*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
- Wong, W.Y. 2011. "Defining Chinese Folk Religion: A Methodological Interpretation." *Asian Philosophy* 21 (2): 153-170.
- Yü, C.F. 2001. *Kuan-yin: The Chinese Transformation of Avalokiteśvara*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Zurcher, E. 1993. "The Spread of Buddhism and Christianity in Imperial China: Spontaneous Diffusion Versus Guided Propagation." In *China and the West* (Proceedings of the International Colloquium held in the Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, Brussels, November 23-25, 1987), 9-18. Brussels: Paleis der Academien.

- . 2001. "Xu Guangqi and Buddhism." In *Statecraft and intellectual renewal in late Ming China: The cross-cultural synthesis of Xu Guangqi (1562-1633)*, edited by Catherine Jami, Peter Engelfriet, and Gregory Blue, 155-69. Leiden and Boston: Brill.

Chinese Sources

- Editorial Board for Memorial Volume 紀念集編輯委員會. *Xingyuan Fashi Nianpu jin Jinianji* 性願法師年譜暨紀念集 [Memorial Biography of Venerable Xingyuan]. Manila: Hwa Chong Temple 菲律賓華藏寺, 1977.
- Shi, C.M. 釋傳妙. *Feilubin Fojiao zhi Chuanru yu Fazhan* 菲律賓佛教之傳入與發展 (1937-2008) [The Introduction and Growth of Buddhism in the Philippines (1937-2008)]. MA thesis, Taichung: Hsuan Chuang University, 2008.
- Shi, C.Y. 釋傳印. *Da Cheng Xinyuan Si Jianjie—fu Feilubin Fojiao Kaikuang* 大乘信願寺簡介—附菲律賓佛教概況 [Brief Introduction to Mahayana Seng Guan Temple and to Philippine Buddhism]. Manila: Philippines Seng Guan Temple 菲律賓大乘信願寺, 1989.
- Shi, C.Y. 釋傳印主編, ed. *Ruijin Zhanglao Jinianji* 瑞今長老紀念集 [Memorial Volume for Master Ruijin]. Manila: Philippines Seng Guan Temple 菲律賓大乘信願寺, 2005.
- Shi, M.Q. 釋妙欽. *Miaoqin Fashi Wenji* 妙欽法師文集 [Collected Works of Venerable Miaoqin]. Taipei: Zhengwen Publishing House 台北正聞出版社, 1998.
- Shi, X.Y. 釋星雲, ed. *Foguang Da Cidian* 佛光大辭典 [Foguang Dictionary]. Kaohsiung, Taiwan: Foguang Press, 1988.
- Wang, R.G. 王榮國. "Fujian Fojiao Xiang Xinmafe Chuanbo ji Qiyixiang" 福建佛教向新馬菲傳播及其影響 [The Transmission and Influence of Fujianese Buddhism to the Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines]. *Fujian Fojiao* 福建佛教 1 (1990): 14-16.
- Yu, L.P. 于凌波. *Zhongguo Fojiao Haiwai Hongfa Renwuzhi* 中國佛教海外弘法人物誌 [Biography of Chinese Buddhist Missionaries]. Taipei: Wisdom Torch Publications 台北慧炬出版社, 1997.

Christian and Buddhist Altruistic Love

Noel Sheth, S.J.

Nostra Aetate declares that the Catholic Church respects what is true and holy in other religions and has a high regard for their manner of life, conduct, and doctrines, even though they may differ from those of the Catholic Church. It urges Christians to enter into dialogue and collaboration with these religions, and to acknowledge, preserve, and encourage the spiritual and moral truths found in these religions. Buddhism is one of the religions explicitly mentioned in this document (*Nostra Aetate*, 2). Since altruistic love prompts and enables religions to respect, appreciate, and enter into interreligious dialogue, this article makes a comparative theological study of this key virtue in the Christian and Buddhist Scriptures.

We shall first present the Christian understanding of altruistic love, then deal with the Buddhist view, and finally compare these forms of love, bringing out the distinctive characteristics, which spring from the different worldviews of these religious traditions.

Altruistic Love in the New Testament

The word for altruistic love in the New Testament is *agapè*. It is one of the four nouns used in Greek for love: (1) *Storgè* (verb *stergo*) refers to the feeling of love between members of a family; (2) *Eros* (verb *erao*) is passionate, possessive love, often associated with erotic love, and is not attested to in the New Testament; (3) *Philia* (verb *phileo*) is generally friendly love in the New Testament. So it is not apt to express the love between God and human beings or to express love of enemies. Besides, the love of friendship is often reciprocal and so does not lend itself so easily to express altruistic love; (4) *Agapè* (verb *agapao*) is, in the New Testament, a selfless, altruistic, and bounteous love, including respect, admiration, welcome, acceptance, and gratitude. It is an explicit demonstration of love. It is universal, inclusive of superiors and inferiors.¹ Hence, since the focus of this article is on altruistic love, we shall concentrate, even if only briefly, on the New Testament usage of *agapè* and related words and leave out consideration of *philia* and cognate

¹ See Ceslas Spicq, *Theological Lexicon of the New Testament*, trans. and ed. James D. Ernest, vol. 1 (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1994), 9-14.

words, even though on rare occasions the distinction between these two word families is not so clear-cut. Compared to other words for love, *agapè* and related words (*agapao*, to love, *agapesis*, love, *agapetos*, beloved) are the most frequently used: they appear 341 times in the New Testament.² Such a frequent occurrence of these words indicates the tremendous importance of this kind of love³ in the NT.

Love is one of the essential characteristics of God: "God is love" (1 Jn 4:7, 16). Love is not just a quality of God; it is God's very essence. Human beings *have* love, while God *is* love.⁴ The Father loves his Son (cf. Jn 3:35; Jn 10:17, 15:9, 17:24, 26), even before the foundation of the world (see Jn 17:24). In loving his Son, the Father shows his respect and esteem for his Son; he sets his seal (of approval) on him (see Jn 6:27).⁵ Jesus too, on his part, loves the Father (see Jn 14:31). It is this mutual love that makes them one (see Jn 10:30) and indwell in each other (see Jn 17:23). Jesus is the beloved (*agapetos*; see Mt 3:17). It should be emphasized that the word "beloved" in all its eight occurrences in the Synoptics is always and exclusively an epithet of Jesus as Son of God, since he alone is perfectly lovable. He is unique in the order of love just as he is in the order of sonship.⁶

If love is the essential nature of God, it also constitutes the very being of a true Christian. As St. Paul exclaims, "If I ... do not have love, I am nothing" (1 Cor 13:2); without love, Christians are nothing, they just do not exist.⁷ Love originates from God (see 1 Jn 4:7). It is infused in us (cf. Rom 5:5; 1 Thess 3:12; 2 Thess 3:5). It comes to the Christian from the Holy Trinity. God the Father proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us (see Rom 8:32); Christ lives in our hearts (see Eph 3:17); and God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who is given to us (see Rom 5:5). While the love of God, the grace of Jesus Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit abide with Christians (cf. 2 Cor 13:13; Jn 14:15-17, 21, 23), it is the Holy Spirit in particular who is responsible for the infusion of love into our hearts.⁸

While Christ is uniquely beloved, the disciples of Jesus are also beloved by God (cf. 1 Thess 1:4; Col 3:12). In fact, it is God who loves us first, and it is because of this that we, in turn, can love God and also love one another (see 1 Jn 4:10-11). Although the word "first" does not occur in 1 John 4:10, the Vulgate brings out this sense in its translation: because he himself has first

² See William Klassen, "Love: NT and Early Jewish Literature," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 4, col. 2, 384.

³ In this article, when speaking of love in the NT, I refer to *agapè* and related words, unless I explicitly state otherwise.

⁴ See Ceslas Spicq, *Agapè dans le Nouveau Testament: Analyse des Textes, Etudes Bibliques*, vol. 3 (Paris: Librairie Lecoffre, 1958), 276-77, 322-23.

⁵ See *ibid.*, 313-14.

⁶ See *ibid.*, 73, n. 1.

⁷ See *ibid.*, vol. 2, 115-116.

⁸ See *ibid.*, 283-85.

(*prior*) loved us.⁹ However, 1 John 4:19 is very explicit: “we love because he first (*protos*) loved us.” Human beings are expected to love God with complete fidelity: one cannot serve two masters (see Lk 16:13). One must love God with all one’s heart, soul, and mind, with all one’s strength (cf. Mk 12:30; Mt 22:27; Lk 10:27).

Our love has both a vertical and a horizontal dimension. The command to love God totally is the greatest (lit. great, *megale*) and first commandment; but there is a second commandment, which is like the first, viz., to love one’s neighbor as oneself (see Mt 22:37-39).¹⁰ Although the command to love one’s neighbor is a second commandment, it is like the first. It is of the same kind and nature as the first. There is but one love, with two different objects: God and one’s fellow human being. God has to be loved without measure, while the neighbor is to be loved as oneself. “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets” (Mt 22:40), that is, these two commandments are the foundation of the entire Christian morality. “There is no other commandment greater than these” (Mk 12:31).¹¹

Our love for God and our love for fellow human beings are two sides of the same coin. We cannot love God whom we do not see if we do not love our brother or sister; God’s command is that those who love God must love their brothers and sisters, too (see 1 Jn 4:20-21). Whatever we do for the least of God’s brothers and sisters, we do for God (see Mt 25:40).

On the one hand, there is a special love that binds fellow Christians together as one brotherhood and sisterhood. Referring to fellow Christians as the brotherhood (see 1 Pt 5:9), Peter repeatedly exhorts his fellow Christians to love the brotherhood (cf. 1 Pt 2:17; 1 Pt 3:8). They celebrated their brotherhood and sisterhood in community meals that they called love-feasts (*agapè*; Jude 12), where they experienced both divine and human love through sharing and fellowship.¹²

On the other hand, Christian love is also universal. Luke mentions the double commandment of love (love of God and neighbor) as an introduction to the parable of the Good Samaritan (see Lk 10:25-37), thereby showing that “neighbor” is anyone in need. Unlike in the Old Testament, where love is largely, if not exclusively, confined to love of one’s own countrymen and women (see Lev 19:18), or also to the alien residing in one’s country (see

⁹ See *ibid.*, vol. 3, 279-280; vol. 2, 112-13.

¹⁰ Note that the command is to love one’s neighbor, not oneself. The text accepts the existence of self-love and at the most legitimizes it; see the discussion on self-love in Klassen, “Love: NT and Early Jewish Literature,” 389; see also R. O. Johann, “Love,” in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, 2nd ed., vol. 8, 828b-830a.

¹¹ See Spicq, *Agapè dans le Nouveau Testament: Analyse des Textes, Etudes Bibliques*, 38-46, 85-89. Scholars have debated whether Jesus was the first to bring together the two commands of Deuteronomy 6:5 and Leviticus 19:18; see Klassen, “Love: NT and Early Jewish Literature,” 385-86.

¹² These love-feasts were discontinued due to abuses.

Lev 19:34),¹³ in the NT love is more universal: the neighbor is anyone who needs our help.

In fact, there is no limit to love. We must love as Christ loves us: "love one another as I have loved you" (Jn 15:12); "be merciful just as your Father is merciful" (Lk 6:36). We must always strive to love others with the same universality, intensity, selflessness, and generosity as God's love. Love is patient, kind, not envious or boastful or arrogant or rude; it does not insist on its own way, it is not irritable or resentful; it is trustful, hopeful, and all enduring (see 1 Cor 13:4-7).¹⁴

Indeed, love is to be extended also to enemies: "But I say to you, love your enemies" (Mt 5:44; Lk 6:27). The verb used for "love" here is *agapao*, not *phileo* (which normally means "to love in friendship"). It does not mean, therefore, that one must necessarily have a warm, friendly feeling towards an enemy, but it does mean showing respect, kindness, and compassion: "pray for those who persecute you" (Mt 5:44); "do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt . . . and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again (see Lk 6:27-30, 35). Even sinners love those who love them, do good to those who do good to them, lend to those from whom they hope to receive (cf. Lk 6:32-34; Mt 5:46-47). The love of enemies goes beyond reciprocal love; it is manifestly and patently an altruistic love, without expecting anything in return: "love your enemies, do good and lend, expecting nothing in return" (Lk 6:35). Loving one's enemies makes us children of God, our Father (cf. Mt 5:45; Lk 6:35), who "is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked" (Lk 6:35). In the Old Testament one does find passages which propose love of enemies, for example, Proverbs 25:21 exhorts people to give food and drink to hungry and thirsty enemies. On the other hand, the Old Testament puts limits on the love of enemies. It seems to have operated on the principle of treating others in the same way as they behaved (see Ps 137:8; cf. Mt 5:38). It criticizes love of one's enemies (see 2 Chron 19:2) and prays for vengeance (see Ps 109).¹⁵ Christ, on the contrary, did not merely propose an innovation; he brought about a radical metamorphosis by commanding, on his own authority: "But I say to you, love your enemies."¹⁶

¹³ See Gottfried Quell, "Agapao: A. Love in the OT," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 1, ed. Gerhard Kittel, 31, 34-35.

¹⁴ There are a couple of passages when the verb *agapao* is used for the love of wrong things, e.g., Lk 11:43; Jn 12:43.

¹⁵ See Quell, "Agapao: A. Love in the OT," 26-27.

¹⁶ See Spicq, *Agapè dans le Nouveau Testament*, 17-24, 170-71; Stauffer, "Agapao: D. Jesus," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. 1, 46. While some scholars (e.g., G. Piper) assert that, by commanding love of enemies, Jesus was a radical innovator, others (e.g., W. Klassen) claim that he derived it from Judaism; see Klassen, "Love: NT and Early Jewish Literature," 387.

Christian love has an emotional coloring. When the rich young man approaches Jesus, he experiences an initial cold reception: "why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone" (Mk 10:18). But, when he informed Jesus that he had been faithful to all the commandments, "Jesus, looking at him, loved him" (Mk 10:20-21). This suggests that Jesus spontaneously gave some sign of cordial affection and delight.¹⁷ The Good Samaritan (see Lk 10:29-37) does not display only kindness and generosity, but also shows tenderness, sympathy, and compassion. When calling fellow Christians beloved (*agapetoi*), St. Paul sometimes conveys the idea of respect, while at other times he expresses his affectionate and tender love for them.¹⁸ Several times he refers to greetings with a holy kiss (cf. Rom 16:16; 1 Cor 16:20; 2 Cor 13:12; 1 Thess 5:26), while Peter writes, "Greet one another with a kiss of love" (1 Pt 5:4). Greeting with a kiss of love (*agapè*) expressed the communion among Christians in an affectionate and familial manner.¹⁹ In fact, Paul goes so far as to speak of Onesimus as a beloved brother, both in the flesh (*sarx*) and in the Lord (*Kyrios*) (see Phlm 16). In this context we may point out that in his first encyclical letter, *Deus Caritas Est*, Pope Benedict XVI even emphatically points out that Christian *agapè* and *eros* go hand in hand since we are a unity of body and soul. Christian love is ecstasy, but in its purified, selfless, and self-sacrificing form (4-8); even God's love for us is both *agapè* and *eros* (9-11).²⁰

Love is the supreme value and without it nothing else has any worth. The gift of tongues, prophesy, knowledge, faith, and even the sacrifice of one's life are all worthless if one does not have love (see 1 Cor 13:1-3). Love is the greatest; it is even greater than faith and hope (see 1 Cor 13:13). Love never comes to an end (see 1 Cor 13:8). God's love for us and our love for God and so also our love for others will endure even after death.²¹

Altruistic Love in Buddhism

There are two forms of Buddhism, Hinayana and Mahayana. In Hinayana only one school is living, namely, Theravada, whose original texts are mostly in the Pali language. In Mahayana there are many schools existing, and their original texts in India were in Sanskrit.²²

¹⁷ See Spicq, *Agapè dans le Nouveau Testament*, 81-84.

¹⁸ See *ibid.*, vol. 3, 72-74.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, 339-41.

²⁰ Compared to *agapao* and its cognates, *phileo* and related words at times display greater emotional overtones; see e.g., Jesus' love for Lazarus (Jn 11:3, 11, 36).

²¹ See Spicq, *Agapè dans le Nouveau Testament*, vol. 2, 66-76, 110-11.

²² Unless otherwise stated, all references to the Buddhist Pali texts are to the Nalanda edition, published by the government of Bihar, and all references to the Buddhist Sanskrit texts are to the Darbhanga edition, published by the Mithila Institute. References to the *Jataka-atthakatha* are to the edition published by the Vipassana Research Institute, Igatpuri, Maharashtra

Metta (Maitri) and Karuna

The two terms in Buddhism that particularly connote altruistic love are *metta* (Pali) or *maitri* (Sanskrit), and *karuna*. They are two of the four Buddhist virtues called Sublime States (*Brahma-viharas*), namely, *metta* (Sanskrit *maitri*, friendliness), *karuna* (compassion), *mudita* (joy) and *upekkha* (Pali; Sanskrit, *upeksha*, equanimity). While in Theravada the exclusive practice of these virtues resulted only in rebirth in the temporary heavenly world of the god Brahma, in later Mahayana it led to nirvana or salvation.²³ *Metta* or *Maitri* is practiced towards those who are happy; its opposite is malice. *Karuna*, on the other hand, is directed to those who suffer and are unhappy; its contrary is cruelty. While Theravada gives more importance to *metta*, Mahayana emphasizes *karuna* more.²⁴

All these four Sublime States are to be cultivated or developed through meditation. Before embarking on the development of *metta*, one must engage in preliminary reflections on the dangers of hate and the advantages of forbearance (Pali *khanti*; Sanskrit *ksanti*). Then one proceeds through meditation to cultivate *metta* in order to protect the mind from the dangers of anger and lead it into the advantages of forbearance. One begins by practicing *metta* towards oneself, wishing welfare and happiness to oneself. After this, one concentrates on engendering *metta* towards one's teacher, then towards a dear friend, next towards a neutral person, and finally towards a hostile person. It will be noticed that one proceeds in a psychologically realistic way: from oneself to friends and finally to enemies. If one starts with enemies one is not likely to straightaway send vibrations of love towards them. Several reflections are suggested to enable one to overcome resentment towards one's enemy. This *metta* is to be perfected in such a way that eventually one makes no distinction between oneself, the dear person, the neutral person, and the enemy. *Metta* reaches its climax when more and more beings are included in the range of one's friendliness, until it extends to all beings, human, animal or plant, and is radiated in all the directions of the universe. A similar meditational order, but with some variation, is followed for the cultivation of *karuna* (compassion), *mudita* (joy), and *upekkha* (equanimity).²⁵

In the development of these qualities, just as in the case of friendliness (*metta*), perfection is obtained by making no distinction between the hostile person, a neutral person, a dear one, or oneself.²⁶

²³ See *Mahavastu*, ed. E. Senart, vol. 3 (Paris: Imprimerie Nationale, 1882-1897), 421-22.

²⁴ See Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, and Co., 1932), 227-28.

²⁵ See *Visuddhimagga*, 9. 1-76; see Nyanamoli, trans. *The Path of Purification* (Colombo: A. Semage, 1964), 321-40.

²⁶ See *Visuddhimagga*, 9. 77-89; see Nyanamoli, 340-43.

Metta (Maitri)

In Theravada, *metta* (Pali, friendliness) essentially consists in the wish that all beings may be happy. Just as a mother would protect her only child at the risk of her own life, even so one should cultivate unlimited love towards all beings.²⁷ In Mahayana, *maitri* (Sanskrit, friendliness) is a love that consists in the hope, prayer, keen desire for, and joy at, the happiness of others, without passion and the seeking of reward. It is of three kinds depending on whether it is directed towards living beings, phenomena (*dharma*) or no particular object.²⁸ There is a well-known Buddhist saying: "Never does hatred cease by hatred, but hatred ceases by love. This is the eternal law (*dhamma*)."²⁹

All the means employed to produce merit are worth only a sixteenth part of the value of *metta*.³⁰ The mind of one who has acquired perfection in *metta* cannot be affected even by the most hostile person, just as the earth cannot be destroyed, space cannot be painted on, and the river Ganga cannot be burned.³¹ The practice of *metta* brings eleven advantages, including being dear to all, quick concentration of the mind, and rebirth in the world of the god Brahma.³² The monk who abides in *metta* attains the happiness that results from the cessation of one's habitual tendencies (*sankhara*).³³

The starting point of *metta* in Theravada is love of oneself, for there is nothing more dear than oneself.³⁴ Taking oneself as an example, one extends *metta* to others.³⁵ This does not mean that *metta* is self-seeking; putting away malice in thought, word and deed,³⁶ it is meant to always radiate or suffuse with limitless love all kinds of living beings everywhere.³⁷ This universality clearly indicates that *metta* is an altruistic love. Hence, although *metta* or *maitri* literally means "friendship," it is a universal, altruistic love.

The cultivation of *metta* is the best way to prevent anger from arising and to remove anger in case it has arisen.³⁸ A Theravada text declares that whoever bears enmity even to thieves who sever one's limbs, one by one, with a saw, does not carry out the teaching of the Buddha. Even in such a circumstance, one should not be harsh to the thieves or hate them, but rather

²⁷ See *Suttanipata*, 1. 8, v. 149, in *Khuddakanikaya*, Part I, 290-91. This simile occurs in Mahayana texts, too; e.g., the love (*prema*) of all beings as if they were one's only child (*Saddharmalankavartasutra*, 8, p. 100, line 6.)

²⁸ See *Siksasmuccaya*, 12.20, p. 117, lines 9-13.

²⁹ *Dhammapada*, v. 5, in *Khuddakanikaya*, Part I, p. 17.

³⁰ See *Itivuttaka*, 1.27.27, in *Khuddakanikaya*, Part I, 196-197.

³¹ See *Majjhimanikaya*, Part I, 21.4.16-18, pp. 170-171.

³² See *Anguttaranikaya*, 11.2.5, Part IV, pp. 383-384. In *Anguttaranikaya*, 8.12, part III, 270, eight similar advantages are mentioned.

³³ See *Dhammapada*, v. 368, in *Khuddakanikaya*, Part I, 52.

³⁴ See *Samyuttanikaya*, 3.8.22, Part I, 74.

³⁵ See *Dhammapada*, v. 130, in *Khuddakanikaya*, Part I, 29.

³⁶ See *Anguttaranikaya*, 5.17.1-5.17.2, Part II, 434-38.

³⁷ See *Suttanipata*, 1.8, vv. 146-47, 150-51, in *Khuddakanikaya*, Part I, 290-91.

³⁸ See *Anguttaranikaya*, 1.2.7, Part I, 5.

one should be kind and compassionate and cultivate *metta* towards them as well as towards the whole world.³⁹ Mahayana texts exhort Buddhists to forgive⁴⁰ all types of offenses (injury, insult, abuse, criticism), everywhere (in private and in public), at all times (past, present, and future), in all circumstances (in sickness or health), in thought (not entertaining angry thoughts), word (not speaking harshly) and deed (not harming physically), without any exception (whether friend, enemy, or indifferent person), and however wicked the offending person or however terrible the injury may be.⁴¹

Buddhist texts abound in several stories of people who did not bear malice towards their oppressors even in the most trying circumstances. Of these the most famous is that of Khantivadi. In one of his previous lives as a Bodhisattva, Gautama Buddha was born as Kundalakumara, who was later known as Khantivadi [Sanskrit Ksantivadin], that is, "One who preached the doctrine of forbearance." Angry with Khantivadi, King Kalabu tested his forbearance by inflicting one agonizing torture after another: he first had him scourged all over his body, then had his hands and feet chopped off, and then his nose and ears cut off. Even though he was taunted by the king after every torment, Khantivadi never got angry, declaring himself to be a preacher and practitioner of forbearance and he even uttered a blessing, "Long live the king!"⁴²

To achieve this high ideal is no easy task, but the Bodhisattvas⁴³ in particular strive to reach this cherished goal, trying all the time not to bear malice or ill will towards anyone even when their life is in grave danger. If, on the other hand, they fail to reach this lofty goal, the Bodhisattvas can repent and confess their fault and reflect how they fall short of the ideal and resolve not to engage in acrimonious disputes, not to reply harshly, not to harbor malice or bear ill will, and so on and so forth.⁴⁴

Buddhism emphatically points out that wrath and animosity affect the unforgiving enraged or hostile persons more than the ones on whom they vent their spleen. The one who is full of rancor experiences mental agony and anguish, while the one who bears no resentment does not feel such pain and grief.⁴⁵ Anger may or may not make the other person suffer, but

³⁹ See *Majjhimanikaya*, Part I, 21.5 .20, pp. 172-73.

⁴⁰ For a detailed study of Buddhist forgiveness, see Noel Sheth, "The Buddhist Understanding of Forgiveness and Reconciliation," *Jñānadeepa: Pune Journal of Religious Studies* 6, no. 2 (July 2003): 78-102.

⁴¹ See the texts cited in Dayal, 209-210.

⁴² See *Jataka-atthakatha*, 4.2.3, no. 313, vol., 3, 34-37. A Sanskrit version is found in the *Jatakamala*, 28, 189-99.

⁴³ In Theravada the term Bodhisattva (Bodhisatta in Pali) generally refers to Gotama Buddha in a previous life before he became enlightened. In Mahayana, Bodhisattvas are special beings who delay their salvation for the sake of helping others, take on the sufferings of others, transfer their merits to them, and give them grace.

⁴⁴ See *Astahasrika Prajnaparamita*, 24, 208-209.

⁴⁵ See *Anguttaranikaya*, 5.18.4, Part 2, 451.

it definitely makes oneself suffer. Moreover, in accordance with the law of *karman* [Pali, *kamma*] it will not lead to liberation but to damnation in purgatories. An infuriated person is like one who wants to hit another with a burning ember or feces in one's hand, but actually ends up being the one to suffer burns or to stink.⁴⁶ It is noteworthy that, in a program entitled "Eye for an Eye" and telecast on May 16 and 17, 1999, CNN showed that rage and revenge not only rob one of peace of soul but also tear apart the body. Laboratory experiments demonstrated that in unforgiving conditions, one's blood pressure, heart rate, and sweat rate shot up. Indeed, revenge is not sweet, but bitter, while forgiveness and reconciliation take the hurt away.⁴⁷

Karuna

Karuna literally means compassion, mercy, pity, but it also includes all altruistic aspects of love. Bodhisattvas do not need to learn very many things; it is enough to concentrate only on *karuna*, and in its wake it will bring them all the qualities that lead to enlightenment or Buddhahood.⁴⁸ The earth with its forests, mountains, and oceans underwent dissolution hundreds of times but the great compassion of a Bodhisattva is never destroyed.⁴⁹ Mercy (*daya*) gives birth to virtues just as rain produces crops.⁵⁰

Bodhisattvas feel *karuna* for living beings like a father for his dear and only son.⁵¹ The wise love all beings more than themselves, or their spouses, children, friends, and relatives.⁵² Tormented by the sufferings of others, the compassionate ones do not look for their own happiness.⁵³ Bodhisattvas desire enlightenment first for all beings and not for themselves.⁵⁴ In some passages we notice that the Bodhisattvas act for the benefit of others (*para*) as well as themselves (*atman*).⁵⁵ But in some other passages, we find that the texts speak only of the good of others, and not love for oneself,⁵⁶ thus emphasizing altruism much more.

Prompted by *karuna*, the Bodhisattvas give generously not only to relatives, friends, and dependents, but also to all those who ask for help, to the poor, the pitiable, the beggars.⁵⁷ They give away not only external

⁴⁶ See *Visuddhimagga*, 9.22-23; cf. *Nyanamoli*, 326-27.

⁴⁷ See Noel Sheth, "The Non-Violence of Mahatma Gandhi," *Jñānadeepa: Pune Journal of Religious Studies* 4, no. 1 (January 2001): 76.

⁴⁸ See *Sikṣasamuccaya*, 16.24, p. 151, lines 14-25.

⁴⁹ See *Jatakamala*, 24, v. 1, p. 162.

⁵⁰ See *Jatakamala*, 26, v. 41, p. 180.

⁵¹ See *Saddharmapundarikasūtra*, 5.44, p. 92, line 24.

⁵² See *Mahāyānasūtralankāra*, 19, v. 5, p. 154.

⁵³ See *Jatakamala*, 8, p. 43, line 1.

⁵⁴ See *Sikṣasamuccaya*, 7.14, p. 81, lines 4-5.

⁵⁵ See *Mahāyānasūtralankāra*, 16, p. 103, line 8.

⁵⁶ See *Mahāyānasūtralankāra*, 3, v. 12; *Bodhicaryāvatāra*, with the *Pañjika* Commentary of Prajñākaramati, 8, v. 173, p. 165.

⁵⁷ See *Jatakamala*, 31, vv. 63 and 65, pp. 227-228; 3, p. 16, lines 16-17.

things like their house, spouses, children, etc., but they also part with their hands, feet, head, limbs, etc.; indeed, they sacrifice everything.⁵⁸ They even transfer their own merit to others for their welfare and wellbeing, both physical and spiritual, and even take upon themselves the sufferings of others.⁵⁹ They do all this and more at the appropriate time, with respect and the intention of promoting the welfare of all,⁶⁰ besides they do not expect anything in return.⁶¹ In this context of *karuna* we must particularly mention the most popular Bodhisattva Avalokitesvara or Padmapani, who is the very embodiment of compassion and even goes to the worst purgatory and takes on the sufferings of the tormented beings there. Possibly because of his great compassion he became feminine in countries like China (Kuanyin) and Japan (Kannon).

Both Theravada and Mahayana texts narrate hundreds of stories depicting the selfless and absolutely generous gifts of property, limb, and life by men and women and even animals. Several texts, both in Theravada and in Mahayana, tell the story of the hare who, having no food, offers a guest his own flesh.⁶² Similarly, both traditions narrate the story of King Sivi (Sanskrit Sibi) who became blind by donating his eyes.⁶³ The most famous story, again in both traditions, in this context of selfless and generous giving, is that of Vessantara (Sanskrit Visvantara) who even after being banished by the king for his excessive generosity, gives away his horses and chariot, and even his children and wife.⁶⁴ A Sanskrit Hinayana text narrates the touching story of an extremely poor woman who gives away even the one piece of cloth that she was wearing.⁶⁵

While traditionally these four *Brahma-viharas* were generally applied only in the purely spiritual realm, nowadays Buddhists are gradually spelling out the wider social implications of these sublime states. In many countries there is an “engaged Buddhism” emerging, where even monks are becoming socially involved and work towards community development. For instance, Seri Phongphit describes the social contributions of eight monks and three laymen in Thailand, all of whom are motivated by these four virtues as well as by other Buddhist attitudes. In the context of compassion (*karuna*), for instance, he remarks, “A rich man who does not care for the miserable conditions of the poor lacks this quality.... Those who

⁵⁸ See *Siksamuccaya*, 1.4, p. 16, lines 2-5.

⁵⁹ See *Bodhicaryavatara*, with the *Panjika* Commentary, 10, pp. 283-87.

⁶⁰ See *Jatakamala*, 25, v. 29, p. 173.

⁶¹ See *Mahayanasutralankara*, 19, v. 28, p. 158; *Siksamuccaya*, 7.14, p. 81, lines 16-17. Note that, in addition to this high selfless ideal, some texts do mention other less lofty motives, such as fame, merit, re-birth in a better state, etc.

⁶² See *Jataka-atthakatha*, 4.2.6, no. 316, Vol. 72, pp. 44-47; *Jatakamala*, 6, pp. 30-35.

⁶³ See *Jataka-atthakatha*, 15.3, no. 499, vol. 73, 359-70; *Avadanasha-taka*, 34, pp. 83-85; *Jatakamala*, 2, 7-15.

⁶⁴ See *Jataka-atthakatha*, 22.10, no. 547, vol. 76, 227-381; *Jatakamala*, 9, 55-69; *Bodhisattvavadanakalpalata*, 23, 172-175.

⁶⁵ See *Avadanashataka*, 55, 140.

shut them-selves up in ivory towers, in the midst of an unjust world, cannot be called compassionate."⁶⁶

Comparison between Christian and Buddhist Altruistic Love

We shall now embark on a comparison between Buddhist and Christian altruistic love. This will serve to bring out their distinctive characteristics in the context of their different worldviews.

With regard to Theravada, I follow to a large extent the comparison made by Winston King,⁶⁷ differing from him in detail and emphasis. One major flaw of King, however, is that on the basis of his study of Theravada, he makes generalized statements about the whole of Buddhism. I shall therefore also briefly point out the specific characteristics of altruistic love in Mahayana, too, which differs from Theravada in some important respects.

Buddhist and Christian love do resemble each other; for example, both are opposed to malice and cruelty, are forgiving and move one to transfer one's merit, and both go to the extent of loving one's enemy and even sacrificing one's life for another. But there are many important differences, springing from their different worldviews. Unlike Christian love, Buddhist love is extended to all living beings, not just to human beings. Buddhist love is therefore more universal, as it encompasses the whole of nature too. In modern times Christianity is becoming more aware of ecology and the environment and so Christian love is now being broadened to include nature, as well. While both in Christianity and in Buddhism love is the highest virtue, in Theravada it leads at best to rebirth in the world of *Brahma*; only when it is linked with insight (*Vipassana*) can it lead to *nibbana* or liberation.⁶⁸ Moreover, as a means to spiritual growth, the exercise of love in Theravada is meant primarily for one's own spiritual advancement, and only secondarily for the benefit of others.

Christians love others because God has loved them, or they forgive others because otherwise God will not forgive them. But Theravada Buddhism does not admit any Supreme Being; hence the motivation is not the same. In Theravada, charity begins at home: one loves or practices love first towards oneself; only then can one extend love towards others.

In Christianity the person loved has intrinsic worth: the person is a child of God and has an immortal soul. In Theravada, on the other hand, the person loved is neither created by a God nor has a soul: each person is just a series of momentary aggregates, subject to the law of *karman*

⁶⁶ Seri Phongphit, *Religion in a Changing Society: Buddhism, Reform and the Role of Monks in Community Development in Thailand* (Hong Kong: Arena Press, 1988), 26.

⁶⁷ See Winston L. King, *Buddhism and Christianity: Some Bridges of Understanding* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1962), 64-97.

⁶⁸ See Harvey B. Aronson, *Love and Sympathy in Theravada Buddhism* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980), 74-77.

(Pali *kamma*), and therefore does not have intrinsic worth, but should be an object of compassion. Theravada love is more individualistic and not so interpersonal and community-oriented as Christian love. Traditionally, Christianity has shown greater social concern than Buddhism but, on the other hand, it has been more violent and intolerant than Buddhism.⁶⁹

In Theravada, love is developed through personal effort, through meditation; while in Christianity, love is a gift of God and cannot be cultivated merely by effort. Christianity believes that grace and effort must go hand in hand. In general, however, it should be remarked that, compared to Buddhism and other Eastern religions, Christianity has not sufficiently developed techniques and methods for the cultivation of specific qualities, as have the Eastern religions. Even the theistic Oriental religions have a whole plethora of concrete methods and techniques.

While the cultivation and expression of Christian love is spontaneous, personal, and generally emotional at least to a certain extent, Theravada love, even if it comes naturally in the case of those who have attained perfection in it, is developed through a systematic, calculated method and expressed in a more impersonal, detached, and emotionally more sedate manner. This impersonality and detachment is important not only in the fourth Sublime State of equanimity, but also in the three other Sublime States: in the practice of *metta*, one must guard against personal attachment; in the case of *karuna*, one must avoid aversion and sadness; and so, strictly speaking, *karuna* does not include sympathy or suffering with the other, but it does involve empathy for the other; and in *mudita* (joy) one must be careful not to give oneself to merriment. In fact, the exercise of these three Sublime States is governed by the highest state of *upekkha* (equanimity). This does not mean, however, that the ideal for the Theravada person is to have no concern for the welfare of others, even if equanimity requires one to be detached.⁷⁰ In Theravada the life of the Buddha and his teachings do manifest altruism and concern for the welfare of others.⁷¹

More specifically, in the context of forgiveness and reconciliation, Christian forgiveness and reconciliation is something active: it brings about a change, a healing, a restoration because it is based on the interpersonal, communitarian worldview. In Theravada, on the other hand, one can only do good or harm to oneself, for each one is reaping the fruits of one's own deeds (*kamma*). One can help another only indirectly by one's example, by trying not to provoke resentment and anger in others and by the tranquil,

⁶⁹ See Noel Sheth, "Hindu Parallels to the Eucharist - II," *Vidyajyoti: Journal of Theological Reflection* 62, no. 10 (October 1998): 766-67.

⁷⁰ King remarks that in equanimity, while one is not indifferent, one does not really care whether beings are happy (the concern of *metta*), or are freed from suffering (the concern of *karuna*), or rejoice in the success of their endeavors (the concern of *mudita*). See *Buddhism and Christianity*, 79; cf. *Visuddhimagga*, 9.93-95, 123; *Nyanamoli*, 344, 352.

⁷¹ See Aronson, 86-94.

detached vibrations of *metta* sent out in different directions. Disagreeing with an acrobat, an apprentice pointed out that they would perform their act successfully not by watching out for each other but by each one watching out for himself.⁷²

In the context of forgiveness and reconciliation, it should be pointed out that the emphasis in Buddhism is in the first place not even on feeling hurt, or on remaining unperturbed, by even the most cruel and vehement aggressor. In this sense, strictly speaking, there is no need of forgiveness for no offence has been taken! The ideal is to practice forbearance, to put up with the trials and sufferings inflicted by others, and not bear any grudge or malice toward the opponents. If one does not succeed in this stoic ideal, and experiences hurt and resentment, one must try and bring oneself to forgive the perpetrator. Although desired, reconciliation is not so actively sought for. If the aggressor is moved to repentance and becomes reconciled, it is well and good, but it is not the deliberate goal of every act of forbearance and forgiveness. Buddhists have always maintained that anger and hatred harm the perpetrator more than the victim. A deeper realization of this has dawned on the consciousness of the modern world only in recent years.

Coming now more specifically to Mahayana, we notice that there are closer affinities with Christianity. The exclusive practice of the four *Brahma-viharas* leads one to nirvana or salvation, unlike in Theravada. Mahayana is far more altruistic than Theravada. In fact, it is in a sense more altruistic than Christianity too, since the ideal for the Bodhisattvas is to delay their salvation until the smallest insect is saved.⁷³ So while we say in Christianity, "No greater love does a person have than to lay down one's life for one's friends," a Mahayana Buddhist could say, "No greater love does one have than to delay one's salvation for the sake of others." The compassion of the Bodhisattvas, too, is so great as to impel them to take on the sufferings of others, even in the worst purgatory. They also give others grace and transfer their merits to them. So in Mahayana the ideal is to think more of the other and less of oneself. Then again the Buddhas will not forgive people unless they forgive others. This, too, brings Mahayana closer to Christianity. However, it should be noted that even here there are differences. For example, it is not the Buddhas and Bodhisattvas who are the highest, but it is the Adi Buddha that is the Supreme Being. The dealings of the Mahayana Buddhists, however, are with the former. Of course the Adi Buddha is not like the Christian Trinity.

As in Theravada, and unlike in Christianity, the person has no intrinsic worth. In fact, compared to Theravada, the person in Mahayana has even less worth, for the person does not even exist; only the Adi Buddha exists.

⁷² See *Samyuttanikaya*, 47.19, Part 5, 144-45.

⁷³ See in this context Paul's yearning to die and be with Christ, and yet, on the other hand, his wanting to stay on to help the Philippians progress in the faith and increase their joy in it (see Phil 1:21-26).

Yet, paradoxically, the ideal is to even delay one's salvation for the sake of other persons who do not really exist even for a moment, except on the level of ignorance and from the practical point of view. In a sense, according to the doctrine of dependent co-production (Pali *paticcasamuppada*; Sanskrit *pratityasamutpada*), interdependence or a sort of inter-relatedness exists, but persons do not exist. Moreover, the inter-relatedness in the Mahayana worldview is on the ontological level; ultimately there is absolute identity. As a result, while in Christianity one concentrates on overcoming differences between alienated people, in Mahayana one transcends these differences. Hence, in Mahayana one can more easily identify oneself even with the oppressor. On the other hand, even though the Bodhisattvas take on the sufferings of others and thus lighten their burden, they must maintain detachment as in Theravada and, in both Theravada as well as Mahayana, aggressors as well as victims are exhorted to be detached from the causes of suffering.⁷⁴

Conclusion

In the context of *Nostra Aetate* and the general theme of this essay, we may recall the historian Toynbee's judgment: "The three Judaic religions have a record of intolerance, hatred, malice, uncharitableness and persecution that is black by comparison with Buddhism's record."⁷⁵ This does not mean that Buddhism has always been snow white: it presents a record that is grey, perhaps light grey.⁷⁶ This negativity is sometimes found even in the Scriptural texts themselves.⁷⁷

But, by and large, the texts are free from narrow sectarianism.⁷⁸ The Buddha mentions that, in wanting to teach the Buddhist religion (*dhamma*), he does not wish to get disciples for himself by alienating people of other sects from their teachers, rules, ways of life and right doctrines or by confirming them in their wrong views; all he intends is to help them get rid of things that cause corruption, suffering, and rebirth.⁷⁹ He declares that he did not preach the Buddhist religion (*dharma*) in separate portions: one pertaining to the Disciples' Vehicle, another to the Vehicle of the *Pratyekabuddhas* and a third for the *Mahayana*. Whoever makes such distinctions is confused and rejects the true *Dharma* by describing it as divided.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ See John D'Arcy May, "Reconciliation in Buddhism," in *Reconciliation in Religion and Society*, ed. Michael Hurley (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University of Belfast, 1994), 177, 180-181.

⁷⁵ Arnold Toynbee, *Change and Habit: The Challenge of Our Time* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 167.

⁷⁶ See Noel Sheth, "Buddhism and Communalism," *Religion and Society* 35, no. 4 (December 1988): 44-45, 53-54.

⁷⁷ See *ibid.*, 49, 54.

⁷⁸ See Noel Sheth, "Freedom from Fundamentalism in Buddhism," in *The Church in India in the Emerging Third Millennium*, ed. Thomas D'Sa (Bangalore: N.B.C.L.C., 2005), 210-19.

⁷⁹ See *Dighanikaya*, Part III, 2.8.27, p. 44.

⁸⁰ See *Sikhashamuccaya*, 4.7, p. 56.

Except in Mongolia, Buddhism did not spread through coercion or force of arms. Even in the realm of philosophy, the Buddhists have tended to present their own position rather than attack their adversaries. While Western philosophers have been inclined to be belligerent and argumentative, Buddhist thinkers have indulged in polemics very rarely.⁸¹ One reason for this difference is that in the Western tradition, unlike in the Eastern understanding, truth is one and does not admit any degrees. Eastern religions distinguish various grades of truth, for example, practical truth and absolute truth. For some schools of Mahayana, notably Zen, even "absolute" truth is relative, for the Sacred transcends all concepts.

In our treatment of altruistic love, we have seen that, while there are similarities in the understanding and practice of altruistic love between Christianity and Buddhism, there are many distinctions arising from the divergent worldviews not only of Christianity and Buddhism but also of Theravada and Mahayana among themselves. These differences are found not only with regard to the presuppositions, but also in reference to the motivation as well as the expression of altruistic love. Such comparison does not only facilitate better mutual understanding but also helps each tradition to understand itself better. The more a religion remains within its own ghetto, the poorer will be its self-understanding. The similarities with other traditions help us to appreciate the larger significance of our beliefs and practices, and the differences give us insights into the unique features of our own tradition. Furthermore, we can also benefit from a cross-cultural fertilization through an on-going interreligious dialogue.

It is through altruistic love that Christianity and Buddhism can reach out to each other, foster dialogue, collaborate in service, and work together to build bridges of peace and harmony to heal our broken world.

⁸¹ See Edward Conze, *Buddhist Thought in India: Three Phases of Buddhist Philosophy* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1962), 213-15.

The Jesuit Image of East Asian Buddhism in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries¹

Thierry Meynard, S.J.

Editor's Remark

[Readers will notice here terms such as *Atheism*, *Superstition*, *Idolatry* and so on used with reference to Buddhism. We would like to assure our Buddhist brothers and sisters that in doing so, no offense of any kind was intended on our part. As we know, 16th and 17th century Europeans had a very elementary grasp of Chinese and Japanese, but almost no knowledge of Sanskrit or Pali. Hence, in seeking to explain metaphysical Buddhist terms such as *Śūnyatā*, they had no choice but to rely on their own understanding of Christian theology and philosophy. Our reverence and love both for Buddhism and for the Lord Buddha will always remain untarnished].

Cultural and religious exchanges between Asia and the West have been generally studied along national boundaries, independent of other nations of Asia. In the case of China for instance, many scholars have analyzed the issue as to how missionaries perceived China, and how this knowledge was received in Europe. A standard reference work is David Mungello's *Curious Land: Jesuit accommodation and the Origins of Sinology* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1985), in which China is understood in total isolation from the other mission fields.

During the last ten years there has been a growing awareness that studies circumscribed to one specific region or country of Asia, missed the greater picture. As we study the interactions between Buddhism and the West in the Ming and Qing dynasties, we need to embrace a pan-Asian view, taking into account the maritime and land roads linking the different regions. In many cases those roads pre-existed the arrival of Portuguese or Dutch merchants, and missionaries made use of those roads to carry out their mission of evangelization.

What I would like to show here is how the earliest Jesuit accounts of Buddhism, were created, circulated, and transformed across Asia. Jesuits

¹ Paper presented at the Third Conference "Research in Texts and Research on Modern Asian Buddhism," at Fo Guang University, Taiwan, May 18-19, 2019. Published in Chinese in the *Journal of Fo Guang* 6, no. 2 (2020): 91-123.

working in Japan, China, and Vietnam, spent time in the Jesuit hub of Macao, exchanging information and views. Ideas circulated through reports and letters, and sometimes obtained a public status through publications in Europe. By retracing those influences of the Jesuit missions in East Asia, we shall be able to reconstruct the Jesuit image of Buddhism.²

This paper will focus on the Jesuit theory of the double-teaching of Buddhism, a conceptual framework first established in Japan, and later adopted and transformed in the context of the Jesuit missions in China and Vietnam. Through this theory of the double-teaching, we shall examine important issues in the field of Buddhist studies, such as the relationship between religious faith and human rationality, and the relationship between religion and politics.

The Japanese Mission: Buddhism as an Atheistic threat

With the arrival of Francis Xavier (1506-1552) in Japan in 1549 Jesuits were mostly engaged in dialogue with Buddhist monks, who were held in high esteem and who seemed to be the best interlocutors. However for the first ten years their communication was flawed by gross misunderstandings. On the one hand the Japanese monks considered the Jesuits as being certain fellow believers from India, the land of Buddha, while on the other the Jesuits had begun to proclaim the Christian God as *Dainichi*, a term that referred to the Buddha *Vairocana*.

The Double-teaching of Buddhism: Idolatry and Atheism

Aside from certain early reports in 1551 by two Spanish Jesuits, Cosme de Torres (1510-1570) and Juan Fernandez (?-1567), it is only in 1556 that those two Jesuits got a better understanding of Buddhism, thanks to Paulo Chozen [Kyozen], a Japanese Buddhist who converted to Christianity in 1554. With the collaboration of a Portuguese Jesuit, Baltasar Gago (1515-1583), they composed the *Summary of Errors* (*Sumario de los errores*).³ The Swiss scholar Urs App has underlined the importance of this text from a historical point of view, which for the first time presented the central Mahayana teaching on emptiness. The Jesuits understood the teaching on emptiness as nihilistic, meaning that nothing exists except the prime matter of the universe and the cycle of death and birth.⁴

² I have consulted with great profit: Henri de Lubac, *La rencontre du Bouddhisme et de l'Occident* (Paris: Cerf, 2000). I am borrowing much information and also method from this work.

³ *Sumario de los errores*, in *Documentos de Japón*, Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, ed. Juan G. Ruiz-de-Medina, vol. 137 (Rome: IHSI, 1990); Portuguese version: *Sumario dos erros em que os gentios de Japão vivem*.

⁴ See Urs App, *The Cult of Emptiness* (Tokyo: University Media), 43-45.

In 1579, Alessandro Valignano 范禮安 (1539-1606), the Jesuit Visitor for East Asia, arrived in Japan to reorganize the mission. In 1583 he wrote the *Sumario de las Cosas de Japón*, a report addressed to the Jesuit Superior General Claudio Acquaviva (1543-1615; r. 1581-1615), and in the third chapter he described the various sects of Japan, those worshipping the gods (Kami of Shintoism) and those worshipping the Hotoke (especially Sakyamuni Buddha and Amida Buddha).⁵ Valignano follows the key point of the first generation of Jesuits mentioned above by warning against the duplicity of the language of Sakyamuni Buddha, who apparently said that there was an after-life, but who in fact believed that everything ended with life. According to the Jesuits, the Buddhist monks did not dare to openly proclaim nihilism, and hence they used words with a double meaning, that is, an exoteric and religious meaning for the common people, and an esoteric and nihilistic meaning for the initiates.

The views of these first generation Jesuits in Japan were transmitted to Valignano by Luís Froís (1532-1597), who had arrived to Japan in 1563. He wrote in 1585 his *Tratado*, where he criticized the Buddhist monks and yet admired their ascetic and contemplative life.⁶ Froís read Buddhist scriptures like the *Lotus sutra*. Interestingly, Froís somewhat distanced himself from the nihilistic reading of Buddhism that had been promoted by Torres, Fernandez and Gago as stated above, and instead expressed the idea that Zen Buddhism worships in fact an eternal principle, without beginning or end. This would mean Buddhism was not atheistic, but closer to theism. However, Froís points out the defect of the first principle of Buddhism, as lacking intelligence and will.⁷ This would mean Buddhism was a defective theism, perhaps something similar to pantheism according to the Western classification.

Froís was the main informant to Valignano, helping him to compose in 1581 some lectures of catechism, which were published in 1586 in Lisbon, and commonly called the *Japanese Catechism*.⁸ This catechism became the most important Jesuit writing for over a hundred years, not only for the missions in Japan but also in China and Vietnam. In this book, Valignano distinguishes between Buddhists following a provisional teaching and those following a real teaching.

⁵ French version : Alexandre Valignano, *Les Jésuites au Japon, Relation missionnaire, traduction, présentation et notes de Jacques Bésineau* (Paris : DDB, 1990), 83-88.

⁶ Original version : *Tratado em que se contém muito sucinta e abreviadamente algumas contradições e diferenças de costumes entre a gente de Europa e esta província de Japão*, 1585. French version: *Traité de Luís Froís, S.J. (1585) sur les contradictions de mœurs entre Européens et Japonais, traduit du portugais* (Paris, Chandeigne, 1993); English version: *The First European Description of Japan* (London and NY: Routledge, 2014).

⁷ App, *The Cult of Emptiness*, 48-49.

⁸ Alessandro Valignano, *Catechismus christianae dei, in quo veritas nostrae religionis ostenditur, et sectae japonenses confutantur* [*Catechismus japonensis*] (Olyssiponae [Lisbon]: Antonius Riberius, 1586).

The Buddhist Roots of the Theory

From the *Summary of errors* of 1556 to the *Japanese Catechism* of 1586, the central scheme of the Jesuits in interpreting Buddhism was the double-teaching, namely the inner teaching for the initiates (Zen Buddhism) and external teaching (Pure Land Buddhism) for the common people. This scheme was not purely a Jesuit invention, but found some support in the Buddhist teaching itself. Urs App has shown that Valignano's catechism had borrowed from the Tang dynasty Buddhist master Guifeng Zongmi 圭峰宗密 (780-841), the fifth patriarch of the Huayan 華嚴 school, the distinction between the provisional teachings (*gonkyo*, *quanjiao* 權教) of Confucius and Laozi, and the real teaching (*jikkyo*, *shijiao* 實教) of Buddhism. In fact, the ideas of Guifeng Zongmi can be traced back to the traditional Buddhist teaching of the two truths *erdi* 二諦 (*satyadvayavibhāga*), as developed especially by Nāgārjuna.

Valignano also paid attention to Zongmi's notion of the Buddha-nature or One Mind. Indeed, for Zen Buddhism, when one has realized his Buddha nature, there is no distinction between I and the world, between past, present and future, and notions of paradise and hell can even be discarded. Jesuits in Japan most probably knew also the systematic classification of the different Buddhist teachings by Zhiyi 智顓 (538-597), the founder of Tiantai 天台 Buddhism.

Atheism as a Threat

Thus, the Jesuits in Japan borrowed from the Buddhist teaching of the two truths and developed their own theory of a double-teaching in Buddhism, at one level, the theistic teaching of popular Buddhism (Pure Land), and at another level the atheistic and nihilistic teaching of elite Buddhism (Zen). This Jesuit theory of the Buddhist double-teaching had the advantage of reconciling into a common frame two aspects of Buddhism, which appeared contradictory. Through this theory, the Jesuit missionaries could establish a unity between practices so different as worshipping Buddhist statues, and seated meditation. However, the Jesuit theory of the Buddhist double-teaching was misleading, and finally became an obstacle towards understanding Buddhism in depth.

First, radical thinking in Zen Buddhism rejects any definition of Buddhahood, but this does not mean that Zen Buddhism is nihilistic as the Jesuits construed.

Second, the Jesuits distorted the moral and religious consequences of Zen Buddhism, by implying that Buddhists following the real teaching could concretely discard all moral, social, and religious rules attached to the provisional teaching, so that they could once and for all go beyond all standards of good and evil. Hence they rejected all gods and supernatural

beings like ghosts, and believed in nothing other than their own mind, rejecting all devotional and moral practices as meaningless. However, authentic Zen masters have taught that even people who have reached illumination are still bound by the moral conventions of the world. The Jesuits in Japan could witness the fact that Zen monks were still making offerings to the Buddhas and to hungry ghosts, and while they practiced seated meditation for long hours every day, they still obeyed the rules of their community or *sangha*.

Third, the Jesuit opposition between Pure Land and Zen hides the fact that most of the Buddhists would recognize a fundamental unity between the two, and this unity was certainly not founded on an incoherence or a deceit, as the Jesuits construed.

Chinese Mission: Buddhism as Political Deceit and Antireligion

Since 1556, the Jesuits in Japan had used the theory of double-teaching to understand the religious sects of Japan. The theory was incorporated into Valignano's catechism of 1586, becoming the official standard for all Jesuit missions in East Asia. In China, when Michele Ruggieri 羅明堅 (1543-1607) and Matteo Ricci 利瑪竇 (1552-1610) stayed in the Guangdong province, they continued the critical engagement with Buddhism which had started in Japan. There was still some kind of ambiguity, because the Jesuits were living close to Buddhist monasteries and called their churches *si* 寺 (temple), and they were dressed as Buddhist monks and called themselves *seng* 僧 (monk). Also, the *True Record of the Lord of Heaven* (*Tianzhu shilu* 天主實錄), published in 1584 by Ruggieri, uses Buddhist terms like paradise (*tiantang* 天堂) or hell (*diyu* 地獄). However, in this same book, Ruggieri clearly rejected transmigration and asserted: "The words of the Buddhist sūtras are absurd, completely irrational, and therefore should not be recited" (釋迦經文虛謬, 皆非正理, 故不可誦).⁹

Ricci's Exclusion of Ancient Confucianism from the Double-teaching

Ricci adopted the Jesuit theory of the double-teaching of Buddhism, though he never explicitly mentioned it by name. He analyzed Chinese Buddhism in terms of popular superstition and elite atheism, but he changed a little the theory, as we shall see. In Chapter 7 of Book 1 of *Della entrata della Compagnia di Giesù e Christianità nella Cina*, Ricci describes in great detail the popular form of Buddhism, with its rituals and temples, which he rejects as completely idolatrous. Yet Ricci is also very much concerned with the Buddhist theoretical doctrine and its influence in China. In his *True Meaning*

⁹ Michele Ruggieri, *Tianzhu shilu* 天主實錄, in *Chinese Christian Texts from the Roman Archives of the Society of Jesus*, vol. 1, ed. Nicolas Standaert and Adrian Dudink (Taipei: Ricci Institute, 2002), 22.

of the *Lord of Heaven* (*Tianzhu shiyi* 天主實義, 1603), he criticizes Buddhism very harshly, and in the second chapter, he draws from Valignano's *Japanese Catechism* many argumentations, applying them to refute the three teachings of China and their core concept, namely the *wu* 無 of Daoism, the *kong* 空 of Buddhism and the *taiji* 太極 of Neo-Confucianism.¹⁰ Ricci considered those concepts as being flawed, and unfit to represent the ultimate origin of all reality.

As just stated, Ricci brings an important modification to the theory of the double-teaching in Buddhism, since he holds a historical fall from truth to superstition, and then from superstition to atheism, as he mentions in the same chapter of *Della Entrata*. Accordingly, Buddhism degenerated first into a superstition and spread into China, and then it came to corrupt the pure monotheism of ancient Confucianism, which plunged further down into atheism. For Ricci, the literati, oblivious of ancient Confucianism have embraced Neo-Confucianism, which for him is nothing other than the atheistic teaching of Buddhism.

In Japan, the double-teaching distinguished essentially Zen (atheism) from Pure Land (superstition or idolatry), but for Ricci, the double-teaching distinguished the Song-Ming philosophy, which we could call Buddhist Confucianism (atheism), from Pure Land (superstition). Though Ricci applied the theory of double-teaching to China, he still maintained that the double-teaching did not embrace the whole of Chinese thought. His historicized version of the double-teaching allowed him to envision a historical stage, even before superstition and atheism. Unlike Japan which lacked authoritative scriptures recognized by all schools, China had a corpus of ancient classics acknowledged by all. Michele Ruggieri was the first to translate the *Four Books* into a Western language, and his translations already suggested ancient Confucianism to be compatible with Christianity.¹¹ Hence, the teaching of Confucius could not be classified either as superstition or atheism, but rather, another category was needed. In his *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, Ricci describes ancient Confucianism in terms of an authentic monotheism. By securing a positive meaning for the Confucian Classics that was compatible with Christianity, Ricci was able to use the Confucian classics in his own dialogue with the Chinese literati.

With the discovery of ancient Chinese monotheism, Ricci was downplaying the theory of the double-teaching, indicating that this theory could not be the exclusive model to understand the local traditions of Asia. The model which had been developed in Japan could effectively explain

¹⁰ See Thierry Meynard, "The overlooked connection between Ricci's *Tianzhu shiyi* and Valignano's *Catechismus Japonensis*," in *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 40, no. 2 (2013): 303-22.

¹¹ See Thierry Meynard & Roberto Villasante, *La filosofía moral de Confucio por Michele Ruggieri SJ: La primera traducción de las obras de Confucio al español en 1590* (Madrid: Mensajero - Sal Terrae, 2018).

the spread of Buddhist popular religion among the people of Asia and the spread of Buddhist concepts such as emptiness among the elites of Asia, but ancient Confucianism could not fit into this model. Instead, Ricci opted to work within the framework of the hermeneutical tradition of China, opposing Confucian classics *versus* Buddhist Confucianism. Ricci started this intellectual shift in Shaozhou 韶州 in 1593, but it took him a couple of years before he discarded the Buddhist garb he had worn for a decade and adopted the dress of a Chinese scholar, in his new residence in the Jiangxi province.

The Re-introduction of the Theory of Double-teaching from Japan

Ricci's breakthrough was to restrict the framework of the double-teaching to contemporary China, that is, Buddhist popular religion and Buddhist Confucianism (Song-Ming Confucianism), allowing ancient Confucianism to exist as a pure monotheism. By doing so, Ricci presented a great challenge to the Jesuit theory of the double-teaching, which had been designed in Japan. Indeed, this theoretical discussion on the understanding of the cultures of Asia has much to do with a conflict among Jesuits themselves, because the Jesuits in China wanted to affirm the specificity of the China mission, and gain independence from the Japanese Jesuit province.

The reaction from the Jesuits in Japan was not long in coming. In the year Ricci died (1610), the Portuguese Jesuit João Rodrigues 陸若漢 (1561-1633) who was forced to leave Japan moved to Macao and brought back with him the Japanese version of the double-teaching.¹² In a letter written from Macao to Acquaviva on 22nd January 1616, he explained the theory of the double-teaching as: on the one side, a popular teaching adapted to common people and invented by scholars to maintain political stability, and on the other, an arcane teaching deeply locked "in various very obscure symbols, which a few understand and profess in the greatest secrecy." As his biographer Michael Cooper remarks, Rodrigues continued "with a sublime confidence," saying:

Until I came into China our Fathers here knew nothing about this and almost nothing about their speculative philosophy, but only about the civil, popular, and fabulous doctrine, for there was nobody to explain it to them in this matter. Father Matteo Ricci himself worked a great deal in this field and did what he could, but for reasons which only our Lord knows he was mistaken on this point.¹³

¹² Rodrigues went to Japan at the early age of 15 years, joined the Jesuits in Japan, and was trained in Japan. Michael Cooper, S.J., *Rodrigues The Interpreter: An Early Jesuit in Japan and China* (New York: Weatherhill, 1974), 20-36.

¹³ ARSI Jap.Sin. 16-II: 290; see Cooper, S.J., *Rodrigues The Interpreter: An Early Jesuit in Japan and China*, 281.

In fact, Ricci did not ignore the theory of the double-teaching but resisted applying it to China as a whole, as we have shown above. On the contrary, Rodrigues systematically applied the double-teaching to all the Chinese schools, including ancient Confucianism: "All three sects of China are totally atheistic because they deny divine providence and claim that matter is eternal."¹⁴ Rodrigues stressed the Machiavellian element in the theory of the double-teaching, that is, popular religion has no truth but it is useful to rulers to control uneducated and superstitious people. During the European Renaissance, modern states tended to view religion more and more as a tool for governance. For Rodrigues, just as the modern states in Europe were using Christianity as a political tool, the Japanese rulers in a similar way were using local religions. In both cases the elite apparently observed religious rules and conventional morality, but it was pure hypocrisy. They did not believe in any truth and used religion as a tool for governance and social stability, as Machiavelli had suggested. Such ideas were completely unacceptable to the Catholic Church which fought against them very severely in Europe. Rodrigues found those same ideas in Japan, precisely at the time Christianity in Japan experienced a harsh persecution. The question Rodrigues asked the missionaries is precisely the question of the relationship of Christianity to politics: should Christianity comply with politics and accept being an instrument of atheistic rulers, or should it stand on its own right and reject any compromise with atheistic rulers? For Rodrigues, it was clear that Buddhism in Japan had become completely subservient to political rulers, because Buddhism itself lacked a true attachment to an absolute truth.

Longobardo's inclusion of Ancient Confucianism in the Double-teaching

After Rodrigues had been expelled from Japan and was forced to move to China, he succeeded in convincing Niccolò Longobardo 龍華民 (1559-1654), and the latter wrote his famous treatise in the 1620s, as a general refutation of all the schools in China, including ancient Confucianism.¹⁵ While Ricci had stressed the genuine monotheism of ancient Chinese texts, Longobardo on the contrary held that all ancient texts apparently referred to God, but it was only a trick to deceive the people, and that their real and hidden meaning was atheistic. Similar to Rodrigues, Longobardo viewed the double-teaching as being both intellectually wrong and politically dangerous, and supported this interpretation of Confucianism and Neo-Confucianism by using excerpts from the *Sum on Nature and Principle* (*Xingli daquan* 性理大全), which he had translated into Portuguese. He concluded that Confucianism,

¹⁴ Cooper, S.J., *Rodrigues The Interpreter: An Early Jesuit in Japan and China*, 281-82.

¹⁵ Longobardo, *Resposta breve sobre as Controversias do Xámtý, Tien Xín, Lím hoên, e outros nomes e termos sinicos*, APF SC Indie Orientali Cina, vol. 1; *Traité sur quelques points de la religion des Chinois* (Paris, 1700).

either ancient or modern, was atheistic and materialistic. He presented his treatise at the Jiading conference of 1627 but it was rejected, and later the Jesuit Visitor gave instructions that it be destroyed.

Ricci had tried very hard to distinguish ancient Confucianism from Neo-Confucianism, looking at the latter as a corrupted form under the influence of Buddhism. Ricci did not invent this idea of a pure Confucianism existing before the entry of Buddhism in China, but it was for him a convenient historical device to retrieve an original Confucianism that was closer to the pristine revelation of God to mankind. On the contrary, Longobardo's analysis negates the historical theory of the corruption systematized by Ricci, because for Longobardo, the problem was not about the contamination of Buddhism over ancient Confucianism, because Confucianism since its inception was wrong. It is not my intention to show here the limitations of Longobardo's analysis, but it is enough to say that he strove to show that ancient Confucianism was atheistic and materialistic and that Neo-Confucianism followed exactly the same premises, without the need of hypothesizing a corrupting influence of Buddhism.¹⁶

Intorcetta and Navarrete's adoption of the Double-teaching in Canton

During their exile in Canton (1666-1671) the missionaries debated missionary practices, especially with regard to the rituals to ancestors and to Confucius. Buddhism was also a topic of discussion, and the Italian Jesuit Prospero Intorcetta 殷鐸澤 (1626-1696) and the Spanish Dominican Domingo Navarrete 閔明我 (1618-1686) wrote two detailed documents on Chinese Buddhism. As Urs App has suggested, both documents seem to have at least one common source, a text by João Rodrigues, which is now lost.¹⁷ Indeed, in those two accounts, Intorcetta and Navarrete explained the political theory of the double-teaching as developed by Rodrigues, especially the view that Buddha himself had intentionally hidden the truth. As Intorcetta stated in the chapter devoted to Buddhism in the Preface of the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*:

On the point of death, he spewed out the terrible poison of Atheism, saying that "in more than forty years, he had not declared the truth to the world" (四十餘年未顯真實) but, content with figures, comparisons and parables, he had hidden the naked truth with an abstruse and metaphorical teaching. Being close to death, he wanted to express the secret thinking of his heart: "Indeed,

¹⁶ Even Jesuits who followed the line of Ricci felt compelled to mention the theory of the double-teaching. For example, in the preface of his *Novus Atlas Sinensis* (1655), Martino Martini mentioned briefly the two teachings of metempsychosis, one exterior and one interior; Martino Martini, *Novus Atlas Sinensis* (Amsterdam: Johannes Blaeu, 1655), 115. Yet, Martini did not make mention of the deceit of the elite using religion to control people.

¹⁷ See App, 140-41.

besides this first origin of everything, 'empty' and 'void,' or *kongxu* (空虛) in Chinese, there is nothing else to be sought, nothing else in which our hopes can be placed." The last words of this ominous impostor are the prime root of Atheism. This root is hidden by the darkness of falsehoods and superstitions, as if buried underground, and escapes the notice of the ignorant masses. There is therefore this famous distinction between the "interior" and "exterior" teaching.¹⁸

Here the idea of Buddhism as a religion devoid of ultimate truth is clearly stated, and a little below Intorcetta explains further the inner teaching with "its most hidden tricks and traps," because the uneducated masses are kept away from it:

This indeed is a basic precaution taken by those malicious people: the plain and credulous crowd has to be kept in obedience through the fear of the Tartars and through the stories of hell. Only the nobility and the literati can understand the truth, as well as some monks and bonzes who have special abilities and excel over the others.¹⁹

The political version of the theory of the double teaching, which had been developed by Rodrigues during the harsh persecution against Christianity in Japan, could once more gain weight at the time of the Canton exile because all the missionaries felt a great disappointment with the political elites of the country, both Manchu and Han. The condemnation to death of Adam Schall 湯若望 (1591-1666) and the exile to Canton, indicated precisely that the people in power were not interested in the quest for truth, but that they manipulated everything, including religion, for their own political advantage. In this context, the theory of the double-teaching was a convenient way to explain the root-problem with Buddhism and Neo-Confucianism, as being a political deceit. In the second part of the preface to the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, the Flemish Jesuit Philippe Couplet (1623-1693) continued the political reading of Intorcetta, characterizing Zhu Xi and the other new interpreters as "atheo-political," meaning that they had allowed the use of religion for the masses as a political tool, but they themselves were atheists.²⁰

Intorcetta and Navarrete held similar views on Buddhism, as a deceit of the elite to control the people. Yet, Intorcetta remained faithful to Ricci by the fact that he rejected including ancient Confucianism into the framework of the double-teaching. Indeed, Intorcetta's theology is deeply influenced by natural theology, recognizing in any culture a grain of truth,

¹⁸ Intorcetta, "Proemialis declaratio," *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* (Paris, 1687), 29; Thierry Meynard, trans., *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* (Rome: IHSI, 2011), 120.

¹⁹ Intorcetta, "Proemialis declaratio," 31; Meynard, trans., *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, 123.

²⁰ See the preface to the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, written in 1667 but published only in 1687. Thierry Meynard, *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus (1687) The First Translation of the Confucian Classics, Monumenta Historica Societatis Iesu, Series Nova, vol. 6* (Rome: Institutum Historicum, 2011).

and therefore he points out some traces of the Trinity and of the Virgin Mary in Buddhism. On a more practical point of view, Intorcetta considers that Chinese vegetarians should be allowed, under certain conditions, to be baptized, without renouncing their fast, and further suggests that the Buddhist practice of vegetarianism can be Christianized.²¹

On the contrary, Navarrete's theology is imbued with a radical Augustinism, and he is quite pessimistic about the ability of human beings to know any truth through reason alone, for he considers human reason as having been irremediably corrupted with the Fall. Hence, unlike Intorcetta, he refutes any possible connection between Christianity and Buddhism.²² Also, he considers the Jesuits as being too lax towards Buddhism. For example regarding the question of Chinese vegetarians, he is categorically opposed to admitting them to baptism unless they first break their fast, by eating a piece of meat and abandoning their vegetarianism.²³

Vietnamese Mission: Engagement with Popular Buddhism

Let us now turn to Vietnam, the third Asian country deeply influenced by Buddhism and towards which Jesuit missionaries devoted considerable efforts after Japan and China. Jesuits sent to the Vietnam mission belonged to the Japanese province. After their linguistic and theological training in Macao and because of the persecution in Japan, many were sent to Vietnam instead of Japan. This explains the fact that Jesuits in Vietnam were mainly influenced by the ideas and methods of the Japanese mission, and only secondarily by the ideas developed by Ricci. However, while their main engagement in Japan was with Zen Buddhism and in China with Confucianism, in Vietnam it was with popular religion, especially popular Buddhism.

Similar to the case of Japan and China, the Jesuits did not open new communications between Vietnam and other parts of Asia, but mostly travelled through maritime roads which had existed for some time. Faifo (Hội An) since its foundation in 1595 by Nguyễn Hoàng (1525-1613) was an important port, trading with Japan, China, Macao, Java and Manila, and it became the port of entry of many Jesuits and Asian Christians.

²¹ Thierry Meynard, “佛教受齋能否融入天主教? ——以1668年“廣州會議”與聶仲遷的報告為例 Could Chinese vegetarians be baptized? The Canton Conference and Adrien Grelon's report of 1688,” 佛光学报》新四卷第二期 2018年, 第476-500页 *Archivum Historicum Societatis Iesu* (AHSI) 87, no. 173 (2018-I): 75-145.

²² Navarrete, *Tratados* (Madrid: 1676), 82.

²³ Navarrete, *Controversias* (Madrid: 1679), 344.

Cristoforo Borri: Territorializing the Theory of Double-teaching

Cristoforo Borri (1583-1632) was resident in Cochinchina for five years from 1616 to 1621, and after his return to Europe he published in 1631 his *Relatione della nuova missione* [...] Cocincina. During the same year appeared the French version, as *Relation de la nouvelle mission*.²⁴ The work follows a common pattern found in many Jesuit works about their missions: after a general presentation of the country (*état temporel*) follows the story of the Christian mission (*état spirituel*).

When compared to the Chinese who were too proud of their own culture, Borri notices the openness of the Vietnamese toward foreign cultures. In all his works, Borri attempts to impart a strong enthusiasm for this new mission field, especially under the background of the bloody persecutions in Japan (1597, 1617), and the much milder persecution in China (1616) (Chapter V, p. 50).

In Chapter VI of the First Part, a chapter entitled "Political and Civil Government of Cochinchina," Borri makes a very positive presentation of Confucius and his teaching, which I translated as follows from the French version:

Cochinchina has a good number of universities in which there are lecturers and degrees by which people are promoted through exams, as it is practiced in China. They teach the same disciplines, use the same books, and read the same authors, that is, Zinfu or Confus, as the Portuguese call him. He is the author of a sublime and profound teaching among them as Aristotle among us, and in fact he is more ancient. His books are full of erudition, valuable stories, profound sayings, and proverbs, all about morality, the same as Seneca, Cato and Cicero among us....They value the most moral philosophy which includes ethics, economics, and politics (*Relation de la nouvelle mission*, pp. 69-70).

Borri speaks here of Confucius in a way similar to Ricci-Trigault in *Expédition en Chine* (Lyon, 1616), with the mention of the moral philosophy of Confucius, which includes the conduct of oneself, family, and the country (*Expédition en Chine*, p. 49).

Borri appreciates the influence of Confucianism in Vietnamese culture. However, he devotes much more attention to Buddhism. He mentions their "treatises on sacred things as the creation and beginning of the world, rational souls, demons and idols," which are called Sayc Kim [Sách Kinh] (p. 73). As we see in the Second Part of the work, the relations with Buddhism are conflictual. For example, in Chapter V, Borri narrates the conversion to Christianity of the ambassador of Cochinchina to Cambodia,

²⁴ English version: Olga Dror and Keith Weller Taylor, eds., *Views of Seventeenth-century Vietnam: Cristoforo Borri on Cochinchina and Samuel Baron on Tonkin* (Ithaca: Cornell University, 2006).

and of his wife. After her baptism, the ambassador's wife returned to her house, removed from a domestic altar the statue of an idol, most probably a Buddha statue, destroyed it, and replaced it with an image of Christ (p. 159). In Chapter VIII, Borri narrates also the conversion of an Onfai [ông sãi], a married Buddhist cleric in charge of a small family temple. According to Borri, the term Onfai describes a great diversity of people: abbots of family temples or of a Buddhist community of monks or nuns, masters of public or private schools, medical doctors with magical powers, pilgrims, and beggars (pp. 195-196).

In a following chapter, entitled "Short presentation of the various sects," Borri borrows from the theory of the double-teaching, developed by his Jesuit confreres in Japan.²⁵ Accordingly, Xaca (Buddha) preached two teachings, one affirming the immortality of the soul, or transmigration; and the other affirming that everything ends with death, or nihilism (p. 197). Borri presents the life of Buddha in three stages. First, Buddha had the illumination that all reality was nothingness, and then he wrote many books on the subject, explaining the theory of dependent origination using the example of a rope: "Let us take as an example a rope; since the rope is not distinct from its constituting parts which makes it exist, thus the rope as rope is nothing..."²⁶ Borri describes Buddhist happiness as avoidance of pain, sadness or affliction; having reached such a control of human passions, people do not feel any liking or dislike for honor or dishonor, wealth or poverty, death or life; this is real happiness and true beatitude (p. 200). This description of Buddhist detachment is quite faithful, though it is expressed here in Stoic terms and even along the Ignatian theme of spiritual indifference.²⁷ Quite surprisingly, this first teaching of Buddha would have also included a cosmogenesis: the world was created from an egg, or a giant called Banco (in Vietnamese Ban Co; in Chinese Pan Gu; p. 200-201). As we see, drawing from his own experience in Cochinchina, Borri incorporates into Buddhism elements coming from the Chinese popular religion, with reference to the god of creation, Ban Co (Pan Gu 盘古).

The second stage of Buddha's teaching is the opposite. Realizing that the Chinese were rejecting nihilism as harmful to morality and to the state,

²⁵ Alain Forest, *Les missionnaires français au Tonkin et au Siam : XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles : Analyse comparée d'un relatif succès et d'un total échec*, vol. 3 (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998), 227: "S'il fallait chercher la source d'inspiration des relations jésuites sur le bouddhisme, c'est chez Valignano, le visiteur de la Compagnie au Japon puis le supérieur de Ricci, qu'on la trouverait dans sa plus complète élaboration. En particulier les éléments du chapitre III de son *Sumario* (écrit en 1583), relatifs aux sectes religieuses du Japon, seront ensuite continuellement repris, aux moins jusqu'à Marini au Tonkin."

²⁶ Borri, 199. Indian Buddhism expressed the idea of dependent origination taking as an example the rope. See Śāntideva (fl. 8th century), *The Training Anthology of Śāntideva: A Translation of the Śikṣā-samuccaya*, trans. Charles Goodman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), N. 238: "By the power of effort, Muñja grass and balbaja grass can be woven together into a rope." 寂天菩薩《菩薩學集》。

²⁷ Ignatius of Loyola, "Principle and Foundation," *Spiritual Exercises*, trans. and commentary by George E. Ganss (Saint Louis: Institute of Jesuit Sources, 1992), 32.

the Buddha shifted to a new teaching, affirming the immortality of the soul, rewards in hell and paradise, existence of a real principle of things and of a Lord of Heaven (pp. 201-202). The Chinese adopted this second teaching which was disseminated in twelve schools, but yet the nihilism of the first teaching did not completely disappear and was continued by a thirteenth sect called *Gensiu* [Jap. *Zenshū* 禅宗]. The people belonging to this sect used to gather on certain days in the countryside, to listen to a bonze and then to shout *Xin* (Japanese *shin*), or nothingness (pp. 203-204).

In the final stage of his own life, Buddha realized that the Japanese and some other peoples in the East were still holding to the first teaching of nothingness, and thus before dying, he told them that this teaching is the truest, though the second teaching (popular Buddhism) should not be considered entirely opposed to the first (nihilistic Buddhism), but as a proof of it.

Borri clearly inherits from the Jesuits in Japan the theory of the double-teaching, which is said to originate from Buddha himself. The influence of Japan is attested also by the fact that Borri uses Japanese words for the Zen school. Yet Borri reframes the theory of the double-teaching by juxtaposing, in an anachronistic fashion, the teaching of Buddha and its reception in Asia: Buddha had first developed his nihilistic teaching, and then, taking into account the poor reception of nihilism among the common people in China, he promoted popular Buddhism, but he still considered the Japanese nihilistic form of Buddhism to be superior.

According to Alain Forest, the first initial teaching of the Buddha refers to Theravada and the second to Mahayana.²⁸ It may be the case that Borri was exposed in Cochinchina to Theravada Buddhism, but as App notices, Borri's description is in fact an adaptation of the theory of double-teaching, as developed by the Jesuits in Japan.²⁹ Borri was in Macao for a year, between 1622 and 1623, while Rodrigues was also living in the College of Macao. It is very likely that Rodrigues taught Borri the theory of the double-teaching. Thus, the two teachings corresponding to the two stages of Buddha's life are in fact both Mahayana, the first being Zen, and the second, Pure Land.

But Borri precisely sees in popular Buddhism a cause for optimism with regard to the conversion of the Vietnamese, because what they received was not the nihilistic teaching of Buddha, but rather his teaching on the existence of gods, ghosts, transmigration of souls, paradise, and hell.³⁰ He could

²⁸ Alain Forest, *Les missionnaires français au Tonkin et au Siam*, 229. Borri follows Valignano in holding that Buddha lived in Siam.

²⁹ App, 132-33.

³⁰ This popular Buddhism includes also the rituals to the ancestors, though those rituals are not specifically Buddhist. In Vietnam, like in China, there was no clear delimitation between the three teachings, and people who worshiped Guanyin Bodhisattva could without any problem use Confucian rituals towards the ancestors. In a dialogue with a Vietnamese scholar, Borri tried to relativize the importance of the rituals to the ancestors, but this scholar replied that the ancestors are not gods but still need to be respected because of their holiness. Borri seems to agree and makes a parallel with the Saints, Apostles, and Martyrs in the Catholic Church. Finally, he sees no contradiction between Christianity and the rituals paid to the ancestors, since the Vietnamese acknowledge the fact that there is one God as efficient cause of the universe, though their notion of God is imperfect (p. 208).

arrive at this surprising conclusion because he had territorialized the theory of the double-teaching of Buddhism. For Rodrigues, the double-teaching constituted two dimensions of Buddhism, and the atheistic dimension was clearly the biggest threat, not only in Japan, but also in China and beyond. Borri somehow destroyed the intrinsic relationship between atheism and idolatry. What he saw in Vietnamese Buddhism was only the popular and familiar form of superstitions, disconnected from the inner and hidden threat of atheism which was felt so strongly by Rodrigues. Borri paid little attention to the atheistic threat in Vietnam, as it was non-existent. In drawing his map of Mahayana Buddhism in Asia, he concluded that it was mostly Zen in Japan and mostly Pure Land in China and Vietnam, or according to the Jesuit theory of the double-teaching, the Japanese were atheistic Buddhists, while the Chinese and Vietnamese were idolatrous Buddhists.

To conclude, Borri had a relatively positive evaluation of Vietnamese culture. Not only did he appreciate the moral teachings of Confucius and rituals to the ancestors, but he saw also a proximity between Christianity and the popular and syncretic form of Buddhism. While Zen Buddhists and Confucians were the main targets of the missionary efforts in Japan and China respectively, Borri suggests that the main target in Conchinchina should be the adepts of popular Buddhism, the closest to monotheism.

Alexandre de Rhodes: Focus on Popular Buddhism

Alexandre de Rhodes (1591-1660) and Ricci are often considered the founders of the modern Catholic church, in Vietnam and China respectively. Rhodes worked in Vietnam during two periods, from 1627 to 1630 and from 1640 to 1645. Similar to Borri who had published a work concerning his relations with Cochinchina, Rhodes published after his return to Europe, a work dealing with his relations with Tonkin. The original was written in Latin, but the French version appeared first with the title: *Histoire du Royaume de Tunquin et des grands progrès que la prédication de l'Évangile y a faits depuis l'année 1627 jusques à l'année 1646* (Lyon, 1651), and the Latin original was published in Rome a year later (*Tunchinensis historiae libri duo*).

When we consider the evaluation of Rhodes and Ricci on Confucianism, we cannot but be struck by their different stances. In fact, Rhodes does not mention Ricci in his works. In chapter XVIII, he discusses the "superstitions of the Tunkinese and their first sect," that is, Confucianism. Unlike Borri who praised Confucius's teaching, Rhodes holds that Confucius should not be called a saint, by arguing as follows:

Either this man you called a Saint had some knowledge of God, Creator of Heaven and Earth, or he did not have it. If he did not know, he cannot be called a Saint, because he ignored the one who is the source and principle of all sanctity... If he knew, being a Doctor and Master of others, he should have instructed them about this, because it is necessary for their salvation. It

appears from his books that he did not know it because he never mentioned God, sovereign principle of all, and so he cannot be called a Saint. (p. 62)

As a proof of the correctness of his argument, Rhodes stated how he succeeded one day in convincing a Confucian scholar who was baptized under the name John, but the other forty literati who listened to his speech left unconvinced. In the controversy on Confucius among Jesuits in China, Rhodes sided with Longobardo who had opposed Ricci's policy since 1623. When Rhodes stayed in Macao from 1630 to 1640, he would have most probably heard about the Jiading conference of 1627 where Longobardo had defended his thesis that Confucianism, both ancient and modern, was atheistic. Similarly, Rhodes holds that Confucius is not a saint; Confucianism is atheistic; and the rituals to the ancestors are wrong.³¹

As Alain Forest asserts, Rhodes joined the "strong minority" who opposed Ricci's policy and followed Longobardo.³² However, we should not neglect the influence of the Jesuits of the Japan mission about the perception of Confucius, since they were the first to openly voice their opposition to Ricci's policy, and only later Longobardo joined their ranks. During Rhodes's stay in the College Saint Paul of Macao, even before going to Tonkin for the first time in 1627, he might have known from João Rodrigues and other Jesuits of the Japanese mission concerning their criticism with regard to Confucius.

Concerning the second superstitious sect, Buddhism (chapter XIX), Rhodes describes quite in detail the family background of Thicca, or Buddha, something that was absent in Borri's description. For example, Rhodes mentions the name of his father Timphan (Śuddhodana, 淨飯王), his wife Adula (Yasôdharā, 耶輸陀羅) and his daughter (*sic*) Haula (Rahul 羅睺羅, p. 66; Latin text, p. 46).

As in the case of Borri, Rhodes distinguishes historical phases in Buddha's teaching: first, the teaching of atheism but without any success, then for the next forty years the teaching of idolatry, with immediate success. As in Borri's explanation, Rhodes mentions that Buddha would have taught his disciples atheism as the true teaching, and Rhodes adds another element, namely that Buddha learned atheism from two demons,

³¹ At some point Rhodes recognized that "Confucius does not say anything contrary to Christianity," but "when he discusses the first principle of all things, he falls into an unimaginable disorder and blindness in his reasoning and speech, because he holds the first principle to be corporeal, without sensation, knowledge, reason and soul, and thus unworthy of worship and adoration" (p. 63). Same as Longobardo, Rhodes admits that Confucius is not *stricto sensu* a nihilistic thinker because of his belief in an ultimate principle; however, this principle is flawed, and so Rhodes concludes that the teaching of Confucius tends towards atheism and opens the gate to all moral evils (p. 64). Logically, Rhodes condemns the rituals paid by the Tonkinese to Confucius as if he was a god, praying to him for good results in the exams. Rhodes sees this as "a crazy superstition" (p. 64).

³² Forest, 40.

Alalam (Maudgalyayana 目犍連) and Catalam (Sariputra 舍利弗). As Urs App noted when comparing with Borri's explanation, Rhodes adds also the fact that Buddha had designed the external teaching of idolatry as a lie to deceive the people, according to the story fashioned by João Rodrigues.

In the following chapter (XX), Rhodes describes Buddhism in Tonkin. Just as as Borri had described Buddhism in Cochinchina as mostly popular superstition, that is, Pure Land, Rhodes made a similar analysis. The difference with China is noted only in terms of degree: Tonkinese have brought the Buddhist idolatry to a new degree (p. 69). Big communities of monks as they exist in China are not present in Tonkin, and the *sai on*, or bonze, live with their families next to their temple.

In his Latin-Vietnamese catechism, Rhodes also expresses the theory of the double teaching: "From this happens the double teaching of the idols, one called external and consisting in the impious worship of the idols with countless fables and which attracts the people to the worship of idols and to countless sins; and another teaching, called internal and which is worst by far, as atheism, removing the brake to all sins."³³

As we can see, Rhodes knew the theory of the double-teaching as developed by the Jesuits in Japan, especially by João Rodrigues, but the emphasis in Tonkin is not anymore on Buddhist atheism but on Buddhist idolatry, which has reached a new peak according to Rhodes. The analysis of Buddhism in Tonkin by Rhodes is similar to the one by Borri in Cochinchina: the missionary policy is to engage with popular Buddhism, instead of refuting the Buddhist theories of emptiness.

It is worth noticing that Rhodes has no less than nine chapters on popular religion and customs (chapters XXI to XXIX). Rhodes mentions the Chinese classification of the three teachings, called the three sects, but his presentation of the third sect goes much beyond religious Daoism, and includes a great array of practices of popular religion in Vietnam, like magical healings, religious trances, new year, weddings, rituals for the birthday of the king, and more importantly the rituals for the dead and ancestors.³⁴

³³ De Rhodes, *Catechismus pro iis qui volunt suscipere baptismum in octo dies divisus* (Rome: Congregation of the Propagation of the Faith, 1651), 107-108: "Unde fit ut idolorum doctrina sit duplex, una quidem, quam exteriorem vocant, quae in impio idolorum cultu consistit, cum innumerabilibus fabulis ac nemiis, quibus plebs ad idolorum cultum trahitur & ad innumera peccata; alteram vero interiorem vocant, quae longe peior est ut pote atheismum, fraena scilicet laxans ad omnia peccata."

³⁴ Rhodes describes with many details the funerals, with the kowtow in front of the tablet of the deceased, the offerings of meat and their consumption by the family members, and also the belief that the dead can interfere with the living. During Chinese New Year, people erect a pole, or *nêu*, in front of their house and attach a basket full of paper money for the needs of the deceased (p. 105).

Giovanni Filippo de Marini: Describing Popular Buddhism

Giovanni Filippo de Marini (1608-1682) worked in Tonkin from 1646 to 1658, and was recalled to Rome in 1661 to report on the state of the missions. In 1663, he published in Rome the *Delle missioni dei padri della Compagnia di Giesu nella provincia del Giappone e particolarmente di quella di Tumkino*, and in 1665, the *Historia et relatione del Tunchino*, followed the next year by the French version, the *Histoire nouvelle de Tunquin* (published also in 1666 under the name *Relation nouvelle et curieuse*).

Concerning the life of Confucius, Marini presents a richer account compared to Borri and Rhodes, giving biographical information: his birth at Qufu in the Shandong province in 522 AD (p. 183),³⁵ and his death at the age of 63 (p. 188). Interestingly, Marini mentions that the parents of Confucius made a ritual sacrifice to the spirits of the mountain Kieu Ngi, in order to obtain a son. Evaluating Confucius, Marini takes a careful approach. He notes that people consider him a Saint, but others disagree, finding in him "all kinds of vices" (p. 188). Marini takes into account here the Jesuit discussion as to whether Confucius was a saint or not, but unlike Rhodes, he neither affirms nor denies it, as some Jesuits had done in China.

Like Rhodes, Marini mentions Buddha's father (Trinh Phan Vuong), but he adds also the name of his mother (Ma Da Phu Nhin), who conceived Buddha when a white elephant entered into her in a dream. Also, Marini's source is most probably the same source used by Intorcetta, who mentioned this mythical conception of Buddha in his preface to the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*.³⁶ Like Intorcetta, Marini sees in this magical conception the work of a demon. Other common features are: the death of his mother not long after the birth of Buddha, the seven steps, the marriage with three wives and the birth of a son, the retreat from the world at the age of nineteen, the four yogis who instructed him, his own 80,000 followers and ten close disciples. As in the accounts by Intorcetta and Rhodes, we find also the confession of Buddha at the end of his life, admitting that the external teaching was a lie. Also, Marini continues with the cremation of Buddha and his tooth which was later brought to Ceylon (p. 205). Marini's account of Buddha's life is also much richer than the accounts of Borri and Rhodes.

In chapter X, Marini analyzes transmigration, a central element of the external teaching of Buddha, as the transmigration of the soul into the six realms of existence, or as a spiritual and speculative law in the human mind. Marini provides more precise and accurate information than Borri and Rhodes, and concludes the same way: transmigration is an invention of the Buddhist monks to deceive people. Interestingly, Marini reports an

³⁵ In his *Sinicae historia decas prima* (1659), Martini states that Confucius was born in the year 551 before Christ. In the *Politico-moralis* (1669) and the *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* (1687), Intorcetta has also 551 before Christ.

³⁶ Thierry Meynard, *The Confucius Sinarum Philosophus*, 117.

argumentation drawn from a Jesuit in the Malabar region belonging to the Jesuit Madurai mission, against transmigration and its corollary, the caste system (pp. 218-219). Another story from India tells of the foolishness of the king of Travancore, who believed that he could be transformed into a Brahmin by entering into a golden cow. Those two references indicate that texts were also circulating from India to Vietnam.

Marini observes that the Tunkinese have little interest in speculation, and the Buddhist monks are satisfied with a popular teaching. He mentions also that the literati did not dare to oppose the introduction of Buddhism, and that they were contaminated little by little by the idolatry (pp. 225-226). Marini's analyses confirms what we have said about Borri and Rhodes. The three Jesuits inherited from the Jesuits in Japan the theory of the double-teaching, but they don't emphasize the hidden atheism of Buddhism. When they mention the hypocrisy and deceit of Buddhism, this does not refer to a political agenda, but mostly to Buddhist monks taking advantage of a credulous people. Popular Buddhism being not nihilistic could be corrected, and the Buddhists drawn towards Christianity.

Though Marini's description is still influenced by the accounts of the Jesuits in Japan and China, yet it incorporates many personal observations from Vietnamese Buddhism, like the solemn procession for the renovation of temples, including elephants, horses, the president (*Ciua Hôy*) of the celebration, dancers, elderly and youth, soldiers, and so on. (pp. 228-230). Buddhists also organize a public confession of their sins, called *Sam hô y*. Other traditional practices include: when people are sick, they call both for a bonze and a magician who are partners in their deceit, sharing the benefits (pp. 232-234).

Conclusion

The Jesuit theory of the double-teaching of Buddhism was designed in Japan to explain Buddhism as being both a religion and an atheistic philosophy. As we have shown, this theory was very much influential among the Jesuits in China and Vietnam, but the theory kept transforming.

Jesuits in Asia had different focuses according to the local situation and their own experience. In Japan, they were engaged in a dialogue with Zen monks and the teaching on emptiness, so they investigated what they considered the core of Buddhism, namely nihilism. In China, they were engaged mostly into a dialogue with the literati and Confucianism. Though Ricci did apply the theory of the double-teaching to understand Song-Ming Confucianism, he believed that ancient Confucianism was neither atheistic nor idolatrous. After Ricci's death missionaries in China faced persecution, and they thought that Buddhism had provided the political elites with an atheistic thinking, which makes any religion subservient to their political project. In contrast, the Jesuits in Vietnam did not reach out to the learned

monks or the literati, and there was not the same engagement with texts. Their approach was more geared towards the common people, because they were considered as being more receptive to Christianity.

This investigation on the Jesuit image of Buddhism in Asia invites us to reflect on the relationship between religion, reason and politics. Most Buddhist scholars and philosophers today have rejected the association of Buddhism with nihilism, and I myself prefer to talk about radical thinking to characterize the core message of Buddhism. This radical thinking presents indeed a challenge to Christianity and to all revealed religions like Judaism and Islam. If philosophical reason leads to the conclusion that all religions, including Buddhism and Christianity, are devoid of any truth, then religions have no meaning.

The radical thinking of Buddhism led the Jesuits to misunderstand Buddhism for nihilism. Jesuits then had difficulty in sustaining at the same time, nihilistic thinking with religious faith.³⁷ As clerics trained in the very speculative discipline of philosophy, the Jesuits would have probably felt the danger of extreme forms of rationalism threatening their own faith and religious vows. Here we can recall the lasting debate in the Catholic Church since the Middle Ages, about how much philosophy should be allowed in academic courses dominated by theology. The reason why the Jesuits were so sensitive to the issue of atheism in Buddhism, was probably because they could feel the danger of philosophy within their own tradition, and many could probably experience it even at a personal level. The atheistic threat of Buddhism was not only an external danger coming from another religious tradition, but it reverberated within the European consciousness as an inner threat. This perceived danger of rationality within the Western tradition, led the Jesuits to detect in Buddhism a radical thinking, leaning towards atheism. The radical thinking of Buddhism revealed to the Jesuit missionaries the idea of nihilism, an idea that was hidden and suppressed within their own consciousness, and so they felt obliged to combat it vigorously. However, instead of denying nihilism, perhaps it would have been more fruitful to engage oneself in a new relationship with truth, a relationship that does not renounce pursuing it, and yet accepts carrying all along the way the question of nihilism.

Besides the philosophical dimension, the Jesuits also paid much attention to the social and institutional consequences of the radical thinking of Buddhism. They perceived Buddhism as finally denying religion its traditional role above politics. This threat was directed to the idea of religion as an entity that was believed to have been divinely established, such as Christianity. Since the time of Machiavelli, this threat was felt very much within the Catholic church in Europe. Thus, the Jesuits in Japan and

37 See my paper, "Chinese Buddhism and the Threat of Atheism," in *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 31 (2011): 3-23.

China tended to view Buddhism as a sort of an anti-religion, or if we were to use the words of Marcel Gauchet with reference to Christianity, as “the religion that brings about the exit from religion” (*la religion de la sortie de la religion*). But, does radical thinking in religious life necessarily lead to our discarding religious practices, institutions, and moral conventions? Perhaps it invites us instead to a necessary deconstruction and purification of theological language, and its temptation for power. The early encounter between Christianity and Buddhism not only has historical value, it also has philosophical value. It assists us in thinking more deeply about the relationship between religion and faith as well as sociological value, since it underscores the difference between popular and elite forms of religion.

Table Representing how Jesuit Missionaries understood the Religious life of Asia, and their strategy

Areas	Jesuits	Double Teaching		Missionary Strategy
		Superstitious devotions	Nihilistic and Atheistic Rationalism	
Japan	Valignano	(Pure land)	Zen	To lead Zen Buddhists to true Metaphysics
China	Ricci	Buddhism	Buddhist Confucianism	To show Literati the Theism of Ancient Confucianism
	Rodrigues Longobardo	Buddhism and Ancestor worship	Confucianism	To reject all Local traditions and teach Western Theology
Vietnam	Borri Rhodes Marini	Pure Land and Ancestor worship		To Christianize Popular Religion

Dialogue as Conflict Resolution: Creative Praxis

Michael Amaladoss, S.J.

Inter-religious dialogue is difficult. I explored some of the reasons for this in an earlier article.¹ Yet difficulty is no reason for passivity or paralysis, for the fact that we don't do anything about it. Let us therefore reflect a little as to what we could do to promote inter-religious harmony and peace, and build communities in situations where there are communal conflicts or tensions pertaining to differences in religions.

In the past, religious fundamentalists may have butchered people seen as heretics or renegades from the faith.² Yet even in those times, the reasons were as much social and political as religious. When religion is lived as a cementing force of a community, a heretic is someone who attacks this unity. He/She has therefore no place in the community. He/She is considered dangerous. He/She has either to be expelled from the community or in other ways be done away with. In the multi-religious context of today, religious fundamentalists are not that violent. They may be aggressive proselytisers in the field of religion, but they do not normally indulge in violence. Violent behaviour results when religious emotions are used to promote economic and political goals, for religion then becomes communalistic. Leaders of communal movements may themselves be non-believers or at least non-practising, but they (ab)use the religious emotions of the masses in a coldly calculating and rational manner. When we discussed communalism in India we used to speak of Hindus and the Muslims, but today, Christians too are increasingly coming under attack from communalist forces. Even in such a situation, rather than adopting a defensive posture, we should rather focus on what we can do to promote communal harmony.

When discussing religious communalism, we must also avoid the tendency of identifying a whole community as being communalistic. It is always some members of a religious community, who in some places and at particular times, indulge in communalistic behaviour. But such outbursts of violence often indicate a prevailing tension. Absence of conflict does not mean that different communities are living in mutual respect, acceptance, and peace. What can be done, not just to avoid communalistic conflagrations but also reduce communal tensions? I shall make a tentative attempt to answer this question in the following pages.

¹ See *VJTR* 62 (1998): 567-79.

² See Lionel Caplan, *Studies in Religious Fundamentalism* (London: Macmillan, 1987).

Communal Conflicts

Any community with a diversity of members and interests will not be entirely without conflict. Conflicts indicate the existence of tensions within the community, and they may be due to valid instances of discrimination, injustice, and misunderstanding related to unequal or inadequate distribution or availability of resources, illegitimate divisions of power, or disputes about status in society. The community then is enabled to intervene in such problematic situations, resolve conflicts, and restore justice. What is vital is not to pretend to avoid all conflicts, but to solve them in creative ways without allowing the eruption of violence.

Writing on conflict resolution, Franklin Dukes declares:

In a democratic society conflict is the basis for social change. If there is to be a just relationship, if change is to occur, latent conflicts must be made visible to all parties. It is through confrontation and advocacy that needs gain currency and legitimacy; in many situations it is this confrontation alone that forces the recognition of interdependence that makes negotiation possible.³

The need to become peace-makers seems to particularly arise when conflicts erupt into destructive violence. Our response to such conflicts however can be explored, both in short-term and long-term perspectives. In the short term, soon after a conflict that has led to violence and destruction, we need to collaborate with multi-religious peace and reconciliation committees. We have to first of all help and reassure the victims, and if necessary defend them. We have to procure aid for them and assist them in their rehabilitation. Second, we have to condemn the violence, and use all possible legal means to seek out its perpetrators, and help bring them to justice. This might involve putting pressure on the government, not only to inquire into the incidents impartially, but also to take appropriate action to restore justice, by punishing the culprits and by compensating the victims, as far as possible. One cannot obviously bring people back to life. But one can rebuild houses, offer help to restart small businesses that may have been destroyed, and so on.

Any peace or reconciliation has to be based on justice and fairness, and not on the appeasement of the powerful and violent. This might be a long-drawn-out process involving collaboration with the inquiry, putting pressure on the government through all legal means to act on the inquiry, and initiate Public Interest Litigation processes if the government is not responsive. Such actions will reassure victims by making them feel they are not alone. In a way this is already occurring in the country, but the process gets subverted in so many ways. Hence there is a need for peace committees to be vigilant and follow up developments. Multi-religious peace committees must resist

³ Cf. E. Franklin Dukes, *Resolving Public Conflict: Transforming Community and Governance* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1996), 164.

all attempts to politicise or once again communalise the issues. This is the reason why we should take seriously the suggestions of practitioners of conflict resolution, that third-party mediation is always helpful.⁴ We could qualify the idea of the 'third-party' as actually a multi-religious group, where there are 'third-party' elements, but also credible representatives of the religious groups in conflict. We do have NGOs that engage in this kind of activity. Inter-religious groups are sometimes formed on an ad hoc basis, to do some immediate relief work, but we do not have stable multi-religious committees, preferably based in the affected areas themselves, to follow up the process of promoting reconciliation through justice. I suggest this as a concrete way of promoting inter-religious dialogue, in life and action.

In the long-term, we need to create a growing atmosphere of mutual understanding, acceptance, and even collaboration among believers of different religions. How can we go about this? In a world wherein religions seem to be becoming sources of conflict rather than promoters of peace, we have to be clear first of all as to what our vision is of a multi-religious community living together in harmony. If we look around the world, we see various ways in which people have sought to solve this problem.⁵ People must be enabled to live as members of such communities. Let me explore this a little more in detail.

A Vision of Community

Before we speak about the role of religions in communities, it would be good to ponder over the idea of people living together in a community, and its implications. Today we have nation-states everywhere, covering a certain geographical space, created by various kinds of historical circumstances. They all have within their national territories different kinds of ethnic, cultural, or religious groups. Conflicts among these are common today, even if they are not violent everywhere. How do people create a community in such situations?

The political theory that developed in Europe during the Enlightenment sees the State as a collection of individuals who have their inalienable rights, but who in pursuit of their own self-interest come together to set up structures of common living, spelt out in a contract. One insists on the dignity and rights of every individual. In such a situation conflicts are seen in terms of the legitimation of power, the defence of one's rights, and the search for one's interests. While we do not deny the relevance of these factors, the social contract of individuals seems inadequate as the foundation of

⁴ See Ronald J. Fisher, *Interactive Conflict Resolution* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1997).

⁵ See Peter H. Merkl and Ninian Smart, eds., *Religion and Politics in the Modern World* (New York: New York University Press, 1985); Gustavo Benavides and M.W. Daly, eds., *Religion and Political Power* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989).

the communities. It ignores natural communities like families, kin groups, etc. The basis of a community is relatedness. Every human being has the experience of being in a relationship with others for his/her origin, life, culture, and celebration. To live in community is to develop such sustainable relationships. Franklin Dukes explains it thus:

While it (relatedness) need not exclude such dispositions as friendship, love, or altruism, it is much more than those dispositions alone. For relatedness does not depend on the good feelings one might have for others. Relatedness is also found in such qualities as a sense of responsibility for one's actions; a sense of obligation to those who are dependent; and loyalty to those who have extended themselves for others. It is found in a respect for the traditions of one's own and others' cultures; recognition of one's shared humanity; and understanding of, and even empathy for, the meaning others impart to their beliefs, values and needs.⁶

Once we go beyond individualism as the basic element of society, we discover that a nation is actually a community of communities, because a nation is not a conglomeration of individuals, but is made up a variety of ethnic, cultural, and religious groups. This reality has been explored, particularly with reference to cultures, as multiculturalism.⁷ People in a national community do not relate to each other only as individuals, but as members of particular groups, each with its identity. Each group attempts to protect its identity and deserves recognition and respect. Of course, the groups should not be allowed to stifle the freedom of individuals in the name of preserving and defending group identity. But the groups have a right to be recognized, acknowledged, and respected. It is from this point of view for example that Gerald J. Larson speaks of respecting "communityship" side by side with "citizenship," in the Indian context. If "communityship" is not respected, then communalism will be the result.⁸

It is in the context of a nation that is a community of communities, that we see the inadequacy of a democratic system that depends on the rule of the majority, because in such a system a majority community can always dominate minority communities democratically. The Fathers of the Indian Constitution tried to forestall this possibility by defining and protecting the rights of minorities. The attempt by some in the majority community to claim for themselves the right to dominance in national affairs by virtue of their numerical majority, shows up the shortcomings of the present liberal democratic system focussed on the individual. This is the reason why people who are reflecting on multiculturalism and conflict resolution, are talking of strong or deep democracy. Strong democracy

⁶ E. F. Dukes, *Resolving Public Conflict*, 169.

⁷ Cf. Amy Gutmann, ed., *Multiculturalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Cynthia Willett, ed., *Theorizing Multiculturalism* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998).

⁸ Cf. Gerald James Larson, *India's Agony Over Religion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995), 285-87.

complements liberal democracy by developing institutions and structures where everyone can actively participate in the discussion, and contribute to the evolution of policy and decision-making that affects every one. Not only individuals, but communities are also respected. Such participative democracy is distinguished from representative democracy, where a few representatives, often more concerned about their own self-interest than the interests of the people, decide the fate of a whole people.⁹ Others speak of "deep democracy." For instance, Judith M. Green, exploring different aspects of deep democracy, writes:

Some one who has developed a culturally pluralistic perspective has already decentred the claims of his or her own cultural tradition to unique and absolute authority, in favour of a perhaps inchoate belief that other voices and traditions have their own, respect-worthy insights, values, and claims to at least limited authority. Such a belief supports and is supported by an impulse towards democracy as a way of life.¹⁰

One who is open to pluralism does not seek to dominate or impose, but to converse, dialogue, and search for consensus. In India the role of the Rajya Sabha is to be a body of wise people, who have the good of the whole country at heart and who in this way counter-balance the elected representatives of the Lok Sabha. Unfortunately however it has also been politicised.

The Indian democratic system has inherited its formal democratic structure from the West. It has an impersonal, universally binding legal system, which is enforced by the State. However it is superposed on a multiplicity of religious and caste groups. A person's primary loyalty is to the group. Such loyalty to one's group also conditions the behaviour of politicians and bureaucrats. This subverts the system from within.¹¹ But the alternative does not seem to be the abolition of intermediary groups between the individual and the State. This does not seem possible in a multicultural, multi-religious community. The challenge then is to build up a community that respects, integrates, and transcends cultural and religious pluralism.

Religions and Community

What are the implications of such a vision for the presence of many religions in a community? Some would say the State should be totally neutral in everything that has to do with religion, but this does not mean that religions must be reduced to the private sphere of the individual,

⁹ Cf. B. Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), quoted in E.F. Dukes, *Resolving Public Conflict*, 153-62.

¹⁰ Judith M. Green, "Educational Multiculturalism," in *Theorizing Multiculturalism*, ed. Cynthia Willett (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1998), 429.

¹¹ Satish Saberwal, *India: The Roots of Crisis* (Delhi: Oxford, 1986) and *Wages of Segmentation* (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1995).

as many secularists would maintain. No true believer would accept that religious faith should not have any influence on his/her public conduct. One could therefore distinguish between the State and its institutions of governance, which must be neutral towards all religions, and the public life of the community, which has its own institutions. At the level of public life there must be a free interplay of a diversity of religions, as well as of cultures and ethnic identities. In a democratic state, the formal structures of governance will be guided and helped indirectly by the convergent consensus of the community. Different religious groups can find inspiration and motivation in their own religious resources for the defence of common human and spiritual values that govern public life, controlled at its own level by the State.

The present situation in India, however, is quite confusing, and no common point of view has emerged. On the one hand we have the secularists, who do not want to have anything to do with religion, neither at the level of the State nor at the level of public life. Here 'secularism' becomes a quasi-religious ideology, which limits religion to the private sphere, with the supposition of course that religion is really something irrational, and while it could be tolerated in the private sphere, it should have no influence on public life. However such secularists in India are few, and there is a consensus among scholars that India is not secularized in that sense, but remains a 'religious' country. At the other extreme we have the Hindutva ideologists who would like to make India a Hindu state, which of course will be tolerant of other religious minorities. They see democracy as dominance by the majority.¹² This view is obviously detrimental to the kind of community that we have envisaged above. In-between we have people like Mahatma Gandhi who wanted a secular State that was respectful of other religions, but he thought Hinduism itself was a kind of inclusive religion that made place for minorities, so that one could say that his was a sort of Hindu secular state based on the principles of *sanatana dharma*, as understood by himself.¹³ The Muslim community led by Jinnah did not accept his vision. Others would suggest a secular state with a public order that would be nourished by all religions, in the manner suggested above.

I think all these four currents of opinion were represented in the Constituent Assembly, as a result of which we have in the Constitution a compromise document. The State is said to be secular, as not against, but neutral to all religions. Yet at the same time, not only the people, but the State itself is committed to protect the minorities and defend their rights. The State also claims the right to interfere even in religious matters, when it concerns the public good and defence of fundamental rights. Quite at

¹² Peter van der Veer, *Religious Nationalism. Hindus and Muslims in India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994)

¹³ Cf. G. Aloysius, *Nationalism without a Nation in India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998), 170-213.

the beginning for instance it reformed the Hindu code, and it claims the right also to legislate for the other personal religious codes, though this is done with the consensus of the religious groups concerned. In any case the State is also committed by the Constitution to move towards a common civil code. It appears as though the Constitution-makers wanted to respect religious pluralism, protect the minorities, and at the same time reform the religions, with regard to practices that were seen as contrary to fundamental human rights.

In the light of what we have seen in the previous section, I think we should move towards a *State* that would remain secular in the sense of being neutral towards all religions, with a common civil and criminal code and a *public life* that is multi-religious, wherein all religious groups are respected and accepted. There must be a dialectical and symbiotic relationship between the State and the Public (community), so that the institutions of the State are constantly nourished by the developing consensus in the community. This mutual influence could be institutionalized in some way. The State can and should maintain public order and ensure justice, but it is the community that can promote peace and reconciliation. It is here that dialogue will have an indispensable role to play. David Matthews spells out as follows why dialogue is so critical.

Why is public dialogue so pivotal? The public dialogue is the natural home for democratic politics. That is the 'home' people feel forced out of and want back. People depend on the dialogue to provide opportunities for the public to hold counsel with itself and give public definition to the public's interest.... The only way to get at the base of the problem is through greater public definition of its own interests. That means the public has to be invested in deliberations over the difficult choices that are involved in delineating the public's interests. That definition is necessary to give direction to the government. And public direction makes for public legitimacy.¹⁴

If we do not appreciate this distinction between the State and the Public we tend to expect the State to do everything, which it is not capable of. Today's need therefore is to build up an active and engaged Public, and dialogue is the only way of doing this. Unfortunately, except for the Press, control of the media by the State makes such free discussion all but impossible.

The goal of inter-religious dialogue is precisely to build up a Public that is multi-religious. It should not of course ignore the other dimensions of dialogue, while it is aware of its own specific identity. Inter-religious dialogue will be only one element in a wider dialogue that is also inter-cultural, inter-ethnic, and, in the case of India, inter-caste. Multi-religious groups will have a special role, not only in shaping the consensus of the community through discussion, but also in conflict resolution, when

¹⁴ David Matthews in *Citizens and Politics* (1991), quoted by Dukes, *Resolving Public Conflicts*, 158.

religious communities come into conflict for whatever reason.

Conditions for Dialogue

We don't have to muse too much over the inter-religious and inter-caste conflicts all around us, in order to realise that dialogue is not easy. From a purely communicational point of view Jürgen Habermas has described what he sees as an "ideal speech situation," to provide undistorted communication. The ideal speech situation is one in which communicative action is not disturbed by power differences and coercion, so that the interlocutors can arrive at a 'rational consensus.' Some of the conditions are that statement must be true, its author must have the required legitimacy to make it, and it should be a true reflection of the intentions of the speaker.¹⁵

Dialogue nevertheless goes beyond communicative action, because what we are looking for is not merely a rational consensus, but the emergence of a community. It has besides the rational, emotional and personal aspects as well. One of the obstacles to dialogue is what social psychologists have termed stereotyping. We tend to categorize others in terms of the group they belong to. The group itself is characterized as an out-group that is opposed to the in-group to which the subject himself belongs, and which gives him his social identity. The relationship between the groups are often conditioned by economic (material benefits) and political (power relations) circumstances. Such stereotyping can block communication. Stereotyping can have negative consequences when one interiorizes for psychological, economic and political reasons, one's own status as an underdog. When the stereotype is in place, concrete data about an individual are either ignored or seen as an exception. Stereotypes can be countered only by bringing them to consciousness and examining them in the light of the available data, and by promoting alternate voluntary groupings.¹⁶

Dialogue can also be blocked if we do not seek to fulfil the need of the others for recognition, respect, and acceptance as a group, and for a social space in which they can live and develop their identity. On the contrary, we may just tolerate them without acceptance and respect, or we may try to be inclusive in a relationship of domination-subordination. The others then may seek to affirm their identity in an adversarial or a revolutionary mode, giving rise to conflict. This is what happens when a group asserts its "right" to go through areas where the others tend to dominate, create a racket near their holy places, and so on. It is often an aggressive demand for recognition that is not voluntarily given. Often, such refusal of mutual recognition is not conscious but symbolic. It means there are no rituals of normal interaction

¹⁵ Cf. Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vols. 1 and 2 (Boston, Beacon Press, 1984, 1987).

¹⁶ Cf. Ann E. Cudd, "Psychological Explanations of Oppression" in *Theorizing Multiculturalism*, 187-215.

between the communities. If I happen to meet a friend, even without anything being said a number of symbolic gestures of recognition and acceptance promptly arise, which immediately make me feel at home. Such rituals may not be available with the adversarial other, or the relationships are limited to commercial or similar transactions, which never reach the level of any personal depth. Any deeper interaction may even be avoided, because one is not sure what the response will be if deeper interaction is attempted. In any case, there is no spontaneity in these relationships. One cannot take anything for granted. Modern individualism in urban and semi-urban situations may aggravate such distance between communities, which is further increased when people tend also to live in separate geographical areas. In such a situation, first of all there must be a basic will to recognize, respect, and accept the other as different. Second, common public rituals must be created, and voluntary associative groups encouraged, so that such acceptance can be mutually communicated in an experiential way. Projects for common action to promote justice and community will also be helpful.¹⁷

Creative Praxis

It is now time to apply what we have seen above about dialogue in the context of community building, to dialogue between people who believe in different religions. Religion being the deepest element in culture and affecting the deeper recesses of a person with regard to his/her search for meaning in life, it certainly plays a key role in personal and social identity formation, in setting clear boundaries for in-and-out groups, and in the creation of stereotypes. Is it at all possible to aim at building a multi-religious community through dialogue? Should one rather limit one's ambitions to living together in mutual tolerance and non-interference? Is it not enough to control fundamentalist groups from causing too much damage to the community? All religions do believe in human and cosmic harmony as the goal of history. The Christians envisage the Kingdom as the reconciliation of all things, according to the plan of God revealed in Jesus Christ. The Muslims believe in the *umma* as a universal community. What can be more unifying than the cosmic manifestation of Krishna to Arjuna in the Bhagavad Gita! The Buddhists believe the whole universe is inter-related. The ideal of Confucianism is universal harmony. Yet looking at the present and at our own nation, I think while community and harmony remain at the horizon, what the immediate future needs is **inter-religious dialogue as conflict resolution**, not only in the short term but also in the long term.

¹⁷ For some of the ideas in this paragraph see Jonathan H. Turner, *A Theory of Social Interaction* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988).

How can we go about this?¹⁸ I shall restrict my suggestions here to possible activities that may help in the long term.

1. Conscientization

Conscientization focuses on personal transformation through surfacing and changing incorrect attitudes, through coming to terms with pluralism at many levels as not only factual but legitimate, and through cultivating the capacity for analysis that unmasks the abuse made of religion by economic and political forces. Our attitude to others is conditioned by our own prejudices and stereotypes, often fed by biased information. The only way of changing this is to surface these unconscious attitudes and confront them with experiential reality. Where there are long-standing tensions that seem to indicate that such prejudices are reasonable, we have to create new experiences of community through dialogue and common action for justice. Change of attitudes takes place neither through preaching nor through abstract argument, but by actually encountering the others, preferably in multi-religious groups, and talking about the issues concerned. Such personal contacts in groups helps bring about not only rational discourse, but also a certain emotional involvement.

In such a dialogical situation, one also learns to understand, respect, and accept the reasonableness of the other. This means, one begins to accept the possibility of pluralism. This experience of pluralism as legitimate needs to be integrated through reflection, both personally and in groups. To be open to pluralism is to accept, at least implicitly, the fact that one's own perspectives are conditioned by culture and history. Such an acceptance of pluralism normally starts with the acceptance of the right of the other to be different, and then goes on to recognize the possibility that in being different the other is not irrational or wrong-headed, but may have some justification in a tradition and experience that I have not shared. Such an experience of pluralism can be further developed and deepened at the philosophical and theological levels, but where experience is lacking, such superstructures will be empty. Today, all major religious traditions, if we exclude the fundamentalist groups in each of them, are open to pluralism.

Another area of conscientization is developing the capacity to analyse society. In our context, the analysis will focus on the role of religion in society, and its distinction from the economical and political dimensions.

¹⁸ I would like to draw the readers' attention to the suggestions made by others which I have found significant. See John Desrochers, *Towards a New India* (Bangalore: Centre for Social Action, 1995), 109-137; Gabriele Dietrich, "Can the Women's movement be a Force against Communalism?" in *Women's Movement in India* (Bangalore: Breakthrough Publications, 1988), 187-201; Virendra Varma, "Communalism: Remedial Suggestions" and S. Usman, "Communalism: A Solution through Co-operation" in *Problem of Communalism in India*, ed. Ravindra Kumar (New Delhi: Mittal Publications, 1990); Gerald James Larson, *India's Agony Over Religion* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995); S. Arokiasamy, ed., *Responding to Communalism* (Anand: Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, 1991).

People should become aware of the abuse made of religion by economic and political forces. The idea is not to deny the existence of economic and political injustices, but to realize that we should struggle against them at their proper level. Such conscientization can be done at all levels, from peasants to city-dwellers, through formal and non-formal education groups and through the media. It is advisable that such conscientization programs be organized and led by multi-religious groups. Groups of people who are accustomed to meet in conscientization sessions, are less likely to be lured into a mass frenzy during communal and other conflicts.

2. Creating a Multi-religious Public Space

In every community, besides the official organs of the State there are a lot of voluntary organizations of a cultural and social nature, that give shape to the public space. The danger however is that these voluntary organizations are also guided by prevalent group prejudices and stereotypes, and so they do not often have a multi-religious character, except at the level of the elites. Even at this level, the multi-religious factor may be interpreted in varying ways according to the prevailing ideology. We have seen above that one of the elements that facilitates the formation of stereotypes is membership in a group, as distinguished from or even opposed to other groups. These groups often tend to be natural groups based on factors like religion, ethnicity, caste, etc. Hence, one way of promoting a multi-religious community would be to facilitate the formation of multi-religious voluntary groups, on the basis of a variety of cultural and social interests such as music and the arts, literature and drama, sports, peace, ecology, feminism, as well as social causes like the abolition of dowry or child labour. As people start belonging to many groups, strong and divisive group identities start breaking down. This is the reason why one should look into groups organized along religious lines, for anything besides strictly religious causes. Multiple group belongingness also helps in defining identity in positive terms, namely in terms of issues that bring the groups together, and not in terms of those that estrange it from others. One also learns not to define one's own identity in any narrow way.

In order to play such a transformative role, the groups must not only be task-oriented, but find time or create occasions for symbolic celebrations of different religious and other social and national festivals, and for 'wasting' time together in relaxation. Such occasions allow informal, 'purposeless' interactions and conversations that have a deeper influence on persons. These groups can be commenced in schools and colleges, and later continued in various ways. It is unfortunate that our schools and colleges seem to have become centers for the manufacturing of degrees and titles, rather than places for community building. In this situation, an essential function of educational institutions as places for socialization, is lost.

3. Collaboration in Action

Probably the most effective way of building a multi-religious community is for multi-religious groups to act together to promote equality and justice, in the non-religious spheres of economics, politics and society. Commentators point out that one of the reasons why a particular group becomes fundamentalist and aggressive, is because of its sense of deprivation and discrimination with regard to economic development and employment. This is not a religious issue. Multi-religious groups can act to collaborate with governmental and non-governmental agencies to promote the equal development of all, without discrimination. At the political level, multi-religious groups can work for the neutrality of political institutions, especially of the State and the Police. When communal riots arise, the arms of the government like the civil administration and police are often accused of partiality towards the majority community. The State must maintain law and order, but it should be viewed as an impartial and neutral body and also act in such a manner. Only active public opinions, public protests, and public interest litigations, can enable citizens to keep the State in check. Such movements must be multi-religious, and the media can play a great role in this. Some of our national newspapers in English are doing a good job, but one is less sure of the vernacular press. The private channels of television can also play an important role. What is needed is appropriate commentary that helps to awaken and conscientize people, rather than provoke a mad collective frenzy. Multi-religious groups that seek to collaborate in action for economic and political justice, must as far as possible be local and based in determinate geographical areas, and their attention could start with improving local facilities so as to promote an ecologically sound common life. However these groups must be able to join together in wide regional and national coalitions and networks, for common causes. Such involvement breaks down narrow identifications. The recent coming together of more than two hundred groups to move the courts to demand action on the Srikrishna Commission report on the Mumbai riots, is a welcome move. Similar coalitions must increase and multiply. Such common action is the only way to defeat the basic principle of communalism, which is that the people who share the same religious beliefs, also share common economic and political interests.

4. Deepening the Relationship

One of the tools that Mahatma Gandhi used for promoting inter-religious harmony was inter-religious prayer meetings. At such meetings passages from different Scriptures were read and devotional songs from different religious traditions were sung, and they were concluded by an exhortation to promote inter-religious peace and harmony. The aim of these meetings was to show that all religions were for peace. If we all believe in one God and we have mutual respect for and acceptance of each other, then praying

together for our country and community will be a welcome religious practice. Let us not forget that India's national anthem the *Jana Gana Mana* is a prayer. Such meetings to promote mutual fellowship in a multi-religious context can be helpful to create an atmosphere of mutual understanding and respect, even if there are no imminent conflicts. One could also suggest the celebration of festivals that could become occasions for sharing one's joy with neighbours of other religions. This happens even today in villages. Actually at the popular level there are instances of greater involvement in the celebration of festivals and pilgrimages. It is however unfortunate that such traditional practices are being given up in some places, due to pressure from fundamentalist groups.

At more elite levels, common sharing of scriptures, common prayer, and common reflection in a multi-religious context on questions arising from contemporary life, can lead to a deepening of understanding both of one's own religion as well as the religion of the other. Such groups can also comment and enlighten the public on books and artistic productions that are fundamentalist in tone or inspiration, seeking to promote division rather than harmony. On the other hand, the very fact of growing in religious depth together, will also enable them to be critical and challenging of the shortcomings in each other's religious tradition, in a constructive way.

Elite groups can also engage in research that will help to remove obstacles and facilitate the process of conversation. I shall indicate just three areas. Each religious tradition needs to be interpreted in keeping with new situations. Though people of most religions have known other religious traditions in the course of their history, yet it is only recently that religious pluralism has begun to be taken seriously. Even today it is only some Christians who accept the legitimacy of other religions, and are ready to meet them on an equal footing. Islamic scholars who make place for other religions are very few indeed. Hinduism is traditionally tolerant, but its tolerance tends to be inclusive and limited to offshoots of its own tradition. Its own *Advaitic* perspective on reality is seen as underlying and unifying all other religions. In such a situation, scholars have to delve deep into the tradition, engage in reinterpretation, and make space in each tradition for the pluralism of religions, that would justify dialogue between them.

Another area wherein research is necessary is political theory. Though there are varieties of solutions offered by different political structures across the world to the problem of religious pluralism, a really adequate democratic structure is yet to emerge. I am of the view that the Indian and Indonesian Constitutions are the most creative in this area, but even these need to be revised in the light of experiences and difficulties.

A third area of research would be personal and social psychology. How does a person evolve his/her personal and social identity? How does he/she live an experience of multiple belongingness? How does one overcome

prejudices and stereotypes? How does one prevent mass behaviour wherein violent and blind emotion seems to take over from reason as the guide of action? These questions do not have ready and clear answers.

Conclusion

Though in the first part I evoked a vision of community in general, in the second I have limited my reflections to the phenomenon of religious pluralism. But real life is much more complicated, with cultural, ethnic, and social (caste) pluralisms, not to speak of class differentiations in the economic and political sphere. In India, we see a resurgence of subaltern caste and tribal groups, affirming their separate identities and demanding recognition and respect. In countries like Canada and the United States there is a lively discussion around the phenomenon of multiculturalism. Religion too is involved in some of these tensions, as it has tended to legitimate discriminative practices in the past, as for example in the Indian caste system. But whatever be the differences and tensions, we are called upon to build up humanity as one community in harmony and peace, in which all the various pluralisms will be respected and accepted, but wherein all are invited to participate in a convergent movement towards community, through conversation and collaboration. We do not have readymade models for such a community, but that keeps the field open for all our imaginative and creative energies.

Buddhism and I

Chong-hwan Pak, S.J.

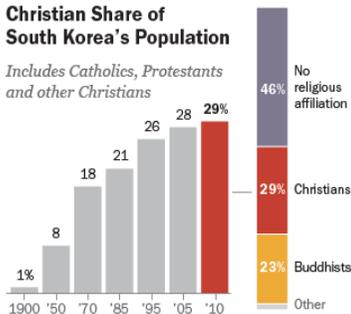
Introduction

To begin with, I wish to introduce myself as a Korean Jesuit and a Catholic priest. I joined the Korean Province of the Society of Jesus in 2000, and on the conclusion of my novitiate and philosophical studies I proceeded to Taiwan in order to study Chinese Philosophy, in particular the philosophy of the Confucian scholar Wang Yang Ming of the Chinese Ming dynasty. I was ordained a priest in 2010 on completing my studies in Theology, and now serve in the Chinese Jesuit Province. During my theology, while writing my thesis on the Theology of Religions, I focused mainly on the theology of the late Fr. Jacques Dupuis, SJ. This article mainly concerns my personal experiences and relationship with Buddhism.

Korea's Religious Statistics of 2014¹

Christian Share of South Korea's Population

Includes Catholics, Protestants and other Christians



(Protestants are about 18% and Catholics about 11% of the Christian population).

Sources: Estimates for 1900, 1950, and 1970 are from the World Religion Database. Estimates from 1985, 1995, and 2005 are from the South Korean Census. Estimate for 2010 is from the Pew Research Center's 2012 report, "Global Religious Landscape." [PEW RESEARCH CENTER]

First, judging by the above statistics of 2014, the principal religion of Korea is Buddhism (23% of the population). This however is not a recent phenomenon, for in the course of Korea's history, since 372 AD Buddhism has been the major religion of the Korean people. Despite the fact that at times it was not accorded the respect due to it by the government, yet it has always been an intrinsic element of Korean culture. Hence, it is not

¹ Accessed December 1, 2020, <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/08/12/6-facts-about-christianity-in-south-korea/>.

surprising that we Koreans breathe the air of Korean culture integrated with diverse elements, including Buddhism. I too have imbibed aspects of Buddhism, both through my natural encounters of daily life and my education. Indeed, even prior to grasping the principles of Catholicism, I was already aware of certain doctrines of Buddhism. We Koreans learn the basic doctrines of Buddhism while in school, and we have many occasions to do so unconsciously, owing to the influence of the surrounding mass media. There are many Koreans, who like me possess some knowledge regarding the fundamentals of Buddhism.

My Views Concerning Buddhism

I first wish to describe my assessment of Buddhism. As an Asian and Korean, my images of Buddhism are, Holy monks, severe discipline, a high level of teaching, enlightenment, Zen practice, transcendence, exquisite temples, prayerful supplications and the like, and for me virtually all these images are positive. Needless to say some are less positive than others, but for the most part I have good and favorable images and impressions of Buddhism.

From where did I obtain these impressions and images? They arose from an array of sources. Since my childhood I have had many occasions to contact Buddhist monks, but without however having any conversation with them. Korea has a deep cultural backdrop of Buddhism, and this backdrop still remains.

An event I still recall very distinctly, occurred when I was a child. I on occasion saw a Buddhist monk, who used to come to my house to beg for food. He wore a special cloth we Koreans call 'Gasa' (and which is usually of a grey color), and he entered our house with the sound of a gong called a 'Moktak', but never uttered a word. He merely came to our house and offered a profound salutation without saying a word, and waited without the slightest movement, sounding only the Moktak. My mother also reacted with a heartfelt greeting to him, and then she wordlessly entered the kitchen and came out with a bucket of rice. On seeing my mother bringing the rice, he turned away from her. My mother thereupon silently opening his cloth-made backpack poured the rice into his bag, whereupon the monk offered another reverential greeting, and then left. I observed this entire incident silently, and after that we too offered a profound greeting to the monk. This scene occurred repeatedly for a lengthy period during my childhood, and even now I recall it very plainly. Whenever I call to mind the scene, at once a lucid image arises within my mind, and I experience a deep feeling of silence and a mood of sanctity. I believe I felt something sacred to radiate, both from the monk and from the entire episode as well. Later though I came to perceive the truth. For monks who intently practice Zen in Korea, there is a discipline of a hundred days that is conducted twice, in summer

and in winter. After the long retreat they come down to the villages, and put into practice among the people what they received during their retreat.

I have on many occasions heard the words of Buddhist monks, and I have had chances of seeing movies on Buddhism and of visiting Buddhist Temples. I still recall the words a monk uttered to the people via a television broadcast. I think it was on New Year's Day, and he spoke words that meant, 'wherever you are, be a person who does his own will.' This was not all. I have reflected over these words repeatedly, and I have received insight and strength from them. There are many Buddhist maxims and brief sayings, that always offer me insight and inspiration, as for example, *Mountains are mountains, water is water; Everything is created by mind; See your essence, become a Buddha; On the 100 feet high pole, take another step; When you meet the Buddha on the road, kill him;* and so on. There are ever so many such statements, all of which are brief and easy to commit to memory. I recall and reflect over them every time and in every place, and sometimes I interpret them in a Christian way and sometimes vice versa.

I have read several books related to Buddhism and I heard many stories from my mother and grandmother about enlightened Buddhist monks who worked miracles, and I also like listening to teachings of Buddhist monks that are broadcast over television.

Shengchul is one of the most famous Buddhist monks of Korea. It is said he never lay down to sleep, and that he practiced Zen facing the wall for eight years. These tales may sound incredible to some, but we Koreans believe them to be true. We respect him as a Teacher of Korea, just as we respect Cardinal Kim. All Koreans cherish his words and we genuinely admire him, regardless of his religion.

I love visiting Buddhist Temples and enjoying their pleasant scenery and setting, (since most Buddhist Temples are situated deep within mountains), and I also delight in their silence. 'Keshimsa' is located near my hometown, and when visiting my family I also try to visit the temple, since I enjoy walking up to it. Occasionally I sit immersed in reflection before an image of the Buddha, and in the course of such contemplation I ask the Buddha to assist me in comprehending the depth of a human being.

Earlier when I studied law in order to become a lawyer, I stayed at the temple for two months and consumed every meal with two Buddhist monks. They breakfasted at 6:00 AM. At first I did not enjoy the food since it lacked meat and red pepper, yet by the close of my stay I came to enjoy it, and it served as a wonderful experience for me. Even now it is not unusual to see monks begging in streets or at entrances of subway stations. Though they rarely speak they yet evoke an experience of sanctity in others, and hence we revere and respect them.

Some time ago there was a very young, famous, and affable monk named 'Won Sung,' who was good at painting and writing. He fascinated

many Korean mothers, and was very popular. Since he was raised in the temple he always missed his own mother, and so he painted pictures of his life in the temple, and expressed his feelings through them. My mother also purchased his book, and shed tears while reading it.

What I wish to say is that Buddhism is a religion familiar to Korean people, and it is valued very much by them. All of you I am sure have heard of Kim-chi, which is known the world over as a Korean cuisine. Almost every Korean loves Kim-chi, and they always miss it. Just as Kim-chi has become an intrinsic part of Korean culture, Buddhism too is an intrinsic part of Korea.

My Vocation and Buddhism

I now wish to share the story of my vocation. In the Christian tradition, the word 'vocation' can be substituted by the word 'Calling.' We Catholics believe in a personal God, who created human beings. That is to say, He created you and me. He has a special relationship with individuals, and a special plan for everyone. A person's vocation is based on this kind of thinking. God requires individuals to live in harmony, with his special plans for them. A human being comes to know and feels the calling of God, and he accepts the call and chooses his lifestyle according to God's plan. Some choose the married way, some choose to lead single lives, and some choose religious lives like us. Yet, since all vocations are based on the calling of God, they are all in essence good.

In my case for instance, I was born and raised in a Catholic family and I used to go to Church on Sundays, but I did not experience any special calling from God until I was 26 years old. The pivotal event occurred in my life at the age of 26. At that time since I hoped to become a lawyer I was preparing for the Bar examination, but I also experienced profound depression because I had no notion as to whether being a lawyer would constitute my lifetime job or not. Until I entered university I had high hopes of becoming an ambassador or newspaper reporter, but I was unsuccessful in the entrance examination. My parents desired that I enter the law department, and from then on my orientation changed, yet I was unsure as to whether this was in truth my heart's desire or not. The merits of being a lawyer were great and so I began to study, yet I slowly grew dejected due to the uncertainty of my direction and successive exam failures, and also due to the pressure of expectation from my family. At that time I was unaware of the acuteness of my depression. I just had a feeling of helplessness, and did not want to meet anyone. I awoke in the mornings with deep sighs and sought to get through the day, and often my thoughts involuntarily turned to death.

Nevertheless however, all of sudden something unexpected occurred to me, due to what we Christians call 'God's providence.' I read short stories by

the Russian author Tolstoy, and inexplicably developed an interest in him as a person. I began reading his biography, and in his biography I discovered a list of books he had read as a child, and which had influenced him. In that list, I saw the Bible. I felt a strong desire to read the Bible, and so I began reading the New Testament, and from that moment onwards, something strange happened to me. The gloom in my heart began to disappear while I read the Gospels, and of a sudden my heart was full of joy and light. I began to have a conversation with God. During my reading of the New Testament, I asked God my life-long questions about human existence, the meaning of life, and so on, and every question was answered in the Bible. It seemed as though I was personally talking to God. My heart rejoiced in the conversation, and I felt strongly that something was occurring within my heart, that God was shaping it. I could not understand or explain this feeling. My reason was perplexed by the sudden influx of joy and light, but my heart was exulting. We Christians call this God's grace.

Certainly, I did nothing to receive this grace. God gave it to me of his own free will. After this, I naturally gave up preparing for the exam and started searching for another way of life. My only desire at that time was to be with God, because He could give me the type of joy and light that worldly objects could not. That was the beginning of my vocation. I finally entered the Society of Jesus, and here I am as a priest. There were many other such episodes on my journey to the Society.

However, there is one interesting incident I wish to share. At that time I really wanted to pray, but I did not know how to pray, since I was not very pious. I wanted to know about Christianity, but I did not know how to pray. Hence, I read several books on Buddhism that were easily available, and discovered a method of prayer. It was similar to the Buddhist 'Vipassana.' I practiced it every day and experienced something. I seemed to see light within my darkness, I felt my body was elevated, and experienced other such feelings. I even thought of becoming a Buddhist monk, but since I was a Christian, a priest in my hometown guided me into the Society of Jesus.

My Encounter with Confucianism

Aside from Buddhism I was deeply influenced by Wang Yang Ming, the Chinese Confucian philosopher and founder of the school of 'Philosophy of the Heart,' whom I encountered and came to appreciate while studying philosophy. I also wrote a thesis on his doctrine on, 'Establishing the will of being a Saint.' To me there is essentially no variance between Christianity and Confucianism, or even between Christianity and Buddhism. I strongly felt the working of the Holy Spirit, and found that the theory of Wang Yang Ming and that of St. Ignatius of Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus, have great similarities. I was happy to read Yang Ming's books, and experienced great joy in doing so.

Yang Ming's method of discipline has influenced me greatly. I deeply cherish his teachings, as well as those of Jesus and St. Ignatius. Yang Ming always inspires me, and he is one of my life's teachers.

Conclusion

On reflecting over my personal experiences of Buddhism, I came across three main points.

First, the teachings of Buddhism have greatly influenced me, and slowly and surely they have formed my identity, sometimes unconsciously in the background, and sometimes consciously as a teaching. My identity is now mainly characterized as that of a Catholic priest, but it has also undoubtedly been formed by Buddhism. The influences of Buddhism are still very much alive and active within me, and they will continue to be a part of my being in the future.

Second, to me Buddhism has been very inspiring and progressive, and I revere and esteem the monks and their teachings. They are enlightened individuals with no links to boisterous and profane living, and as teachers and holy people who dwell in temples, caves, or mountains, we can rely on their teachings and advice.

To conclude, I sense a keen desire within me to comprehend Buddhism a little more lucidly. This needs to be done not just obliquely via books, movies, or other media, but through direct dialogue, such as sharing, conversations, exposures, and joint prayer. More than monks or priests we are humans having a shared base and origin, and hence I look forward to increasing my friends among the Buddhist monks.

Korean Protestantism in the Age of “Surplus of Positivity”: A Socio-Cultural Analysis of Church Defaults in South Korea

Rev. Yong Un Choe¹

Abstract

In this paper the author not only analyzes the considerable number of Korean Protestant churches that are in default, but also attempts to apply the theoretical framework of Han Byung-Chul’s cultural criticism to the status quo situation of Korean Protestantism. Regarding the extent of the church defaults, one notices diverse factors impacting the situation, including a growth-oriented attitude among many senior pastors as well as other church leaders, moral hazards related to financial deals and the socio-cultural components of Korean Protestantism (such as excessive competition between denominations), a preference for bigger churches, the culture of *ch’emyŏn* (face), and church privatization. According to Han, the twenty-first century is an era of neurosis, wherein surplus positivity prompts a series of tendencies such as self-exploitation and depression. The Korean people have been over-worked and over-stressed, and both these factors have contributed to the nation’s suicide rate, which since 2003 has been the highest among the OECD member nations. The phenomenon of the “healing craze” (K. *Hilling yŏlp’ung*) emerged under such conditions in Korea. Despite these factors, in many cases, emphasis is still placed on a growth-oriented strategy in Korean Protestantism, resulting in a burnout syndrome within congregations, which leads many believers to stop attending church (the so-called *Kanaan sŏngdo*, or Canaan congregation). Meanwhile, the “Small Church Movement” has recently been initiated by some Korean Christian leaders. This phenomenon can be interpreted as an attempt to re-consider the importance and role of small churches, and to emphasize spiritual maturity over numerical growth.

Keywords: Korean Protestantism, Church Defaults, Burnout Society (*Müdigkeitsgesellschaft*), Canaan Congregation (*Kanaan sŏngdo*), Healing Craze (*hilling yŏlp’ung*), Small Church Movement.

¹ This is a revised version of an article that appeared in *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 30, no. 2 (December 2017): 217–238. © 2017 Kyujungak Institute for Korean Studies, Seoul National University.

Preface

Over the past 10 years, as a member of the Buddhist Studies & Dialogue group of the JCAP I learned a great deal while attending the annual workshops, and I was frequently asked about Christianity by other members, especially about Protestantism in South Korea. As is well known, Korean Protestantism achieved incredible growth during the latter half of the twentieth century, and as of 2019, it has sent more than 28,000 missionaries to 171 countries abroad, a record figure which ranks just behind the United States.

On January 29, 2021 however, three representatives from the NCKK, YMCA, and YWCA offered a public apology for the frequent coronavirus cluster infections occurring in Christian organizations, causing harm to public health. "COVID-19 gave us a message to stop and look back," said Ms. Won, head of the YWCA. "It was a more powerful message for Christians and the church, as it allowed us to look back on Churches that only focused on growing in size, and emphasized the Church." (*The Korea Herald*, January 29, 2021). Her message reminded me of my article published a few years ago by the Kyujangak Institute for Korean Studies at Seoul National University, in the *Seoul Journal of Korean Studies* 30, no. 2 (December 2017): 217–238. It analyzed the status quo situation of Korean Protestantism before COVID-19 from a socio-cultural perspective, criticizing a growth-oriented attitude of church leaders and the socio-cultural components behind it.

The objective of the JCAP Buddhist Studies and Dialogue group is to enhance harmony and cooperation among religions through inter-religious dialogue, and I believe a self-critical attitude toward one's own religion is one of the crucial elements in dialogue. Although Korean Protestantism has achieved incredible growth within a relatively short period, many problems have occurred in the middle of this rapid growth. I hope my article in this book will grant many Christians including myself an opportunity to look back on their churches.

Introduction

On July 1, 2013, a church appraised at approximately US\$50 million was put up for sale, the most expensive religious facility in the history of court sales in Korea.² This became headline news in the *Maeil kyōngje*, a well-known financial newspaper in Korea (U Cheyun 2013). The auction item, finding it too difficult to secure a new owner due to its very large valuation, was ultimately sold to the World Mission Society Church of God, a Korea-based international religious organization judged as a cult by orthodox Protestant denominations in Korea, a contention that has become another large issue in the Korean Protestant community (Kim Chinyōng 2014). This financial crisis

² In this paper, Korea refers to South Korea (the Republic of Korea).

is not a problem solely of Protestant churches in Korea; Korean Buddhism, for instance, faces a similar issue, with the number of Buddhist temples on the judicial auction block growing for decades. Among all auctioned properties, however, the percentage of Protestant churches make up 70%, much higher than the Buddhist temples at 20% (Pak Pyöngguk 2014).

The extensive construction of churches and church-related edifices (education centers, prayer centers, etc.) has produced many side effects (O Hwach'ö l 2013, 171). Several church communities are either trapped in a state of financial instability, or have been forced to suffer dismantlement due to default. On July 23, 2013, the MBC TV program *Newsdesk*³ aired an investigative report revealing that the number of churches or church-related facilities listed for judicial sale has been growing considerably, from 181 cases in 2008 to 312 in 2012, a 70% increase (Kwak Sünggyu 2013). Only rarely do Korea's major broadcasters run church-related news stories in their evening news segments. After continuing to increase (to 331 cases in 2013), the growing trend of church sales reversed itself, with 307 listed court sales of churches in 2014 and 241 in 2015, which would imply that the construction of churches had decreased not only due to economic depression, but also to low bidding rates (Chang Ch'ang'il 2016).

In the so-called "Miracle on the Han River," Korea achieved remarkable economic growth over the latter half of the twentieth century, following its emergence from the ruins of the Korean War. For example, in 1955, two years after the end of the Korean War, the per capita gross national income (GNI) for South Korea was US\$65. By 1996, that number had skyrocketed to US\$13,077 – a more than 200-fold increase within a span of 41 years.⁴ It is important to note here that Christianity, chiefly Protestantism, also achieved incredible growth during this same period in Korea (Lee 2010, xii). Some scholars have described this phenomenon as a "church growth explosion" (Ro and Nelson 1995). And many scholars have sought to investigate the reasons for this religious growth, and from a diversity of perspectives (Chung 2014; Han, Han, and Kim 2009; Lee 2010; Ro and Nelson 1995; Kim Sünggön 2013).

The growth of Korean Protestantism, however, has not been steady. Not only did it enter a period of stagnation in the mid-1980s (Han, Han, and Kim 2009, 333–334), but since the new millennium it has also seen itself transformed into "a symbol of scandal, corruption, anti-reform, social friction and national/ global conflict" (Cho 2014, 317). Scores of scholars and pastors in Korea lament that now is the time for Korean society to worry about the future of the Korean Church, which has contributed significantly

³ MBC means the Munhwa Broadcasting Center, which is one of the two largest broadcasting stations in South Korea. *Newsdesk* is the main evening news of MBC.

⁴ See Korea National Bank Economic Statistic System, accessed November 10, 2017, http://ecos.bok.or.kr/flex/Key100Stat_k.jsp.

to the development of Korea (Yi O'gap 2016; An Kwanghyōn 2012; Sin Tongju 2012).

Nevertheless, the results of the Statistics Korea 2015 Population and Housing Census elated many Protestant leaders, as it showed the number of Korean Protestants now exceeding Buddhists, who had made up the largest religious group in the Statistics Korea 2010 Population and Housing Census.⁵ However, many scholars and pastors have questioned the veracity of the data, asserting some level of statistical errors or that the Christian numbers might include believers registered in cults or those who consider themselves Christians but do not attend church—a group also known as the “Canaan congregation” (*Kanaan sōngdo*) (Kim and Kim 2016, 200–202; Ko 2017). Whatever the exact analysis of the census numbers may be, the important point all religions in Korea should keep in mind is that they are facing an exodus of their adherents (Kim and Kim 2016, 202).

Despite such a reality, some Korean Protestant ministers and other church leaders are still inclined toward a growth-orientated mindset, seeking to secure large bank loans in order to construct new church buildings or church-related institutions. The many empty Protestant church edifices listed for court sale, occupying the largest portion among religious properties, can be taken as evidence of the consequences of such a mindset. Why do those pastors and church leaders in Korea take so many risks in their quest for expansion? Where does their excessive positivity come from? In his *Müdigkeitsgesellschaft*⁶ (*Fatigue Society*,⁷ K. P'iro sahoe), Byung-Chul Han identifies contemporary society as the “burnout society,” wherein people grow exhausted due to a surplus of positivity,⁸ resulting in self-exploitation and depression (Han Byung-Chul 2012). Despite flaws in his theory, Han's approach does possess ample weight as a hermeneutical approach to the current situation of Korean Protestantism.

This paper firstly investigates the contributing factors in the erection of unfeasible churches, as well as the reasons behind the financial instability and defaults that have been plaguing Korean Protestantism. To do this, a comparison shall be made with Korean Buddhism, since it has been undergoing changes similar to those of Korean Protestantism. In addition, this study analyzes the unique socio-cultural and religious milieu of

⁵ Statistics Korea, a central government organization dedicated to statistics, and which conducts quinquennial surveys on a variety of factors regarding population and housing. See <http://kostat.go.kr>.

⁶ As soon as this book was published in Germany, it was widely acknowledged by the mass media. For example, the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* reported in its special section that as a Korean-German scholar, Byung-chul Han had pioneered a new way of cultural criticism from the East-Asian perspective (*Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, October 2, 2010).

⁷ Though the literal meaning of “*Müdigkeitsgesellschaft*” is fatigue society, the English translation of the book appeared as *The Burnout Society* (Han Byung-Chul 2015).

⁸ The term *Übermaß an Positivität* in the original German edition was translated into “a surplus/excess of positivity,” or “surplus positivity” in the English edition (Han Byung-Chul 2015), 5.

Korea that goads many pastors and other church leaders into undertaking audacious ventures. Following this analysis, this research seeks to apply the new theoretical framework of Han in order to adopt a hermeneutical approach to the current situation of Korean Protestantism, while also exploring what this hermeneutics manifests with regard to both the congregation and pastors. Finally, this study not only portrays an observable fact in Korean society regarding physical and psychological desire, namely *hilling yōlp'ung*⁹ ("healing craze"), but also probes the implications of this trend for Korean Protestantism.

The Mechanism for Launching New Church Facilities

The tendency within the Korean Protestant community has been to build larger and more modern churches. This is not the case with just a few congregations; this notion appears to have pervaded the entire church community, and the factors behind this trend are in need of analysis.

First, there is the case of existing churches requiring renovation due to their advanced age. According to the Korean Housing Construction Promotion Act (Dec. 31, 1977), owners of buildings over twenty years old can request permission for reconstruction from the government (Sō Ŭit'aek and Kim Hyōnsu 1996, 9). Alongside the rapid economic growth during the 1960s and 1970s, the Korean Protestant congregations witnessed a parallel growth in their adherents. In order to accommodate this increase in numbers, local churches rushed to erect more edifices. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, most of these buildings were now over twenty years old. Although the average durability of concrete buildings is estimated to exceed fifty years, buildings over twenty years old may legally be rebuilt in Korea. For example, in the case of reconstructing apartment buildings, in which roughly 70 percent of the Korean urban population resides, such work is carried out frequently in order to improve living conditions, although the housing cooperatives formed by apartment dwellers, who take the initiative for reconstruction, also seek to increase property values (Ch'oe Kyōngsik 2009, 53).

A new loan program launched by certain Korean banks also helped trigger the boom in church reconstruction. On observing the desire to expand and build among the Korean Protestant churches, some Korean banks began a new loan program for church reconstruction (Pak Chunsōng 2013). Amidst the fierce rivalry in both the private and corporate loan markets, some banks discovered a new market, namely the church loan project. This proved beneficial to banks as well as church leaders seeking capital for construction costs. However, even though this is common

⁹ The literal meaning of "*yōlp'ung*" 烈風 is "enthusiastic wind." In Korea, this word is used when a new fever or enthusiastic trend for something appears.

practice in some countries, especially in the US, in Korea it attracted criticism and gave Korean Protestants a bad name for borrowing funds in order to build churches. There are two reasons for such criticism. First, this practice is viewed by many as contrary to biblical teaching (Pak Chŏngyun 2010). Second, since a significant portion of congregational donations is used to pay off church loans, the church inevitably encounters budget cuts in the important aspects of its mission, such as supporting missionaries, charitable activities etc. (Sin Sangmok 2016). Yet, despite the criticism, this financial practice is prevalent throughout the Korean Protestant community.

Financing loans for religious organizations has not been confined to Protestantism; some banks have developed project loans for other religions, such as Buddhism, Catholicism, etc. With regard to financial instability, Buddhism is just below Protestantism, since, as mentioned above, among all the religious facilities up for court auction, Buddhist temples account for approximately 20 percent. However, this is still low compared to Protestant properties, which make up around 70 percent of such sales. As of March 2012, loans to Protestant churches had soared to comprise 90.4 percent of the total loans to religious organizations, compared to Buddhism (2.3%) and Catholicism (1.9%) (Hwang Sang'uk 2012; Yi Taeung 2012).

Finally, church rivalries could well be a major factor behind the drive to construct new edifices. In consumer studies, it is believed that consumer purchases are strongly influenced by the purchasing behavior of other consumers (Kim, Ch'u, and Yi 2014, 167-168). That is to say, the feelings of pastors, elders, and other church leaders who observe another church erecting a new building, would be similar to that of a consumer witnessing another consumer make a purchase. If one church begins constructing a new building, another in the vicinity might experience a fear of losing members, who prefer a new and modern building to their old uncomfortable one. Hence, it would not take long for the other church to begin the construction of a new building.

As is well known, there is no executive headquarter that controls the regional allocation for the founding of churches among the denominations of Protestantism. Particularly in Korea, the number of denominations is much greater than that of other countries due to splits in the Presbyterian Church, the reasons for which will be detailed in the next section. Hence, there can arise fierce competition in certain areas, pitting all denominations against each other. Moreover, the more churches initiate the construction of buildings, the more pressure the neighboring churches feel, and as the number of churches embarking on new building constructions increases, the possibility of neighboring churches doing the same also increases (Kim, Ch'u, and Yi 2014, 180-181).

The Mechanism behind the Financial Instability of Churches

As stated earlier, in response to the needs of the Protestant churches for capital, some Korean banks began a new loan program. However, unlike in the case of ordinary mortgage loans or business loans, for church loans the lenders sought to establish new criteria in order to judge the credit of the borrowers. Thus, banks set up new criteria for evaluating the credit of churches, including congregation size, congregation growth rate, amount of recent offerings, the average amount of such offerings, etc. (Ko Minsö 2014b).

From the standpoint of the lender, these seem appropriate elements for appraising church credit, and yet these factors are also easily distorted or altered. For example, with regard to estimating the amount of prospective offerings, this could fluctuate depending on the financial situation of the church members. Also, with regard to counting the number of congregational members, it is widely known that in Korean Protestant churches there is a considerable difference between registered numbers and attendees. Generally, the number of registered members is more than double that of attendees (Kim Mujöng 2012). That is to say, the statistics depend on what number is used, and hence, depending on the assessor's subjectivity, the rate of congregational increase may deviate widely.

Although reasonable efforts are made, it is possible that errors may arise while evaluating the financial credit rating of a church. However, what makes things worse is the fact that some banks manipulate the credit rating of churches in order to grant them more loans. That is to say, some banks intentionally provide churches with larger loans by providing them better credit records. For example, Suhyup Bank¹⁰ was accused by the National Financial Supervisory Service of granting loans to churches with bad credit, by deliberately raising their credit ratings (Ko Minsö 2014a). As a result, it is not difficult for Protestant churches in Korea to borrow more than their financial capacity should normally allow.

On the other hand, it is also possible that an unexpected scenario could arise, such as a decrease in the number of church members. When building a new church or church facility, one of the things the senior pastor and church executive committee members do not wish to anticipate is declining congregation numbers, which would result in a reduction in offerings. Generally, a church constructs a new building in the hope of growing into a larger church. However, contrary to such expectations, the opposite may happen, as is illustrated by the following three cases.

The first possibility is that church members may abandon the church if the amount of expected offerings is perceived as too burdensome. Usually, special events are held for the purpose of raising funds. During

¹⁰ The literal meaning of Suhyup (*suhyöp* 水協) is "National Federation of Fisheries Cooperatives." The Suhyup Bank is the bank established by this federation.

these emotional events, participants are required to make pledges toward construction costs, and they frequently swear to give a far greater amount than they can actually afford. Sometimes the senior pastor will approach participants directly to solicit donations. This can prove a great burden both financially and psychologically on church members.

In the second case, church members who happen to come into conflict over church construction plans may opt to leave the church. There may arise conflicts between members of the executive committee over issues such as the construction scale, selection of the construction company, etc. Conflicts may even arise between the senior pastor and the executive committee, and here, if things become worse, it is possible that a group of committee members and their followers, whose views were rejected by the senior pastor, may splinter from the church.

Finally, in rare cases, a construction broker may deceive the senior pastors or church leaders, and this may put pressure on the financial stability of the church. There are many construction brokers in Korea who mainly focus on church construction, and after suggesting favorable conditions and receiving contract deposits they disappear, and thereby place the church in a very poor financial position due to the significant loss incurred.

The Unique Socio-Cultural Milieu of Korea

The fact that a significant number of churches have been listed for court sale forms part of wider societal issues in Korea. Korean Protestantism faces a unique socio-cultural milieu, which will be analyzed further below.

First, there is excessive competition between a noticeable number of Korean Protestant denominations. Korean Protestantism is characterized by a separation between denominations, that is more pronounced than anywhere else in the world (Smith 1961). The Presbyterian Church, which constitutes the largest denomination in Korea, presents the most serious case. As of 2002, there were over 100 denominations registered as Presbyterian with the National Ministry of Culture and Tourism (Kim Chunsu 2011, 106–107).¹¹ Protestantism in other countries has also witnessed denominational divisions, but in the case of Korea, a relatively small country but with a high population density, the impact of this may be stronger than in other countries. Thus, in Korea too many graduates have been produced from the seminaries of each denomination (Kim Sangkeun 2005, 467–468; Lee 2010, 147), and they have then been sent to establish a church in every city or rural area. Although each denomination has a headquarters, regional allocation of church-founding becomes meaningless, due to the excessive foundation of churches of each denomination within the same area. Sometimes even

¹¹ For a general overview of the history of the separation of the Korean Church, see Im H u'iguk (2011).

two to three churches start their ministries in the same building. Every church faces unlimited competition from other churches, and hence it is possible that a church involved in excessive construction will face financial vulnerability, with any decline in congregational numbers.

Second, Korean Protestantism has demonstrated a marked preference for larger churches (Pak Hyöngjin 2016, 259; Han Kug'il 2015, 359). Although Christians in other countries have similar attitudes, it is much more pronounced in Korea. It is widely known that the largest church¹² in the world is in Korea, where there are twenty megachurches with adult congregations of more than ten thousand (Kim Sönggön 2013, 6-7; Yu, Connolly, and Kim 2015, 62). Establishing a large/megachurch means a successful career for the senior pastor as well as the church leaders, and becoming a member of its congregation gives pride to its members (Yu, Connolly, and Kim 2015, 63; Yang Soji 1996, 177). Hence, in Korea, large/megachurches tend to increase, while small churches tend to decrease. Even though the era of decline of Korean Protestantism commenced from the late 1990s, the number of large/megachurches has increased significantly, which corroborates the fact that there is a noticeable inclination among Korean Protestants towards such large-scale churches.

Third, the important Korean cultural notion of *ch'emyöñ* (face) could also play a significant role in the construction of new churches. The extended quote below helps illuminate the influence of this notion of *ch'emyöñ* in the excessive construction of new churches or church facilities:

Chemyeon [*ch'emyöñ*], literally meaning the surface or appearance of one's self, is a mark of personal dignity; to maintain *chemyeon*, or face, is to have a good reputation in the eyes of one's peers. One could lose his or her face by not living up to the expectations of others, or by failing to keep a promise or by behaving disreputably. There is something akin to *chemyeon* in the more individualistic Western societies, but it has more to do with etiquette, character, manners, concern for others, etc. In Korea, however, it is more inclusive, as many factors are involved in the maintenance of face: action according to one's status in given situations; dignified appearance of material comfort and high social status; social success or the ability to show signs of social success; and independence and maturity recognized by others. *Chemyeon* is thus important in a group-oriented society like Korea where one is always mindful of the perception of others. (Kim and Choi 2015, 210-211).

With the economic leap of the 1960s, and within the accompanying milieu of severe competition, there has been a critical change in the culture of *ch'emyöñ*. Koreans feel impelled to appear not just superior to others but even as perfect, rather than making any effort to conform to the expectations of others (Tudor 2012, 113). Moreover, pastors in Korea regard the size of their church as a sign of their success (Yu, Connolly, and Kim 2015, 63; Yang Soji 1996, 177) Thus, Koreans will occasionally push forward

¹² The name of the church is Yoido Full Gospel Church, whose founder is Pastor Yonggi Cho.

with construction despite unstable finances, and this sometimes results in negative outcomes. That is to say, the culture of *ch'emyōn* could possibly play a critical role in the orientation towards large/megachurches.

Finally, with church “privatization,”¹³ the prospect of erecting new churches or church-related facilities has arisen to an exorbitant degree. In Korean Protestant churches that have achieved remarkable growth during the latter half of the twentieth century, there are usually charismatic leaders, that is, senior pastors who not only founded the church but also enabled it to prosper and grow. When it comes to church management, however, they are supposed to manage their churches in conjunction with a church committee usually composed of elders, but in most cases the role of elders is relegated to a subordinate position rather than one of supervision (Yu, Connolly, and Kim 2015, 60–61). Hence, excessive power is concentrated in the person of the senior pastor, effectively bringing about the privatization of the church.

Church privatization, however, does not happen in every large/megachurch. If the senior pastor is not a founder, the church committee is more likely to dominate. Nonetheless, in Korean Protestantism since the senior pastor has a crucial role to play in managing her/his church (Sö Hönje 2014, 86), it is still possible to privatize the church regardless of whether that person is a founder or a successor.

A Theoretical Diagnosis of the Status Quo of Korean Protestantism

In his *Müdigkeitgesellschaft*, Byung-Chul Han proposes a new cultural criticism employing a pathological approach. As a Korean-German scholar accustomed to the culture of both East and West, his theory towards contemporary society was persuasive enough to cause a sensation. Even if his criticism does not directly concern Korean Protestantism, it proposes a hermeneutical framework for analyzing the status quo of Korean Protestantism, where not only do a significant number of churches have huge debt burdens, but many church or church-related buildings are up for court sale due to default.

Ecclesiastical Burnout Syndrome due to a Surplus of Positivity

Every era may be characterized from a variety of perspectives. For instance, it is frequently said that the twenty-first century is the era of information technology, whereas the twentieth century was the era of industrialization.

¹³ The term “privatization” of religions was first devised by Peter L. Berger. For a further description of this concept, see Berger (1990).

Han also makes an attempt to define an era in his unique way. Following the statement that every era has its major disease with its typical features, he argues that the twenty-first century may be defined as the era of neurosis, while the twentieth century was the era of immunology (Han Byung-chul 2012, 11-12). According to Han, the era of immunology was characterized as attack and defense based on a distinct separation between homogeneity and heterogeneity, whereas the era of neurosis is characterized as one of surplus positivity due to an excess of homogeneity, thus causing a burnout syndrome (Ibid., 12-22).

Han's approach using the analogy of pathology offers considerable insight into Korean Protestantism, and especially senior pastors. Today, many senior pastors in Korea are obsessed with the surplus of positivity, which causes an excessively result-oriented attitude. They continue to emphasize the importance of quantitative growth in the church community. After constructing huge buildings by borrowing an inordinate amount of money, they not only require the congregation to reimburse the loan, but also to fill the enlarged space with new members. Under such circumstances, the exhausted congregation of the "fatigue society" can obtain neither physical nor psychological repose at their churches, and so eventually many either leave for other churches, or stop attending weekly services altogether. These Protestants use as substitutes for these services either digital media or private small-group gatherings at home, that is, groups composed of those in the same situation.

Recently, a new expression, "*Kanaan sŏngdo*" (Canaan congregation, or Canaan holy-believers) was coined for the purpose of ministry in the Korean Protestant community. On hearing this expression without understanding the satire behind it, people naturally perceive it in a positive way, due to the connotation of the word "Canaan," which is generally acknowledged as the Promised Land bequeathed by God in Christianity. Yet it does not refer to Canaan in its literal sense, but is rather a satirical wordplay: in Korean, Kanaan 가나안 pronounced in reverse becomes "annaga" 안나가 (not attending). Consequently, *Kanaan sŏngdo* refers to those Protestant Christians who do not attend church services. But there is another approach to explaining the phenomenon of *Kanaan sŏngdo*, as descriptor for a congregation searching for Canaan. Applying the literal meaning of Canaan, we see that this is similar to the experience of the Jewish people, who had a long journey to Canaan the Promised Land. That is, it refers to those searching for a new church (Chŏng Chaeyŏng 2013, 85).

It is reported that more than one million self-described Christians in South Korea do not attend regular church services, and they are called *Kanaan sŏngdo* (Ch'ae Pyŏnggwān 2016, 220; Yang Hŭisong 2014, 35). According to a recent study, the number of *Kanaan sŏngdo* has increased by 8 percent over the past five years, putting their total number at 1.9 million

(Yi Yongp'il 2017). Although such research may contain some statistical errors, the fact is that the large number of *Kanaan sŏngdo* cannot be ignored.

The phenomenon of *Kanaan sŏngdo* is analyzed as either the Korean version of "believing without belonging," a phenomenon that had emerged earlier in the West, or as a societal result of secularization (Chŏng Chaeyŏng 2013). However it is viewed, a primary factor behind the phenomenon of *Kanaan sŏngdo* is the result-oriented attitude of senior pastors and other church leaders, which not only imposes excessive financial burdens on the congregation, but also exerts psychological pressure to bring in new church congregants. Consequently, the ecclesiastical burnout syndrome has occurred within a significant number of Korean Protestant churches.

Pastor Depression and Burnout in a result-oriented Society

As previously mentioned, the result-oriented attitudes of senior pastors and other church leaders impose considerable burdens on congregations. However, those attitudes can at the same time be burdensome to the pastors and church leaders as well. According to Han, while the contemporary era is a result-oriented society where positivity is stressed, the earlier era was a rule-oriented society where negativity was stressed (Han Byung-Chul 2012, 23–24). Han also argues that accentuating negativity produces criminals, whereas accentuating positivity produces depressives (Ibid., 24). Hence, given his theory, the result-oriented circumstances in a church bent on emphasizing positivity can cause the congregation to burnout, and what is more, they can also cause senior pastors to fall into a state of depression. The reason for this is because congregants tends to leave the church when they encounter such circumstances as described above, whereas senior pastors, tied to the church as their workplace, tend to fall into depression while also experiencing burnout.

After conducting qualitative research through in-depth interviews with thirteen senior pastors in Korea, An Tŏksu, who is a senior pastor, concluded that the greatest cause of depression among senior pastors was the quantitative growth in the church (An Tŏksu 2009, 139). Given the research of An, one can presume that senior pastors of churches that have received large loans from banks in order to construct new facilities, are more likely to be depressed when that congregational increase is not achieved within an anticipated period. Moreover, when a practical growth rate is not fulfilled in accordance with the expected criteria, the senior pastors can also become frustrated, which results in a burnout syndrome (Ibid., 6).

In another study dealing with stress in the ministry, O Sejun, who is also a senior pastor, conducted a survey of 315 senior pastors in Korea using various questionnaires and with interesting results. According to O's study, for senior pastors, ministering in a rented facility is even more stressful than in a church-owned one; the stress affects her/his ministry, family life, and

even relationships with others (O Sejun 2009, 113–116). Therefore, it may be presumed that stress causes senior pastors to rush to complete church-owned edifices, in spite of financial instability.

With regard to the result-oriented policy in church ministry, as mentioned above, elders and other members of church committees also play significant roles in boosting the result-oriented atmosphere. If a senior pastor is not a church founder, the church committee members will often have much more leverage than the senior pastor. Moreover, since a great amount of money is often obtained through donations from church elders rather than through bank loans, the stress could be significant when financial status becomes unstable due to a decrease in congregation size. So far, however, there has been no in-depth research of church leadership depression in the context of Korean Protestantism. We must also pay attention to Han's analysis in the following sense. Since the characteristic of exploitation in a result-oriented society is not just spontaneous but also accompanies feelings of freedom, it has a greater effect than in times past (Han Byung-Chul 2012, 29). The process of constructing a new building is not done under pressure from others, but rather, spontaneously by the senior pastor and church leaders. In addition, the extent of self-exploitation in Korea might grow even more acute due to the fact that it is occurring in association with the aforementioned socio-cultural or religious factors, such as excessive competition between denominations, a large-church oriented psychology, the culture of *ch'emyŏn*, and church privatization.

The Healing Craze and its Implications for Korean Protestantism

In recent years, "healing" has become a catchword in Korean society as part of the socio-cultural trend in Korea called *hillŏng yŏlp'ung* (healing craze). This concept has been used and applied in nearly all fields, including broadcasting services, advertising, publishing, music, cuisine, etc. What does the phenomenon of *hillŏng yŏlp'ung* signify in Korea, where incredible economic growth was achieved in just half a century? And what might Korean Protestantism acquire from this phenomenon?

In 2012, a best-selling book with the title *Mŏmch'umyŏn, piroso poinŏn kŏttŏl* (Things you can only see when you slow down), by a Korean Buddhist monk named Haemin,¹⁴ sold a record one million copies in just seven months, the shortest period to reach this magical number in the history of the book market in Korea. As its title suggests, the book emphasizes the

¹⁴ In mid-November, 2020, Haemin came on a TV show showing his daily life, but it caused controversy because his life seemed to be different from what he had been encouraging people to try, which was non-possession. So the controversy was named as "full-possession controversy." Finally, Haemin posted a public apology on his website and declared he would stop all his public activities and concentrate on Buddhist practice.

importance of relaxation and internal peace, teaching the art of introspection to those exhausted by the excessive competition and psychological stresses of contemporary society. The monk, who has become a celebrity with the popularity of his book, has held many events, so-called “healing concerts.” These concerts, which have been very popular in Korea, include his lectures, individual counseling, and Korean traditional music.

Hilling yŏlp’ung generated a new trend, the so-called “healing tourism,” in the Korean tourist market. The term “healing tourism” is unfamiliar to Westerners, though it would fall under wellness tourism in the West (Yi and Pak 2014, 5–6). One of the representative items in healing tourism is Templestay. The Templestay program, which is one of the tourism products developed from Buddhist cultural resources, became a representative religio-cultural tourism item in Korea within a relatively short period.

Korea’s Templestay program has grown over the years, providing both foreign visitors and Korean people with respite, beautiful scenery and a chance to learn about Korean culture. It serves as an opportunity to find their identity amongst the harmony of nature, while staying at a Buddhist temple by paying respect to the temple’s ritual practices and meditative disciplines. (Pak Ŭisŏ 2011, 131)

Even though Templestay was initially devised in order to provide lodging facilities for foreign visitors during the 2002 World Cup (Yŏ T’aedong 2007, 226–227; Pak Ŭisŏ 2011,131), it has attracted a considerable number of Korean nationals (Kim and Kim 2015, 38). In the big data-based analysis of responses of the Korean participants the results were predominantly positive (Ibid., 33).

Despite the fact that a successful program such as Templestay has managed to introduce many people to Korean Buddhism, according to the Statistics Korea 2015 Population and Housing Census, the size of the Buddhist population in Korea has seen a sharp decline over the past decade. Korean Buddhists, and especially leaders of every Buddhist order, institute, and organization, expressed shock and disappointment to learn that the mantle of largest religious affiliation in Korea had been transferred to Protestantism (Song Chihŭi 2017; Cho Hyŏnsŏng 2016). According to Kim Chong’in, the reason the success of the Templestay program has not led to the growth of the Buddhist population, is not only that it is very difficult to convert participants to traditional Buddhist beliefs with a new educational program, but also because in many cases program leaders do not attempt to convert participants to Buddhism (Kim Chong’in 2017).

According to OECD statistics (2014), the “average annual hours actually worked per worker” in Korea was 2,124, the second highest among the 36 member countries. Compare this for instance to Germany’s 1,371 hours.¹⁵

¹⁵ OECD (2016), Hours worked (indicator), accessed December 20, 2016, doi: 10.1787/47be1c78-en.

OECD statistics (2013) also show that the “temporary employment rate” in Korea was 22.4 percent, fourth among the 36 member countries.¹⁶ Judging from these statistics, Koreans are working significantly more and are considerably more stressed, contributing to a very high suicide rate, with Korea ranking highest in suicides relative to population among all OECD member countries for the period spanning 2003 to 2013.¹⁷

All these statistics demonstrate that contemporary Koreans inhabit a milieu ripe for the success of *hillung yǒlp’ung*. In an era of surplus positivity, many Koreans suffer from burnout and depression in the context of a society under the burden of excessive labor and competition. What is more, under such extremely stressful conditions, they also have the highest suicide rate among the world’s developed countries.¹⁸ Despite these circumstances, Protestant churches or church-related edifices still occupy the largest portion of court sales among religious properties in Korea. Just as Koreans yearn for relaxation and repose, Korean Protestants also seem to demand physical and psychological recovery in the church.

In reaction to the excessive emphasis on numerical growth witnessed among Protestant churches, the value and importance of small churches has recently gained prominence—the so-called “small church movement” (*chagŭn kyohoe undong*). This movement can be interpreted as an attempt to reconsider the importance and unique role of small churches, and an emphasis on spiritual maturity rather than numerical growth (Pak Hyǒngjin 2016, 286). Many Korean Christian leaders have been joining the movement, which is gradually spreading across the Korean Protestant community.

There are a considerable number of small churches in Korean Protestantism. The criteria to determine whether a church is a small church vary by country, culture, and scholar. Nevertheless, financial status and congregation size are naturally included in the criteria. In terms of financial status for instance, although there is some variation by denomination, between 34% and 49% of churches in Korean Protestantism are dependent on outside financial assistance (Yi Yǒng’un 2017, 243; Yu Chaedök 2012, 58). In addition, when it comes to the number of attendees, approximately 80% of Korean Protestant churches have less than a hundred regular parishioners (Pak Hyǒngjin 2016, 258).

Many small churches have difficulties competing with large ones, and experience frequent losses of adherents to their larger counterparts (Yi Huch’ön 2011, 220). Further, it has been shown that pastors of small churches are more likely to suffer from feelings of low self-esteem (Yi Yǒng’un 2017, 253; Yi Myǒnghŭi 2005, 267). Nonetheless however, small churches have

¹⁶ OECD (2016), Temporary employment (indicator), accessed December 20, 2016, doi: 10.1787/75589b8a-en.

¹⁷ OECD (2016), Suicide rates (indicator), accessed December 20, 2016, doi: 10.1787/a82f3459-en.

¹⁸ OECD (2017), Suicide rates (indicator), accessed October 24, 2017, doi: 10.1787/a82f3459-en.

various benefits that are hard to find in large/megachurches. For instance, not only does the small church provide supportive pastoral care to its attendees, but it also makes them feel truly valued and imparts a strong sense of belonging to the church community (Yi Myŏnghŭi 2005, 263–264). Despite this, according to Pak, the mindset that only small churches make ideal and balanced models of churches might also generate new conflicts between large/megachurches and small churches in Korean Protestantism (Pak Hyŏngjin 2016, 285).

Conclusion

During the latter half of the twentieth century Korea experienced remarkable economic progress, a fact that earned it international accolades. During the same period, Korean Protestantism also witnessed explosive growth, a fact that many churches in the world applauded. However, today, among the economies of the developed world, that of Korea is facing hardships. Since the 1990s, Korean churches have seen a stagnation in their numbers, and in the twenty-first century their image has been tarnished due to a variety of issues, such as the hereditary succession of the church, financial corruption, sex scandals, and so forth.

Despite these challenges, a significant number of senior pastors and other church leaders in Korean Protestantism, trapped within the mentality of quantitative growth, have constructed new facilities by securing large loans from banks, and have been repaying the enormous interest on those loans through the offerings of the congregation. Moreover, due to loan default, a considerable number of churches or church-related facilities have been brought up for court sale. A variety of other factors have only aggravated this situation, such as a persistent growth-oriented attitude among senior pastors and other church leaders, the moral hazards of some banks, and socio-cultural components in Korean Protestantism (including excessive competition between denominations, large/megachurch-oriented psychology, the culture of *ch'emyŏn*, and church privatization).

Applying a pathological analogy, Byung-Chul Han has presented us with a new cultural criticism. According to him, the twenty-first century is an era of neurosis, in which there is a procession of self-exploitation and depression caused by a surplus of positivity. Borrowing his term, we may say that we live in a “fatigue society.” His diagnosis is useful for penetrating the status quo of Korean Protestantism. Due to the surplus positivity of senior pastors and other church leaders, many churches have pursued a growth-oriented strategy, resulting not only in a burnout syndrome among congregations, but also in burnout and depression among senior pastors. Congregational burnout has become a primary contributing factor to the phenomenon of *Kanaan sŏngdo*.

During the late twentieth century Koreans experienced a transition

in their industrial structure, namely from labor-intensive to technology-intensive and knowledge-intensive industries. Nevertheless, a significant section of company CEOs and government bureau executives in modern Korea maintain the same attitude they possessed during the period of labor-intensive industries. Hence, a vast section of Koreans complain of exhaustion and excessive work hours. In addition, the status of employment has become so unstable that vast numbers of working Koreans are under a considerable amount of stress, fearing dismissal and loss of income. Both overwork and job insecurity have become major factors in giving Korea the highest suicide rate among OECD member nations since 2003.

The phenomenon of *hilling yŏlp'ung* was engendered under such conditions, and the desire for healing—physical and psychological—appeared in almost every aspect of Korean society. One manifestation of this in the Buddhist context is the highly successful Templestay program initiated in 2001. For Korean Protestantism, this desire for healing, repose, and spiritual renewal can be seen in the *Kanaan sŏngdo* as well as the recent "small church movement," the latter generated by a portion of Korean Christian leaders. This latter phenomenon can be interpreted as an attempt to re-consider the importance and role of small churches as an escape from the growth-oriented mindset of larger churches, and it is a movement gradually spreading across the Korean Protestant community.

REFERENCES

- An Kwanghyön. 2012. "Han'guk üi kaesin'gyo pup'ae hyönsang e taehan koch'al" [Investigation into the corruption phenomenon of the Korean Protestant Church]. *Sinhak kwa sahoe* 26, no. 3: 103–137.
- An Töksu. 2009. "Han'guk kyohoe chungnyön namsöng mokhoeja üi st'üresü wa talchin e kwanhan yön'gu" [Study of the stress and burnout of middle-aged male ministers in the Korean Church]. PhD diss., United Graduate School of Theology, Yonsei University.
- Berger, Peter L. 1990. *The Sacred Canopy*. New York: Anchor Books.
- Ch'ae Pyönggwan. 2016. "Han'guk üi kanaan söngdo wa Yöngguk üi sosok ömnün sinangin e taehan pigyo yön'gu" [A comparative study of "Canaan believers" in Korea, and "believers without belonging" in Britain]. *Hyönsang kwa insik* 40, no. 3: 161–182.
- Chang Ch'ang'il. 2016. "Kyohoe könc'h'uk = söngjang sidae üi chongsik" [End of the age where constructing churches equals church growth]. *Han'guk kidok kongbo*, July 4.
- Cho Hyönsöng. 2016. "Pulgyo in'gusu kamsö nün ch'use" [Decline of the Buddhist population is a trend]. *Pulgyo tat köm* [bulgyo21.com], 29 December.
- Cho, Kyuhoon. 2014. "Another Christian Right? The Politicization of Korean Protestantism in Contemporary Global Society." *Social Compass* 61, no. 3: 310–327.
- Ch'oe Kyöngsik. 2009. "Chiphap könmul ch'aegönc'h'uk yögön e kwanhan yön'gu" [A study of the requirements for reconstruction of the congregate building]. *Chiphap könmul pöphak* (5): 31–60.
- Chöng Chaeyöng. 2013. "'Sosok ömnün sinangin' e taehan yön'gu" [Research on "believers without belonging"]. *Hyönsang kwa insik* 37, no. 4: 85–108.
- Chung, ByungJoon. 2014. "A Reflection on the Growth and Decline of the Korean Protestant Church." *International Review of Mission* 103, no. 2: 319–333.
- Haemin. 2012. *Mömc'h'umyön, piroso poinün köttül* [The things you can see only when you slow down]. Seoul: Sam & Parkers.
- Han Byung-Chul [Han Pyöngch'öl]. 2012. *Piro sahoe* [Fatigue society]. Translated by Kim Taehwan. Seoul: Moonji Publishing Co., Ltd.
- Han Byung-Chul [Han Pyöngch'öl]. 2015. *The Burnout Society*. Translated by Erik Butler. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

- Han, Gil-Soo, Joy J. Han, and Andrew Eungi Kim. 2009. "Serving Two Masters': Protestant Churches in Korea and Money." *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 9, no. 4: 333-360.
- Han Kug'il. 2015. "Taehyöng kyohoe üi munje ch'indan kwa p'yöngka: Han'guk kyohoe e taehan pip'anjöök söngch'al üi kwanchööm esö" [Diagnosis and evaluation of problems of the megachurch: from the viewpoint of critical reflections on the church in South Korea]. *Sön'gyo sinhak* (39): 359-389.
- Hwang Sang'uk. 2012. "Ünhaenggwön, taech'ul k'ünson, yegüm k'ünson, chonggyogyo mosigi" [Financial sector to welcome religious sector, which is a big customer in terms of loans and deposits]. *P'ainaensyöl nyusü* [Financial News], May 23.
- Im Hüiguk. 2011. "Han'guk changno kyohoe üi punyöl üi yöksa" [Education of the history of Korean Presbyterianism for the cooperation and unity of the Church]. *Changno kyohoe wa sinhak* (8): 39-82.
- Kim, Andrew Eungi, and Joon-sik Choi. 2015. *Contemporary Korean Culture: The Persistence of Shamanistic and Confucian Values and Practices*. Seoul: Korea University Press.
- Kim Chong'in. 2017. "Pulgyo in'gu kamsö wa saeroun sindosang" [Shrinking Buddhist population and the new image of the Buddhist in Korea]. *Pöppo sinmun*, 17 July.
- Kim Chunsu. 2011. "Kyohoe yönhap ül wihan sönggyöngjöök hwahae sayök yöngu" [A study on the Bible Reconciliation Ministry for Church Unity]. *Sönggyöng kwa sinhak* (57): 105-133.
- Kim Habin, Ch'u Hojöng, and Yi Hagyöng. 2014. "Sösyöl k'ömösü sanghwangesö t'ain üi chonjaega kumae üido e mich'inün yöngnyang: sahoejöök silchaegam kwa kyöngjaengsim üi maegae hyokwa rül chungsim üro" [Effects of social clues on purchase intentions in social commerce: focusing on the mediation role of social presence and consumer competition]. *Sobijahak yöngu* 25, no. 5: 167-188.
- Kim Hyönggil, and Daniel Kim. 2016. "Han'guk in'gu kujo üi p'yönhwa wa Han'guk kyohoe üi taeüng" [Changes in the population structure of Korea and some recommendations for the Korean Church]. *Logos kyöngyöng yöngu* 14, no. 4: 191-210.
- Kim Mujöng. 2012. "Kyohoe üi hösu" [Imaginary numbers of the Korean Protestant Church]. *Kookmin Ilbo* [Kungmin ilbo], 5 October.
- Kim Pogyöng, and Kim Migyöng. 2015. "Pikteit'a rül hwallyong han t'emp'ül söt'ei kiwödü net'üwök'ü punsök" [Keyword network analysis of Templestay using big data]. *Kwan'gwanghak yöngu* 39, no. 5: 27-40.

- Kim, Sangkeun. 2005. "Sheer Numbers Do Not Tell the Entire Story: The Challenges of the Korean Missionary Movement from an Ecumenical Perspective." *Ecumenical Review* 57, no. 4: 463–472.
- Kim Sönggön. 2013. "Kodo söngjang ihu üi Han'guk kyohoe: chonggyo sahoehakchök köch'al" [Korean Protestant Church after its rapid growth: a sociological study of religion]. *Han'guk kidokkyo wa yöksa* (38): 5–45.
- Ko, Dong-hwan. 2017. "More Koreans now Non-believers, Census Shows." *Korea Times*, 10 January.
- Ko Minsö. 2014. "Suhyöp chunganghoe, kyohoe sindo su pup'ullyö 150 ök pusil taech'ul" [Bank of the National Federation of Fisheries Cooperatives, granting loan of 12 million US dollars to churches with credit deterioration]. *P'ainaensyöl nyusü* [Financial News], 27 June.
- . 2014. "Taech'ul kökchöng ömnün chonggyo: sindo su ppöngt'wigimyön küt" [Religion without loan anxiety: inflating the congregation number is acceptable]. *P'ainaensyöl nyusü* [Financial News], 2 July.
- Kwak Sönggyu. 2013. "Taehyöng kyohoe kyöngmae sokch'ul: murihan söngjönkönych'uk'pittömi" [Continuous appearance of megachurches at the national court auctions: unreasonable construction of churches saddled with debt]. *MBC TV Newsdesk*, 28 July 28.
- Lee, Timothy S. 2010. *Born Again: Evangelicalism in Korea*. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press.
- O Hwach'öl. 2013. "Han'guk kyohoe könych'uk e kwanhan mokhoe sinhakchök chöpkün" [Pastoral theological approach for church architecture]. *Sinhak nondan* (73): 165–193.
- O Sejun. 2009. "Mokhoe süt'üresü punsök mit haegyöl pangan" [Analysis of pastoral stress and its solution]. PhD diss., Sungkyul University.
- Pak Chöngyun. 2010. "Söngjön könych'uk ül wihan sönggyöngjöck chabon chodal üi wölli wa kyohoe üi ch'aip könych'uk" [Biblical financing principles for temple construction and the church borrowing phenomenon]. *Logos kyöngyöng yön'gu* 8, no. 2: 119–136.
- Pak Hyöngjin. 2016. "Lojan undong kwanjöm esö pon chagün kyohoe undong" [Small church movement from the perspective of the Lausanne Movement]. *ACTS Sinhak chönöl* (30): 257–290.
- Pak Pyöngguk. 2014. "Kyohoe, sach'al kyöngmae naon iyu nün" [The reason churches and temples are on the auction block]. *Heröldü kyöngje* [Herald Economy], 13 May.

- Pak Ŭisö. 2011. "Han'guk chonggyo kwan'gwang ũi chöngch'aek panghyang kwa sönggong sarye" [Policy direction and successful cases of Korean religious tourism]. *Kwan'gwang yön'gu chönöl* 25, no. 5: 121-137.
- Ro, Bong Rin, and Martin L. Nelson, eds. 1995. *Korean Church Growth Explosion*. Seoul: Word of Life Press.
- Sin Sangmok. 2016. "Pulhwang hanp'a kyohoe töpch'ina" [Does economic recession attack the Korean churches?]. *Kookmin Ilbo* (Kungmin ilbo), 15 January.
- Sin Tongju. 2012. "Sahoe ka kyohoe kökchöng hanün il antakkawö" [Isn't it regretful that Korean society worries about the Korean church?]. *Segye ilbo*, 12 January.
- Smith, John Coventry. 1961. "Policy Lessons from Korea." *International Review of Missions* 50, no. 199: 320-324.
- Sö Hönje. 2014. "Kyohoe punyöl e kwanhan taeböpwön p'an'gyöl ũi ũüüi" [Review of the Supreme Court judgments on the division of the church]. *Chosüt'isü* [The Justice] (145): 85-112.
- Sö Ŭit'aek and Kim Hyönsu. 1996. "Chaegönc'huk saöp ũi kaesön pang'an e kwanhan yön'gu" [Study on the reconstruction of deteriorated apartment buildings]. *Tosi yön'gu po* (4): 1-11.
- Song Chihüi. 2017. "Han'guk pulgyo wigi, chonggyo ponyön ũi yökhal ro toragaya" [Crisis in Korean Buddhism, better return to the basic religious role]. *Pöppo sinmun*, 18 April.
- Tudor, Daniel. 2012. *Korea: The Impossible Country*. Singapore: Tuttle Publishing.
- U Cheyun. 2013. "526 ök! Yöktae ch'oegoga kyohoe kyöngmae" [50 million dollars! The most expensive church on the National Court auction]. *Maeil kyöngje*, 3 July.
- Yang Hüisong. 2014. *Kanaan söngdo, kyohoe pak sinang* [Canaan congregation, faith outside the church]. Seoul: Poiema.
- Yang Soji. 1996. "Kyohoe nün taehyöngghwa, mokcha nün ch'ibu" [Churches get bigger and pastors get richer]. *Han'guk nondan* (83): 176-182.
- Yi Chinhyöng, and Pak Chongsön. 2014. "Hilling yölp'ung kwa kwan'gwang kaebal: kaenyöm, sahoemunhwajök paegyöng kwa sarye" [Healing craze and tourism development: concept, socio-cultural background, and cases]. *Tongbuga kwan'gwang yön'gu* 10, no. 1: 1-17.
- Yi Huch'ön. 2011. "Ch'agün kyohoe rül wihan silch'önsinhakchök kwaje" [Practical theological issues for small churches]. *Sinhak kwa silch'ön* 26, no. 2: 219-245.

- Yi Myŏnghŭi. 2005. "Chagŭn kyohoe t'ŭksŏng kwa hyokwajŏgin mokhoe"
[An understanding of small churches and making them effective].
Sinhak kwa silch'ŏn (8): 259–294.
- Yi O'gap. 2016. "Han'guk kyohoe ŭi munjae nŭn ch'ingŭiron ttaemunilkka?"
[Are the problems of Korean churches caused by the doctrine of
"justification by faith"?]. *Han'guk kidokkyo sinhak nonch'ong* (100):
163–193.
- Yi Taeung. 2012. "Kidokkyogyŏ, kŭmyŏnggwŏn taech'ul ch'ongaek 4 cho
5 ch'ŏnŏk yŏwŏn" [Protestant sector, total amount of loan soared to
approximately 4 trillion 5 hundred billion wŏn]. *K'ŭrisŭch'ŏn t'udei*
[Christian Today], 15 May.
- Yi Yongp'il. 2017. "Kanaan kyoin 5 nyŏn chŏn poda 8% nŭrŏtta" [Number
of Canaan Christians has increased 8 percent over the past 5 years].
Newsnjoy, 9 June.
- Yi Yŏng'un. 2017. "Kyoyuk mokhoe rŭl wihan chagŭn kyohodŭl ŭi
yŏnhap hwaldong sarye yŏn'gu" [Educational ministry through joint
programs among small churches]. *Kidokkyo kyoyuk chŏngbo* (52): 239–
272.
- Yŏ T'aedong. 2007. "T'emp'ŭl sŭt'ei ŭi unyŏng silt'ae wa hyangsangwha
pang'an" [Management of the temple stay program and how to
improve it]. *Sŏn munhwa yŏn'gu* (3): 225–269.
- Yu Chaedŏk. 2012. "Chagŭn kyohoe rŭl wihan kidokkyo kyoyuk"
[Christian education for the small-membership church]. *Kidokkyo
kyoyuk nonch'ong* (30): 51–80.

Part IV

Socially Engaged Buddhism and Universal Spirituality

The Peace Walk (*Dhammayietra*) in Cambodia: People Met in a “Spiritual Space”

In-gun Kang, S.J.

I arrived in Cambodia in February 1997. I could hear the sounds of gunfire and explosion from time to time, since the long-lasting civil war was still going on between the Khmer Rouge guerillas and the government army. I worked in Banteay Prieb, a vocational training center for people with physical disabilities. Many of our students had been former soldiers of the different fighting factions. Banteay Prieb was not merely a technical school. It was a *basic human community* consisting of several houses, where the students were living together to learn how to help each other in cooking, gardening, and playing. In the one-year program, many students realized that the real obstacle in their lives was not the disabled conditions of their bodies, but the “landmines of mistrust and hatred” in their hearts. In Banteay Prieb, they regained their self-confidence, human dignity, and spirit of reconciliation. Their innocent smiles brightened the place. Jesuits and volunteers often learned from the students how to be happy in difficult situations. The poor and unlearned Khmer students offered something valuable to us, who were highly educated and came from developed countries. Since then, I have met many other poor people over the last twenty-four years, who inspired me to learn something similar to what I learned in Banteay Prieb.

During a retreat I did last year, I reflected on my experience in Cambodia. I realized that I had learned from the poor people of a ‘spiritual space,’ within the deepest core of our being. No matter what ethnicity, religion, or political group we may belong to, and regardless of how much wealth and education we may have, as humans we share a common spiritual space within the deepest part of our being. Christians call this common spiritual space ‘unconditional love’ and Buddhists call it ‘selfless wisdom,’ but the poor people do not know how to call it. They simply share it with a smile, whenever an occasion arises. During my prayers and reflections, I met Jesus and enjoyed sharing his spiritual space with the poor and the marginalized. I also met Maha Ghosananda, a Buddhist monk who proclaimed peace and reconciliation in the midst of the suffering people, during the civil war. I was extremely eager to meet Bob Maat, a former Jesuit brother, who in 1992

became a co-founder of the *Dhammayietra*¹ ('Peace Walk') movement, along with Ven. Maha Ghosananda.

After the retreat I went to see Bob Maat at his residence, the Wat Kandal, a Buddhist temple in Battambang. As I had expected, he welcomed me warmly and permitted me to conduct a lengthy interview with him, concerning the story of the *Dhammayietra*. What I received from him was an exciting account of the socially engaged Buddhist monk, as well as the people who followed him. I was also able to acquire an insightful sharing by a mystic who had left the Society of Jesus in quest of real peace, and to become a man of inner freedom. The live sharing of Bob Maat inspired me to view the *Dhammayietra* from an original standpoint, something I was unable to do via the reading of books and documents. His sharing reminded me of my own experience of the *Dhammayietra*.

This article concerns the *Dhammayietra*. However, it focuses not so much on the movement's social and historical aspects as on its spiritual significance, which inspired numerous participants. It is a story of people who met in a 'spiritual space' initiated by Ven. Maha Ghosananda, in the course of his *Dhammayietra* journey. The story arises wherever and whenever people confront immense sorrow and uncertainty, issues that urge them to walk together towards human solidarity. So, I trust this article too provides insights to those confronting the current pandemic crisis, from a deeper spiritual perspective.

Maha Ghosananda

I personally met Ven. Maha Ghosananda on two occasions. The first was at the Foreign Correspondents Club in Phnom Penh in 1998, and the second was in the course of his meditation session some years later. At the first meeting, international journalists surrounded him on account of his having won the 15th Niwano Peace Prize. They called him the "Gandhi of Cambodia." His face shone with a calm and peaceful smile, and I was impressed by his gentle way of speaking to the crowds, who were seeking to arouse his emotions with reference to the then political tensions in Cambodia. His message was clear, namely that real peace cannot be achieved by hatred. Rather, it could be achieved only by compassion and love for all, including our enemies. I could feel the mood of discontent in the audience. They might have wanted to hear critical comments pertaining to the political leaders of the time, but he never mentioned anyone in that sense. Later I learned that his message had been consistent throughout his entire life.

¹ The term *Dhammayietra* means 'walk' or 'pilgrimage' (*yietra*) in 'truth' or 'peace' (*Dhamma*). Here, the term refers to the peace movement that Maha Ghosananda and Bob Maat initiated in 1992. So, the term *Dhammayietra* can be interpreted as 'walking in Dhamma' or 'walking in peace,' or in short, 'peace walk.'

The point of Maha Ghosananda's message concerns a *spiritual space* that every human being has to share, beyond socio-political, cultural, and religious borders. He says, "Our goal as humans is to realize our universal brotherhood and sisterhood. I pray that this realization will spread throughout our troubled world. I pray that we can learn to support each other in our quest for peace."² To me, his words seemed to resonate with His Holiness Pope Francis's latest encyclical letter, *Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*, wherein he also appealed for universal brotherhood and sisterhood, to overcome the "dark clouds over a closed world" in which social injustice and ecological crisis have prevailed.³ The Pope's dream of walking together with "all people of goodwill" along the paths of hope towards a better world was already sought for by Maha Ghosananda in his *Dhammayietra* movement, in the dark age of war and violence in Cambodia.

In the 1980s, the Khmer people suffered from the ongoing civil war between the four different political factions. The violent conflict did not end even in the refugee camps. While many NGOs focused their humanitarian aid on refugees belonging to particular political sections, Maha Ghosananda tried to meet all political leaders of each faction, including Khmer Rouge leaders, to persuade them to accept a cease-fire. As soon as he arrived at the Sakeo refugee camp in 1978, he started building simple shack-temples, and gave Dhamma talks to the refugees. He emphasized the importance of meditation and inner peace, to acquire strength for social harmony and reconciliation. In 1980, together with a Christian social activist, Rev. Peter Pond, he formed an Interreligious Mission for Peace in Cambodia.⁴ The Thai military officials, who secretly backed the war, did not like his efforts towards establishing a *nonviolent neutral space* in the camp, and hence he was banned from the refugee camp.⁵

After his expulsion from the refugee camp, Maha Ghosananda established Buddhist temples and community centers in Khmer resettlement communities in the USA, Europe, and Australia, and concurrently promoted peace and reconciliation within Cambodia and the world, as a consultant to the United Nations Economic and Social Council.⁶ His peace movement was recognized by world religious leaders, including Pope John Paul II, whom he met in Rome in 1983. The Pope invited him to participate in the Day of Prayer for World Peace in Assisi in 1986, and since then, Maha Ghosananda has annually attended the event until his death.⁷ In 1989 he led a contingent

² Maha Ghosananda, *Step by Step: Meditations on Wisdom and Compassion*, ed. Jane Sharada Mahoney and Philip Edmonds (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1992), 60.

³ See Francis, *Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*, encyclical letter, sec. 5-6, 9-55, Vatican website, October 3, 2020, accessed June 29, 2021, https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html.

⁴ See Jane Mahoney and Philip Edmonds, Editors' introduction to *Step by Step*, 20.

⁵ See Bhikkhu Santidhammo, *Maha Ghosananda: The Buddha of the Battlefield* (Bangkok: S.R. Printing, 2009), 37-39.

⁶ See *Ibid.*, 40.

⁷ See *Ibid.*, 41.

of Buddhist monks to Jakarta to participate in the United Nations-sponsored peace talks between the four warring Khmer factions, and in the meeting he asserted, "Peace is possible!" He named his group "an army of peace," the fifth force comprised of monks and other peacemakers, and proclaimed:

History is being made. Four armies are putting down their guns. Four factions are joining to govern. We are all walking together. All Cambodia weeps for the dead. Every act has a consequence. Years of violence have brought great tragedy. More violence can only bring more harm. Now is the time for peace, and Buddhist monks will bring a fifth army to Cambodia—the army of the Buddha. We will shoot the people with bullets of loving kindness. The army of Buddha will maintain strict neutrality. Mindfulness will be our armor. We will be an army of so much courage that we will turn away from violence. Our goal will be to bring an end to suffering. We will work for unity, freedom, and for an international policy of friendship. In the days ahead, we will continue to broaden the spiritual ground for peace. We will continue to strengthen our skills for peace. We will seek to organize ourselves as an army of peace.⁸

This message reveals Maha Ghosananda's determination with regard to nonviolent conflict resolution in Cambodia, by collaborating with all people of goodwill. At the Jakarta peace talks he met Bob Maat, who was then a Jesuit brother, as well as other peacemakers from refugee camps. Bob Maat and Ven. Yos Hut Khemacaro participated in the same conference as representatives of an NGO called CPR (Coalition for Peace and Reconciliation). Maha Ghosananda and other CPR leaders, including Liz Bernstein and Bob Maat, were all "students of Gandhian nonviolent activism."⁹ They realized that people were in fear and trauma even after the Paris Peace Agreements of October 1991 because armed conflicts were still continuing. Hence they organized the first Peace Walk (*Dhammayietra*) in 1992, on the occasion of the UN's plan of repatriating 350,000 refugees by 1993.¹⁰ According to Bob Maat, both the Thai and Cambodian governments refused to sanction their ideas, and neither did the UNHCR. Nevertheless though, they pursued it as planned.

The first *Dhammayietra* was a 430 km journey, starting from Klong Luek on the Thai border and ending at Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia. The march began with 150 people, comprising monks, NGO workers, and Khmer refugees, but in the course of the march hundreds of villagers joined them, thereby raising the number finally to around 1,000. Maha Ghosananda gave Dhamma talks daily on peace and reconciliation. Villagers prepared buckets of water along the way and waited for the *Dhammayietra*, in order to receive water blessings from the monks in the early morning. In view of the massive destruction of Buddhism during the Khmer Rouge regime and

⁸ Ghosananda, *Step by Step*, 77.

⁹ Matthew Weiner, "Peace Wins: Maha Ghosananda, the 'Gandhi of Cambodia,'" *Fellowship* 73, 4-6 (Spring 2007): 37.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

chronic civil war, these water blessings served as a means of psychological healing and purification for the suffering people of the villages. Even soldiers laid down their guns and joined the march. Emotional healings also occurred through unexpected encounters along the way, between friends and relatives who had not seen each other for decades during the war.¹¹ The further the *Dhammayietra* proceeded, the more did stories of healing and reconciliation arise. Thus the first Peace Walk fulfilled its objective as a successful repatriation program, with beautiful accounts.

The *Dhammayietra* continued annually in the most crucial areas of Cambodia with diverse themes, such as peaceful elections (1993), stopping armed conflicts (1994), an interreligious pilgrimage for peace (1995), anti-deforestation and banning of landmines (1996), reconciliation with the defeated Khmer Rouge and anti-domestic violence (1997), environment and peaceful election (1998), five moral precepts and HIV/AIDS patients (2003), and so on. The number of local participants increased, especially Buddhist monks. Each year the peace walkers faced a variety of hurdles. In the 1993 *Dhammayietra*, three people were wounded by crossfire before starting the march in Siem Reap, though no more attacks arose while marching through the war areas of Kampong Thom. During the 1994 *Dhammayietra*, the walkers were caught in a crossfire on the road to Pailin from Battambang, and hence they had to change their route several times with an armed escort. However, the armed guards attracted raids from the Khmer Rouge, which caused the deaths of a monk and nun and the wounding of five others.

Recently when I interviewed Ven. Yon Seng Yeath¹² with reference to his experience of the *Dhammayietra*, he shared with me a memorable episode related to Maha Ghosananda, involving a tragic accident that occurred during the 1994 march. He said:

When we reached road number 408, the battle between the Khmer Rouge and Government soldiers was going on, and Maha asked both sides for a ceasefire in order to march across the road. The government soldiers said, "It's okay, venerable! But you have to go to the side of the Khmer Rouge and tell them to stop firing." And, Maha did go alone. Yes! Right in front of us, about a thousand people, he went alone. He just jumped into the car and asked the driver to go through the road under fire. Everybody was so scared. The government soldiers shouted, "Oh, he must have been shot dead!" Everybody was in a panic, because the Khmer Rouge soldiers may have misjudged the situation and believed that his car was from the government army. His driver just dropped him into the battlefield for about an hour, and he came back. At that time, we were all silent. We were keeping quiet because we did not think Maha would return, since fierce firing was going on over our heads.¹³

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ven. Yon Seng Yeath is one of the leading intellectual Khmer monks who had just completed his four-year Postdoctoral Research Fellowship at Harvard University in 2020. He joined the first *Dhammayietra* in 1992 as a young monk, and has been actively engaged in the movement.

¹³ Yon Seng Yeath, "Maha Ghosananda on the Battlefield," interview by author, Preah Sihanouk Raja Buddhist University, Phnom Penh, February 5, 2021.

When I reacted by saying, “Maha Ghosananda was so brave,” Ven. Yon confirmed:

Yes, he was. When he came back, everybody was astonished. Then, he started giving his talk. While he was preaching, the fighting was going on. We could hear the sounds of shelling and gunfire over our heads, which never stopped. Father, you know I myself saw that Maha was so calm, and he knew how to enable a thousand people also to calm down. Everybody was silent, and they listened to his speech. He gave us a talk for seven to eight minutes. We started forgetting the sounds of gunfire and just listened to him. Even the government soldiers sat down and listened to him. He did not mention the war. He talked about the calmness of the mind and how we can control ourselves. I still have that image in my mind and heart. I am trying to find the exact spot where Maha gave us his preaching. I want to build a memorial peace monument in that place.¹⁴

Ven. Yon asserted that after the Buddha, Maha Ghosananda was the first monk in Buddhist history who preached on a battlefield. He continued saying, “Maha was never afraid to deal with soldiers having guns. One day a soldier with a gun rushed at him. It was a dangerous moment. The walkers behind Maha were so scared, but when the soldier approached Maha, he asked for a blessing. Maha was never in panic. He was always kind and gentle.”¹⁵

How could Maha Ghosananda maintain tranquility and peace even on the battlefield? How could he so gently persuade people to continue the march, even after losing co-walkers to gunfire? To answer these questions, we have to look back at his educational background and his meditation experience. He was born in the Takeo Province in 1929, and entered monkhood after finishing his primary education. He and many other young monks were trained under Somdech Chuon Nath, the then Supreme Patriarch.¹⁶ After completing his Buddhist studies at Buddhist universities in Phnom Penh and Battambang, at the age of about 24 Maha Ghosananda went abroad for an MA degree at Nalanda University in India. Some documents say he continued to his PhD at the same university, but there is no evidence of that. All sources agree though on a more critical event that occurred during his period of study in India, namely his meeting a Japanese Buddhist Master, Nichidatsu Fujii, who was the founder of the Nipponzan Myohoji Buddhist Order, and a friend of Mahatma Gandhi. Maha Ghosananda acquired from Ven. Fujii the notions of Gandhian nonviolence, for peace and reconciliation.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Somdech Chuon Nath (1883-1969) is the most renowned Buddhist monk in the modern history of Cambodia. He tried to reform Khmer Buddhist practices by making sense to rationalist modern thought and rebuilding Khmer national identity against French colonialism, through recovering the Sanskrit-Pali roots of the Khmer language. His Khmer dictionary is still regarded as the most authoritative in standard Khmer.

Another significant event in the life of Maha Ghosananda occurred in the late 1960s, when he went abroad to practice meditation in a forest temple in Thailand. According to Weiner, Maha Ghosananda met the famous Thai Buddhist reformer Bhikkhu Buddhadāssa in 1965, and learned a ‘radical orthopraxis’ of harmonizing meditation and social engagement.¹⁷ Then from 1969, he began a nine-year meditation retreat at Wat Chai Na, under the strict master Dhammadaro. He described his experience in the forest thus, “All day long, we moved the hand up and down, with mindfulness, following each breath carefully. Every day we did only this—nothing more.”¹⁸ During the nine years of his retreat, Maha Ghosananda listened to news from Cambodia over the radio and learned about the military coup d’état by General Lon Nol in 1970, the American bombing campaign that killed half a million Khmers, and the fact that the Khmer Rouge regime began in 1975. The most tragic news for him, however, was the fact that his parents, all his siblings, and many of his fellow monks and nuns had been murdered.¹⁹ Overwhelmed by sorrow he wept uncontrollably each day, yet he was able to overcome his anguish by practicing meditation and reflecting upon his master’s strong advice. His master, Ven. Dhammadaro said to him,

Don’t weep, be mindful! Having mindfulness is like knowing when to open and when to close your windows and doors. Mindfulness tells us when is the appropriate time to do things.... You can’t stop the fighting. Instead, fight your impulses towards sorrow and anger. Be mindful. Prepare for the day when you can truly be useful to your country. Stop weeping, and be mindful!²⁰

These stern directives on mental control by Dhammadaro assisted Maha Ghosananda, in not allowing the sufferings in Cambodia to leave any imprint upon his mind.²¹ He came to the realization that “There is no sorrow in the present moment. How can there be? Sorrow and anger are about the past. Or they arise in fear of the future. But they are not in the present moment. They are not now.”²² It was the mindful awareness of the

¹⁷ See Weiner, “Peace Wins: Maha Ghosananda, the ‘Gandhi of Cambodia,’” 37. Weiner’s article is the only reliable source that reports the meeting between Maha Ghosananda and Buddhadāssa. To me, it is a very plausible report because Maha Ghosananda’s teachings and activities were similar to what Buddhadāssa taught. It seems unreasonable to think that he had never met Buddhadāssa while staying in the forest temple in Southern Thailand close to Buddhadāssa’s Suan Mokkh, for over nine years. The term ‘radical orthopraxis’ is my own neologism for Buddhadāssa’s thought and practice. For a deeper study of Buddhadāssa, see In-gun Kang, “A Radical Orthopraxis of Theravada Buddhism: Buddhadāssa’s Dhammic Essentialism,” in *The Buddha & Jesus: An anthology of Articles by Jesuits engaged in Buddhist Studies and Inter-religious Dialogue*, ed. Cyril Veliath (Kelaniya, Sri Lanka: Tulana Research Center, 2015), 186-217.

¹⁸ Santidhammo, *Maha Ghosananda: The Buddha of the Battlefield*, 33.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 34.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ See Linda Chhath, “Seeing the Angles, Step by Step: A Study of Maha Ghosananda, a Khmer Monk in Action” (Master’s thesis, University of Wisconsin Madison, 2012), 42.

²² *Ibid.*, 35.

present moment that revealed its power in his calm and pacific act upon the battlefield, that was cited above. I am of the view that Maha Ghosananda achieved his profound *spiritual space* by practicing with diligence this type of intense meditation within the Thai forest, but once he gained enlightenment he never returned to the forest, for he had discovered his temple in the suffering reality of the people. The following are his famous words shared at the Gethsemane Encounter in 1996.²³

We Buddhists must find the courage to leave our temples and enter the temples of human experience, temples that are filled with suffering. If we listen to the Buddha, Christ, or Gandhi, we can do nothing else. The refugee camps, the prisons, the ghettos, and the battlefields will then become our temples. We have so much work to do. This will be a slow transformation, for many people throughout Asia have been trained to rely on the traditional monkhood. Many Cambodians tell me, "Venerable, monks belong in the temple." It is difficult for them to adjust to this new role, but we monks must answer the increasingly loud cries of suffering. We only need to remember that our temple is with us always. We are our temple.²⁴

For Maha Ghosananda, every human person is endowed with a dignity in his deepest self, that is often referred to as the 'Buddha Nature' or the 'Christ Nature.' He realized that war and violence cause harm to this dignity, both in the case of criminals and victims. Hence, when using the phrase "temples of human experience," he meant not just the terrible wounds of the victims who had suffered from the enduring civil war, but also the ignorant desires of warmongering leaders, who had destroyed the human dignity within themselves. Maha Ghosananda was firm in his conviction that authentic peace and reconciliation will be achieved by healing the wounds of the war among the suffering people; and, at the same time, by transforming the distorted minds of the warmongers into vessels of peace. He emphasized the fact that actual conflict resolution is possible only by following Gandhian nonviolent action, that "seeks to put an end to antagonism, and not the antagonists."²⁵ He further asserts, "the opponent has our respect. We implicitly trust his or her human nature, and understand that ill will is caused by ignorance. By appealing to the best in each other, both of us achieve the satisfaction of peace. We both become peacemakers. Gandhi called this 'bilateral victory.'"²⁶

²³ From July 22 to 27, 1996, there was a meeting of fifty Buddhist and Christian monastics at the Abbey of Gethsemane, home of Thomas Merton. This encounter was called for by His Holiness the Dalai Lama at the 1993 Parliament of World Religions. Maha Ghosananda was also invited to this meeting, and he shared his experience of meditation and peace movements. See Donald W. Mitchell, "The Gethsemane Encounter on the Spiritual Life," *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, 17 (1997): 205-8. See also Murray Bodo, "The Dalai Lama Visits Gethsemane," *St. Anthony Messenger*, January 1997, 28-34.

²⁴ Ghosananda, *Step by Step*, 63.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 62.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

Hence, to Maha Ghosananda, the *Dhammayietra* was a journey towards total healing, the integral human liberation of both victims and offenders. This journey welcomed anyone to join in, regardless of their ethnic, religious, or political differences. The rich and the poor could walk together in the *Dhammayietra*. Men and women, young and old, Khmer monks and foreign Christians, former soldiers and victims, could all walk together, until genuine peace arose within their hearts and the world. It was a continuous journey of compassion that did not cease even after Maha Ghosananda grew incapable of walking any longer, owing to physical weakness and his eventual death in 2007. Among his numerous friends and devotees, I wish to share the narratives of Bob Maat who began the *Dhammayietra* along with Maha Ghosananda, and Oddom Vann Syvorn who kept organizing the *Dhammayietra* annually, until her death in 2018. These accounts are based both on my interviews with Bob Maat,²⁷ as well as my personal experience of having participated in the recent *Dhammayietras*.

Bob Maat

If I were asked to share something concerning notable personalities I chanced upon in the course of my life, I would unhesitatingly pick Bob Maat as my primary choice. He is a person I regard as a living saint, or more precisely, a mystic. His presence urges me to reflect upon my life as a Jesuit, and to judge whether I am pursuing the right track or not. Despite having left the Society of Jesus twenty-five years ago, his lifestyle radiates a profound integration of apostolic chastity, poverty, and obedience. People are often struck by his life of extreme poverty: no house, no vehicle, no telephone, no computer, no family, and no funds for personal expenses. Residing in a small room within a Buddhist temple, he spends a dollar and a half for a daily meal he consumes just once a day, since that is all he needs. The *Dhammayietra* shirts are the only clothes he wears, and all donations he receives from friends abroad are used for the benefit of prisoners, poor HIV/AIDS patients, and for peace-promotion activities.

When I asked what poverty meant to him, Bob replied, "I did not know poverty until I left the Jesuits." When we laughed together, he immediately added, "But all the ideas of Jesuit poverty are true. It is freedom in a spiritual space." On my requesting him for further explanation, he declared, "Well, when I lived in a Jesuit house we always tried choosing the lowest commodity, and poverty was always referred to rather jokingly. Obedience is tough, but poverty is a FRIEND. I grew up in Fr. Arrupe's time."²⁸ His

²⁷ Bob Maat, "The *Dhammayietra* Story," interview by the author, Wat Kandal, Battambang, October 19, 2020.

²⁸ Fr. Pedro Arrupe (1907-1991) was 28th Superior General of the Society of Jesus from 1965 to 1983. He tried to lead the Jesuits with the spirit of the Second Vatican Council, especially with a 'preferential option for the poor' and a 'faith that does justice.' The Jesuit Refugee Service was founded by him in 1980 in response to the cries of the Vietnamese boat people and the Khmer refugees in the Thai border

documents influenced me. It was so good. 'To be poor with the poor.' It is a poor person who accepts you and accepts me. That's the moment. It is not for me to go down to meet and help them. Just walk together with them." On receiving that answer, I could understand why Bob gave up riding vehicles and chose to walk all the time. It was to identify himself with the poor. Because of his walking habits, Khmer villagers refer to him as "Barang Chkuot," meaning 'a crazy foreigner.'

The *Dhammayietra* taught him to walk peacefully step by step, and this literally became a habit in his life. In order to walk slowly and distribute the peace packs of Maha Ghosananda to people on the roads, he at first refused to accept any rides that were offered to him. Later though he began accepting offerings of rides, and he duly thanked the people for their compassion shown to a 'poor old guy.' On his long journeys by foot, there were always moments to meet people, who out of compassion stopped their cars to pick him up, saying "Please ride with us!" Bob accepted those offers, and conversations began. In the course of these rides, he came to learn many stories concerning the people. They often recalled Bob as a good man whom they met in the refugee camp, and speak of what they received from him. To Bob, it was a moment to encounter the presence of God, a moment of pure Love. A marvelous incident concerning those divine moments, is the following:

When I reached Phnom Penh in the pouring rain, a guy called out to me, "Buff, Buff." I thought he mispronounced my name, but in fact he was calling me a "wandering poor guy," in Khmer. Obviously he was influenced by drugs, and he was with a group of friends, and he said to his friends, "This guy gave me soap from 1995 to 2000 when I was in the Sisophon prison!" At that time he was a prisoner and remembered all of that, but this time he didn't ask me for money, because he knew that I was also poor (laughing). When I was about to leave, he gave me 500 Riels, saying, "Buy more soap for them." He put his hands on mine and said, "Barang Chkuot," but he did so very affectionately. So, he knew what I was called. He said to me, "You are my crazy friend!" (Laughing). This man was broken and living on the streets, and yet he accepted me. He saw me as a person. Yes, of course, I looked like a bomb too. It's how they identified me. That was the right moment! Isn't that the divine moment? Isn't that a moment of compassion to be touched by? That's what it is. Yes, I found that all the vows are freeing. All instructions of the religious vows are about how to make us free. Gandhi said, "Once your building is built, you don't need any more instructions. You'd better drop all away." So, now I look back on all those things I learned from Jesuits. Wow! What great helps at that time when I didn't understand. In fact, when you take your religious vows, you don't know what you are doing. We just do so because we are told to believe that the system can help us to do that. But all are meant to be free. And, so for me, poverty is a "DEAR FRIEND." And, just FREE. That's all. The vows give us detachment. All those things, including money, can't disturb us.²⁹

²⁹ Bob Maat, "The *Dhammayietra* Story," interview by the author, October 19, 2020.

Bob confesses that such freedom, a *spiritual space*, did not come to him automatically. After officially leaving the Society of Jesus in 1996, he went through around ten years of the 'dark-night experience.' The doubts and questions arose even long before that, while he was working in the refugee camps in the 1980s. He joined the Jesuits in the Detroit Province in 1971, and attained a PA (Physician's Assistant) degree in 1977. A providential call came to him suddenly in the form of a joke, while he was on his way to participate in a friend's diaconate ordination in Chicago, on December 8, 1979. In the car, he happened to be reading a Jesuit Newspaper, wherein it was said that the Thai refugee camps urgently needed anyone with a medical background. Since there was a Jesuit medical doctor in the car, who was four years senior to himself, Bob said to him jokingly, "You know, Frank, I'd like to go with you to help those Khmer refugees." It was a joke because he did not believe that such a thing would really occur. Frank was just in his first year of theological studies, and Bob himself was doing a two-year course on cancer research. However the joke turned into a reality, for three weeks later the Detroit Provincial sent them to the Khao I Dong refugee camp, the first official UNHCR camp on the Thai border. So, they were the first Jesuits to arrive in the camp before the establishment of the JRS (Jesuit Refugee Service) by Fr. Pedro Arrupe, in November 1980.

In the Khao I Dong camp, three Jesuits and two female nurses began their medical service for six months under the ARC (American Refugee Committee), and returned to the USA in June 1980. Of them, Bob Maat alone came back to the camps in 1981. During his second term Bob was involved with the JRS meetings, but kept working as a medical team member of ARC. He came to know a farmer's family who adopted him as a 'Koun' (son), where the Mother was a Khmer refugee and the husband was Thai. The couple had five children, the oldest son being a Buddhist monk, and although they had no idea as to what a Christian monk was they warmly welcomed Bob into their family, and it was a really great experience for him.

However, grief pierced Bob's heart when his brother Suwin, the second son of the family, hit a landmine along the border in July 1981. Suwin was twenty-five years old, and was awaiting his wedding ceremony in December. He narrated his experience to Bob as follows. "I remember hearing an explosion and flying up into the air. When I hit the ground, I looked to my right and saw one of my feet. Looking down at my left leg, I saw that foot just dangling."³⁰ Bob asked, "Then what did you do?" He looked at Bob incredulously and said, "I laughed! Of course, what else could I do but laugh?"³¹ Later Bob recorded this story in his journal:

They say grief leaves the face of the Cambodian quickly but goes down to the heart and stays there a long time.... Cambodia has more mines than human

³⁰ Edwin Pugh, ed., *Even the Crazy Man Wept: Reflections Following the War in Cambodia* (Marston Gate: Sharp Edge Publishing, 2015), 37

³¹ *Ibid.*

beings.... If I am a Cambodian soldier and place a mine in the ground today, my granddaughter thirty years from now could walk on that mine that grandpa planted.... My brother Suwin is better now. Thailand, a country well down the road to development, has provided him with two good plastic prostheses. He can walk again, but only in the dry as he is unable to negotiate the mud of the rainy season. We often joke how he taught his crazy foreign brother how to plant rice, bring in the harvest while drinking rice wine, catch frogs in the first-midnight downpour of the rainy season, be a good water-buffalo boy while catching lizards for dinner at the same time—all those things which helped make us brothers; that as brothers, we will never do together again.”³²

This story is the tip of an iceberg that Bob had experienced in the camps, with great pain and sorrow. Seeing countless innocent victims of war and violence day and night, his heart was burning with a serious question: what is the Jesuit role in this conflicting armed situation of refugee camps? Each political faction took its supporters from among the Khmer refugees, and exploited humanitarian aids for killing each other. Like many other NGO workers and religious people, Bob was extremely busy supporting urgent needs. Yet from time to time, the burning questions kept arising within his mind: Why are we here? What are we doing? Are we here to support the war, or are we for peace? It was a very complex situation, and his challenging questions often silenced people during meetings.

A flash of hope came to Bob when he met Maha Ghosananda at the Jakarta Peace Talks in 1989. It was during a break between sessions in the hotel lobby, and Maha Ghosananda said to Bob, “You know, all of my people want peace, but they go back to one faction. I am working for the peace of all Cambodians, not for one faction.”³³ These words touched Bob’s heart. It was what he had tried to figure out during his inner struggles in the refugee camps. Since then they met more often, and one day Bob suggested to Maha Ghosananda the idea of a ‘Peace Walk.’ He added that many people of goodwill in the camps and abroad had shared the same thoughts. Maha Ghosananda’s response was strikingly positive: “Oh, it is a great idea! But you know, there was a monk who did the same thing 2,500 years ago. His name was Siddhartha Gautama, known as the Buddha. He went to meet the kings on the battlefield. He walked all the time. So, let’s call our walk *Dhammayietra*, walking in *Dhamma*, walking in Peace.”³⁴

Many people were involved in preparing the first *Dhammayietra*, and Liz Bernstein and other CPR members in particular organized the whole process. The CPR also continued their financial support for successive *Dhammayietras*. Sulak Sivaraksa, the world-renowned Thai social activist, was a great supporter too. In the preparatory nonviolence workshops run

³² Ibid., 37-38.

³³ Bob Maat, “The *Dhammayietra* Story,” interview by the author, October 19, 2020.

³⁴ Ibid.

by an excellent Philippine NGO, Bob and other team leaders realized that the Christian language did not work for the Buddhist Khmer refugees. They needed the language of the heart, and Buddhism was their language of the heart. Hence, it was a perfect match with Maha Ghosananda.

To Bob, Maha Ghosananda was a man of deep *spiritual space*. That was the idea he received. At his morning Dhamma talk of the first *Dhammayietra*, Maha Ghosananda stopped his preaching on Buddhism and said, "Oh, I notice Christ is here with us today. Stand up please, dear Christ!" People wondered what he meant, but Bob knew that Maha was talking about himself. Maha Ghosananda then continued saying, "Jesus Christ accepted the suffering of the world." At these words a Buddhist audience would instantly recall *Preahbath Thoamik*, a righteous king who would come from the West to bring peace to the world. However, for poor Bob, who at that time was unaware of such Buddhist beliefs, it was very embarrassing to be called "Christ" in front of so many people. Maha Ghosananda however continued to call him Christ, and so at night, Bob met him and quietly asked him about it. Bob described the meeting as follows:

"Venerable, May I come in?" Maha answered, "Oh, come in, Christ!" I said, "That's why I came to see you, venerable. You called me that in the crowd, and I was very nervous." He smiled and answered, "But it is true. You are a true Christ!" (laughing). And then, we had an honest discussion. He said, "We all have a Christ nature and a Buddha nature in us." He reiterated, "Yes, that's true. It's our reality." He was seeing reality on a different level from ordinary people. I smiled and said, "That is true and beautiful. However, could we keep our divine sparks to ourselves until this walk is over?" He smiled.... Anyway, we had an authentic conversation. I felt that I was meeting with an individual so deep in spirituality. And, he was not political at all. He was not like other monks who played games with political parties. Politicians came to see him in order to get his favor, but he welcomed anybody who wanted to walk together.³⁵

Bob and Maha Ghosananda shared their virtuous rapport in such a *spiritual space*, an inner freedom that was not barred by any political or religious margins. It was a spirituality open to all. However, as a Jesuit Brother, he had to be faithful to his religious vow of obedience, and hence he tried his best to figure out his sincere question concerning the Jesuit role in the conflicting armed situation, through constant prayer and discernment along with his superiors. In December 1994, his honest discernment process led him to meet Fr. Kolvenbach, the then Superior General of the Society of Jesus, in order to share his inner conflicts. It was a sincere and compassionate conversation, but did not help any change. Bob made an eight-day walking retreat for his final discernment, wherein he tried to recall all the sound reasons his good Jesuit companions and superiors suggested to him in order to remain in the Society, yet he found no consolation. In 1996, he officially

³⁵ Ibid. See also Pugh, ed., *Even the Crazy Man Wept*, 47-48.

left the Society of Jesus, and for about ten years he suffered the 'spiritual dark night.'

Despite his persistent struggles in relation to spirituality, Bob discovered a light of consolation from his bond with Maha Ghosananda, who encouraged him to keep walking for peace. In 1995 he moved to a small room in the Wat Kandal temple of Battambang, and started teaching the young monks and youth. He wanted to impart to them skills concerning peace and reconciliation, but they were more keen on learning English. So, he used peace materials for his English lessons. When he conducted a survey with eighty young people with regard to issues related to peace, there was no single positive answer that peace was possible in Cambodia, for such was the situation in the mid-1990s. Although sounds of gunfire were reduced, none believed peace would come to the nation. So Bob started introducing Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and Maha Ghosananda to his students, asserting that peace was possible. In the entire nine-month course he organized six teams of six people, and each team leader helped with the readings, presentations, and discussions. Those young monks and youth trained in his class became leaders and activists, promoting peace and justice in society. His lessons continued until public Buddhist education commenced, via the institution in 2008 of the Battambang branch of the Preah Sihanouk Buddhist University. Ven. Vy Sovechea, the current Rector of this university, was one of those young monks in Bob's class. Ven. Yon Seng Yeath, the Vice-president of the same university on the main campus in Phnom Penh, was also his student and friend, and Sarom Sek, a marvelous lady student who was totally engaged as a team leader, is now organizing the *Dhammayietra*.

Finally, I asked Bob how he managed to attain liberation from the ten years of the 'dark night of the soul,' which he described as a kind of 'desert,' a spiritual state wherein he could not believe anything anymore. He said it was a continuous desolation, and he was just bore it with firm patience and occasional consolations that arose, during the walks in the *Dhammayietras*, his own eight-day retreats, and peace-promoting activities. Since Maha Ghosananda was a UN committee member, Bob too was often invited to the UN-based peace conferences. At those conferences he met many good people, including Sufi Muslims. One day, those Sufis recommended that Bob read the work of a great Sufi mystic, and that book really helped to release him from his long years of desolation. The author touched his heart when he said, "In the life of a Sufi, desolations are the part of normal spiritual development. It is an experience wherein everything you had trusted in breaks down. Something happens in your life, but you should learn to detach yourself from all the psychological pains you went through. This detachment is called *fana*."³⁶ Bob continued saying,

³⁶ Ibid.

The author said that *fana* is a part of Sufi's life. He emphasized letting all things go. And, it worked for me. I thought: 'I could not trust any names such as Jesus, Buddha, Mohamad, etc. But I now have a God of NO NAME.' It was a good answer for me. It was different from my Jesuit experience. It was really sitting in silence. It was profoundly touching in another spiritual space. That helped me to come out of my long desolation. I realized: 'Oh my God, that's what it is. A pure love! A pure silence! It is all about Pure Love, Pure Truth, and Pure Silence.'³⁷

On being released from his all distress, Bob recalled his Jesuit experience as a good and sincere process that had occurred. He realized he had left the Jesuits out of love. It was an act of love in a most humble form. Everybody's life experience is different, but for Bob, *fana* was a necessary part of human growth in a pure spiritual space. Now he believes Sufis are not formed, but born. They are born out of a *spiritual space*, the place before God gets a name. This space is similar to what Buddhism says emptiness or voidness (*sūnyatā*), where there is no more Ego in it. Bob emphasized, "You know, space is the Real. This is not about dogma. It is real. It is what I call ONENESS. All are parts of the ONENESS, but there is no name for it."³⁸ I asked further how he prays or meditates, and Bob answered:

Well, the Sufi is not attached to any shape or physical posture in silence. Just keep silent in a prayerful mode. And, I live here (in the Wat Kandal) alone as a Muslim (laughing). But when I walk, it is very much part of my meditation. There is no end. Just go deep into silence. Maha and the Dalai Lama come into my meditation, those people who really went beyond boundaries. There is nothing you do, or No Ego. Yes, you have to say 'Yes' at some point to touch the deepest Being, your Lover. And, Trinity, for me, becomes Love, Lover, and Beloved. That's what Jesus tells us, isn't it? It's all LOVE. That led me to the 'Christ' conversation with Maha. He reminded us that every person has a Christ nature. We don't realize it because we are covered up by so many layers, which do not help.³⁹

Hence, to Bob, Maha Ghosananda shared the same spirit of Sufism, which goes beyond the given institutional religious boundaries. Maha was not attached to the Theravadin customs, and maintained a deep sense of 'pure love.' Thich Nath Han also got that point. Their teachings came out of a *spiritual space* open to all, and they were filled with peace and joy. The same spirit was now shining on the face of Bob himself. His silent smiles and unaffected laughter always touched my heart, and many other friends have had the same experience with him. One of those close friends is Ms. Oddom Van Syvorn. Let me briefly share her story.

³⁷ *ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.* Bob composed many poems on his mystical experience of Oneness. In those poems, he referred to the ultimate reality in various ways such as 'I am who I am,' 'Being,' 'Love,' 'Nothingness,' 'Openness,' 'Oneness,' 'Silence,' and 'Freedom,' etc. See Edwin Pugh, ed., *Fly Without A Shadow: Meditations on Oneness* (UK: Sharp Edge Publishing, 2017).

³⁹ *Ibid.*

Oddom Van Syvorn

During the 28th *Dhammayietra* of March 2018, I found Syvorn very active and busy. She was as usual leading the participants and organizing things with the volunteer monks, but at times she seemed too fatigued, and her face occasionally turned pale. When I asked her what was the matter, she smiled and answered calmly, "Dear In-gun, this will be my last *Dhammayietra*. I have been diagnosed as having heavy cancer." We then had a photograph taken together, and that was my last photograph with her. Later I twice visited her at hospitals, and finally saw her corpse at her funeral in December 2018. I shared my deepest condolences with the Buddhist monks and with Mr. Ik Napakadol, a Thai friend who had been an active participant in past *Dhammayietras* organized by Syvorn. It was a quiet and peaceful funeral within the yard of her village Buddhist temple, a funeral well resonant with her life that was devoted to the *Dhammayietra*, with a pure intention and no anticipation of any reward.

Syvorn's life reflected the first line of Maha Ghosananda's famous poetic prayer for peace; namely, *the suffering of Cambodia has been deep*. The agony of the war and its scars were embedded within her entire life. When Bob visited her at the Battambang hospital prior to her passing away she happened to be writing her life story, and so when Bob asked her, "Syvorn, how did you begin your story?" She replied, "from the B-52 bombing story, of course!" That was her earliest memory. Born in 1962 as the second of three children, she recalled her family running to find a safe province that would not be bombed. In April 1975 her father was arrested by Khmer Rouge soldiers and disappeared, and in 1976, Syvorn, her mother, and her younger sister were seized and taken by truck to the local killing fields. However, the truck while in transit developed two flat tires, and so with the help of a man they managed to escape. She learned later that the man who assisted them had been killed by the Khmer Rouge.⁴⁰

At the age of thirteen, Syvorn had to stop her formal education of five years and enter the school of suffering. Pangs of acute hunger were her meditation masters, for as she explained: "I learned to meditate during the Khmer Rouge era. I would meditate at night, when I was so hungry I couldn't sleep. I would pay attention to my breathing in and breathing out, and forget that I was hungry. Of course, as soon as I stopped meditating, I became hungry again. I did not know I was meditating until Maha Ghosananda taught about it on the first *Dhammayietra*. Then I realized, aha! this is meditation."⁴¹

⁴⁰ See World-Wide Asian-Eurasian Human Rights Forum, "Oddom Van Syvorn-Cambodia," *World People's Blog*, February 26, 2008, accessed on May 25, 2021, <http://word.world-citizenship.org/wp-archive/1944>.

⁴¹ "Peacemakers Walking: A Khmer Heart," *CPR Newsletters*, 2003.

In 1992, when Maha and Bob started the first *Dhammayietra*, Syvorn was running a small shop at the local market of Sisophon town, in the northwest province of Banteay Meanchey. On hearing about the *Dhammayietra*, she went to the Thai border, met Maha Ghosananda, and asked, "Venerable, do you really think peace is possible? I do not believe peace is possible. It never happened in my life."⁴² Maha Ghosananda smiled and invited her, "Come and walk with us, keep walking with us." She repeated and challenged him, "I do not think peace is possible. Where were you when we were suffering?"⁴³ Syvorn was such a person, straightforward, brave, and transparent.

Once she got into the *Dhammayietra*, however, she became a faithful follower of Maha Ghosananda. Her relationship to Maha Ghosananda was unusual when viewed from the standpoint of normal Khmer society, since one was a laywoman and the other a great monk, and yet they maintained mutual understanding and respect in a profound spiritual friendship. There were other lay followers such as Kimleng and Puthy, the brilliant couple who helped at the early *Dhammayietras* in training the walkers. They were from Maha's hometown of Takeo, and so they were probably his relatives. However they stopped joining the *Dhammayietra* in 2000, after Maha Ghosananda was no longer able to walk together with the others. It was Syvorn who continued leading the annual *Dhammayietra* until her death, even without Maha Ghosananda.

Since Syvorn took over the organization of the *Dhammayietra*, she had to face many challenges. She had to ask permission from the government every year, and received lots of criticism from the government officials. They asked,

"Why do you continue the Peace Walk? There is no more war!" Syvorn answered, "Do you think the war really ended? Every day we fight over money, food, power, etc. We get angry about this and that. The war in our hearts has not yet ended. Do you think we have no more corruption in the country?" Then, she reminded them of Maha's words, "Landmines of the heart are still there. You have to overcome them to get real peace." That's why she kept teaching the five precepts and the noble eightfold path. It was always the foundation of her teaching. That was the path to peace. She did not stand for any NGO because she felt that many of them had also become corrupt in financial matters. She also knew that all governmental organizations were corrupt. She always emphasized, "I am not an NGO member, I do not belong to any organization, I am a *Dhammayietra* volunteer."⁴⁴

This was Syvorn. Beneath her smiling face and soft voice lay a resolute woman, who would permit no obstacle to get in the way of her quest for

⁴² Bob Maat, "The *Dhammayietra* Story," interview by the author, October 19, 2020.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

peace.⁴⁵ In order to hold the annual *Dhammayietras*, she was humble but fearless in arguing with government officials. On the other hand, however, Syvorn was also a deeply wounded individual and a victim of a great deal of suffering, from losing her family and the agony that followed later. As a matter of fact, until the end of her life she did not believe peace was possible, since she felt Cambodia would revert to war again. However, she offered her best for the Peace Walk until the very end.

During the 2017 *Dhammayietra* I witnessed the deepest wound in her heart, when we walked in Banteay Meanchey Province in the Northern section of Cambodia. As usual we started our day with the early morning chanting by monks and silent meditation, and after a long day of walking, giving water blessings on the way, and educating children in little schools, we arrived in the evening at Wat Batkong, in the Preah Net Preah District. It was a small Buddhist temple with a faded wall. After we had walked thrice around the temple, the monks and participants entered as usual the old temple hall for chanting and meditating. I remained in the hall a little longer engaged in my deep breathing meditation, even after the people had exited the place. Sometime later on opening my eyes I found Syvorn alone, weeping silently within the same hall. I had never seen her so emotional and weeping in that manner, and I could not ask her the reason why. Later when I had an opportunity to ask her, she replied, "I was there in that hall a long time ago. It was used as a jail by the Khmer Rouge soldiers. There were many people. I managed to run away, but all the others were killed." I was shocked by those words. We then prayed together and burned incense for the repose of those departed souls.

Syvorn's suffering wounds were indeed so deep, that she could not even believe Maha Ghosananda's comforting words that peace was possible. She often said, "I don't believe in religion so much," but she also asserted, "if you do good you will receive good, and if you do evil you will receive evil."⁴⁶ Her life experience had revealed this truth to her. To Syvorn, this Khmer saying was not to acquire a fortune in the next life. Rather, it was her own experience in this present life, and she tried her best to do good for herself and for others. She did not get married, preferring to dedicate her whole life to the *Dhammayietra*. When she was not organizing the *Dhammayietra*, which from start to finish covered nearly six months of the year, she was still busy with her daily works of dedication, namely teaching the five precepts and meditation to village youth, providing peace and reconciliation training for village leaders, planting trees to remind people of the importance of the environment, and supporting spiritual services

⁴⁵ See World-Wide Asian-Eurasian Human Rights Forum, "Oddom Van Syvorn-Cambodia."

⁴⁶ This is a Khmer traditional saying that all Cambodians learn from the time of their birth. It reflects the fundamental Buddhist teaching of *Kamma* and rebirth, but Maha Ghosananda and Syvorn interpreted it as a this-worldly human experience.

for prisoners.⁴⁷ Thus for Syvorn, the daily activities of peace and the annual *Dhammayietra* became one.

Syvorn's dream was to see real peace among the Khmer people. At times she felt like giving up, but she could not stop working for the *Dhammayietra* because it appeared to be her only hope. Her focus was more and more on youth education, and she said, "When I teach old people they cannot remember what I taught them, but if I teach the young they will carry the message further. I want them to learn to meditate, but I want them to learn the type of meditation that evokes wisdom, the wisdom of the Khmer heart."⁴⁸ She further affirmed, "the *Dhammayietra* is not waiting for the next war to begin. Rather, it comes now to spread information everywhere and to invite everyone to a change of heart, a Khmer heart, a heart that is soft, kind, and gentle."⁴⁹ With this vision and mission she was able to continue leading the *Dhammayietra* as a laywoman, a fact that was unique in Theravadin Buddhist society. I was impressed by her relationship with the monks during the *Dhammayietras*. She was a small, quiet, and humble woman, and yet she was talented at communicating with monks politely and charismatically. The monks joyfully obeyed her!

That was Syvorn's way. She kept the *Dhammayietra* alive. I am of the view that her spiritual space was not far removed from that of Maha Ghosananda and Bob Maat. Despite her having lost her opportunity for formal education owing to the tragic civil war, she was advanced in her spirituality acquired from the *Dhammayietra*. According to Bob, she once had a mystical dream about Maha Ghosananda, in a manner whereby his spirit became deeply embodied within her. Syvorn elucidated the experience in a very Khmer way by saying, "In my dream, I felt Maha's powerful energy within me, and I saw him a few times clearly." This dream reveals how intensely she adhered to the spirit of Maha Ghosananda and sought to realize the *Dhammayietra's* vision of peace in the world, starting from a single person's change of heart. Syvorn is no more with us. Yet her unaffected smile and fearless zeal for peace-making activities will remain in us all, inspiring our never-ending walks for justice and peace.

The Story Goes On

I have shared the accounts of individuals who met in the 'spiritual space' of selflessness, within the *Dhammayietra* movement in Cambodia. Both Maha Ghosananda and Bob Maat attained a realm of spiritual freedom and compassion, that surpassed institutional religious boundaries. Syvorn, who was imbued by a profound spirituality, followed the *Dhammayietra* in her own way, focusing more on the practice of the five Buddhist moral

⁴⁷ See "Just One," *CPR Newsletters*, 2003.

⁴⁸ "Peacemakers Walking: A Khmer Heart," *CPR Newsletters*, 2003

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

virtues and meditation. Many others embarked on this journey from a diversity of nations, faiths, and milieus. I believe all of them somehow had a taste of the spirit of the *Dhammayietra* and its dream, namely that peace is approaching slowly, a step at a time. Hence, we continue walking together with compassion and wisdom towards a better world, wherein human solidarity prevails over suffering. On this journey new stories will arise among participants, who are endowed with a sincere desire for peace.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bodo, Murray. "The Dalai Lama Visits Gethsemane." *St. Anthony Messenger*, January 1997, 28-34.
- Cambodia Daily*. "Marching in the Buddha's Steps: Monk leads 'Army of Peace' on a Courageous Journey." Special Supplement, 1-20. May 1998.
- Chhath, Linda. "Seeing the Angles, Step by Step: A Study of Maha Ghosananda, a Khmer Monk in Action." MA thesis, University of Wisconsin Madison, 2012.
- CPR Newsletters*. "Just One." 2003.
- . "Peacemakers Walking: A Khmer Heart." 2003.
- Francis, *Fratelli Tutti: On Fraternity and Social Friendship*. Encyclical Letter, Vatican Website. October 3, 2020. Accessed June 29, 2021. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html.
- Ghosananda, Maha. *Step by Step: Meditations on Wisdom and Compassion*. Edited by Jane Sharada Mahoney, and Philip Edmonds. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1992.
- Kang, In-gun. "A Radical Orthopraxis of Theravada Buddhism: Buddhadasa's Dhammic Essentialism." In *The Buddha & Jesus: an anthology of articles by Jesuits engaged in Buddhist Studies and Inter-religious Dialogue*, edited by Cyril Veliath, 186-217. Kelaniya, Sri Lanka: Tulana Research Center, 2015.
- Maat, Bob. "The *Dhammayietra* Story." Interview by In-gun Kang. Wat Kandal, Battambang, October 19, 2020.
- Marston, John. "The Nalanda Pali Institute and Globalizing Buddhism." A draft paper for Buddhist Homelands Workshop, University of British Columbia, June 28-29, 2019.

Mitchell, Donald W. "The Gethsemane Encounter on the Spiritual Life." *Buddhist-Christian Studies*, 17 (1997): 205-208.

Pov, Sarun. "The Role of Buddhism in Peace-Building and Development of the Cambodian Society: A Case Study of the Contributions Done by Venerable Maha Ghosananda." MA thesis, Maha Chulalongkorn Rajavidyalaya University, 2016.

Pugh, Edwin, ed. *Even the Crazy Man Wept: Reflections Following the War in Cambodia*. Marston Gate: Sharp Edge Publishing, 2015.

———, ed. *Fly Without A Shadow: Meditations on Oneness*. UK: Sharp Edge Publishing, 2017.

Santidhammo, Bhikkhu. *Maha Ghosananda: The Buddha of the Battlefield*. Bangkok: S.R. Printing, 2009.

Sok, Pheatarak et al. *Who is Somdech Preah Maha Ghosananda?* Chicago: Cambodian Buddhist Association, 2007.

Weiner, Matthew. "Peace Wins: Maha Ghosananda, the 'Gandhi of Cambodia.'" *Fellowship* 73, 4-6 (Spring 2007): 36-39.

World-Wide Asian-Eurasian Human Rights Forum. "Oddom Van Syvorn-Cambodia." *World People's Blog*. February 26, 2008. Accessed May 25, 2021. <http://word.world-citizenship.org/wp-archive/1944>.

Yon, Seng Yeath. "Maha Ghosananda on the Battlefield." Interview by In-gun Kang. Preah Sihanouk Raja Buddhist University, Phnom Penh, February 5, 2021.

Buddhism in a New Key: The Roots and Growth of Engaged Buddhism¹

Gregory Sharkey, S.J.

This paper, which originally took the form of a presentation to a Kathmandu audience, aims to shine an historical light on an aspect of Buddhist Modernism we call Engaged Buddhism. Fifty years ago, in his book *Vietnam: Lotus in a Sea of Fire*, the famous Vietnamese monk and activist Thich Nhat Hanh coined the term “Engaged Buddhism”. The term quickly gained currency in the Buddhist community and beyond. In the half-century since then Engaged Buddhism has taken many forms, and has had many exemplary proponents.

While it is a quintessentially modern development within Buddhism, Engaged Buddhism has specific philosophical underpinnings that can be traced to the beginning of the 20th century, to the Buddhist reformer Taixu and his disciples, and the rise of Humanistic Buddhism in China. Here I would like to explore the genealogy of these ideas and their influence over the past century, especially in the context of Chinese Buddhism.

Engaged Buddhism can, of course, take many different forms. In its original usage Master Nhat Hanh, or “Thay” as he is known to his students, applied it to political activism oriented toward peacemaking, in the context of the Vietnam War in which his country was embroiled. Through his friendship with, and influence on, figures such as Dr Martin Luther King Jr, and the Trappist monk Father Thomas Merton, he had a significant impact on the development of the anti-war movement in the US and around the world.

For others Engaged Buddhism connotes attending to the physical and material welfare of the needy, through disaster relief, or by providing food, shelter, clothing, and medical care to the needy, as organizations such as Rangjung Yeshe Shenpen, the charitable association linked to my own college, does. For some it takes the shape of education and awareness-raising, and activism to overcome historical social inequalities. In recent

¹ This presentation was delivered at Symposium 2017, a conference held on (25-26) March 2017 in Kathmandu, Nepal, by the Rangjung Yeshe Institute, in celebration of its twentieth anniversary.

years a surge of attention to climate change and ecological degradation has meant that Engaged Buddhism means protecting the environment.

Apart from Thich Nhat Hanh, there have been a host of Buddhist practitioners who are associated with the practice of Engaged Buddhism. Though they do not specifically embrace the label, the followers of Dr Ambedkar, for example, are a clear – and even earlier – example of applying Buddhist principles to overcome the political and social injustices of the caste system.

Other outstanding examples are: Robert Aitken Roshi and the Buddhist Peace Fellowship; Bernard Glassman Roshi's and Joan Halifax Roshi's work with the Zen Peacemakers Order, Sulak Shivaraksha in Thailand, Bhikkhu Bodhi in the US, and the late Cambodian Sangharaja Maha Ghosananda. But these are just a few stars in a large firmament. One could list many more throughout the Buddhist world.

Being kind and generous, and taking concrete action to relieve others' suffering, are not new to Buddhism, of course. What is new is the deliberate thematizing of the motivation for compassionate action and the articulation of guiding convictions and principles for action.

When naming exemplary practitioners of Engaged Buddhism, it is important to avoid a kind of "essentialist" error. To put that more plainly... new trends can arise spontaneously and simultaneously in different places without the need for a direct historic link between them.

I believe that increased immigration, the globalization of communication, and Buddhism's spread to the West over the past several decades has brought Buddhism into contact with other religious traditions, particularly the Jewish and Christian ones, with their long history of organized charitable efforts – as well as into contact with secular models of social service and upliftment of the less fortunate. Obviously many western Buddhists come from that very background. For Buddhism as a whole, I think, this has generated what we might call a "sense of discrepancy" between compassion as a purely spiritual virtue and compassion as a compelling motivation for concrete action on others' behalf.

Thich Nhat Hanh's "Engaged Buddhism"

In order to talk usefully about the phenomenon of Engaged Buddhism, however, we can give a greater specificity to the term. Master Thich Nhat Hanh first used the term in 1967, in the book already cited, where he speaks of "promoting the individual's active role in effecting change." He expands on this in his book *Interbeing*, published in 1993, where he outlines fourteen principles of Engaged Buddhism.

Engaged Buddhism, or “Socially Engaged Buddhism” was his way of rendering the Vietnamese term *Nhân gian phật giáo*, which literally means “This-world Buddhism.” It is his way of translating the Chinese expression *renjian fojiao*, which is usually translated as “Humanistic Buddhism.” This highlights the historical origins of Engaged Buddhism in the writings and teachings of Dharma Master Taixu, an activist monk and Buddhist reformer in early 20th century China.

Seeds planted by Taixu were nurtured primarily by his disciple Yin Shun, who lived to the ripe old age of 99, from 1906 to 2005. It is Yin Shun who systematized and promoted Taixu’s teachings on “Buddhism for the Human Realm,” or Humanistic Buddhism. The seeds bore fruit in the work of his 4 chief successors, who are known in Taiwan as the “four heavenly kings of dharma”, and as founders of the “Four Mountains” of Buddhism. I will discuss all four of them, beginning with Taixu.

Master Taixu

Taixu – whose dharma name translates Great Emptiness, *Mahā-śūnyatā* – was born in 1890, during the reign of the Guangxu emperor, and the Empress Dowager Cixi. If you have ever seen Bertolucci’s film “The Last Emperor,” she’s the one who tells the young Pu Yi that he’ll be the next king, then promptly dies and has a black pearl popped into her mouth. This marked the beginning of the end of the Qing Dynasty, and it was a time of social and political ferment in the Middle Kingdom.

Orphaned at an early age Taixu became a monk at age 16 in the Linji sect of Chan Buddhism. This is the original form of what migrated to Japan – and is better known in the West – as the Rinzai School of Zen Buddhism. Taixu lived until 1947, and died in Shanghai, two years before the declaration of the People’s Republic of China. In order to understand Taixu’s efforts and achievements we need to understand the situation of Buddhism in his lifetime.

Taixu was born toward the end of a 30-year period of China’s history known as the “Self-strengthening Movement”; it lasted until he was 5 years old. This was a time of modernization of Chinese industry and, especially, of its military, after embarrassing defeats in the Opium Wars. It was a period of growing nationalism, in which the populace had an emerging sense of identity as Chinese citizens – and not simply as subjects of the Qing rulers.

Taixu was heavily influenced by revolutionary thinkers of his period, especially the leaders of the unsuccessful “100 Days’ Reform,” which had taken place with the partial support of the Guangxu Emperor – and no support from Empress Dowager Cixi (who had them all beheaded) – when he was 8 years old. A few years later he lived through the Boxer Rebellion, which attempted to eradicate foreign encroachment in Chinese affairs. He

witnessed the revolution of 1911, which brought an effective end to a 2000 year old monarchy, and was 22 years old when the Chinese Republic was declared the following year.

From his youth he was steeped in the writings and teachings of nationalist, progressive, reform-minded thinkers who were advocating for a republic or, at least, a nominal constitutional monarchy. Their political and social philosophies emphasized the value and rights of the individual human being. In his autobiography he wrote "My social and political thought was based upon ... the Republican Revolution, Socialism, and Anarchism." By the latter he meant a non-hierarchical society, with self-government by the people.

Taixu brought the spirit of these social and political movements to the religious sphere. The reform of the political system could be paralleled by a reformation of religion. And so Taixu advocated for the revival of Buddhism in China.

In their book *Rebuilding Buddhism*, about the Theravada Movement here in Nepal, Levine and Gellner observe that Buddhist revival movements typically start as efforts to reform the monastic Sangha. This is clearly true in the case of Taixu.

Taixu believed that a re-organization of the sangha was essential to Buddhism's survival. From the time of the Ming Dynasty, which lasted from the 14th to 17th centuries, and throughout the Qing Dynasty, China's last imperial government, the *Sangha* of Chinese Buddhism had evolved a three-fold structure of specialist monks. There were meditation monks, teaching monks, and what we translate as "yoga monks."

The yoga monks were ritual specialists who supported themselves by being on-call to perform ceremonies for a stipend, mostly funerals. Their ceremonies focused almost entirely on prayers for the dead to ensure a happy rebirth, and appeasement of the spirit world. But simply explaining the tri-partite *Sangha* structure does not give an accurate picture. By the end of the Qing Dynasty and the start of the first Chinese republic, these on-call ritual specialist monks formed the vast majority of the Chinese *Sangha*.

Taixu's re-organization of monastic life proposed a great reduction of the *Sangha* to a committed core of 20,000 monks. Bear in mind that, even then, the population of China was over 400 million. Monks would be a very small, committed percentage. The great majority of the *Sangha* should be what he referred to as "*Bodhisattva* monks." Most would be involved in teaching and propagating Buddhism, and administering Buddhist-oriented schools. About 10 per cent of this hard-core *Sangha* would engage in direct charitable work and material relief of the poor.

During a sojourn in Europe Taixu was impressed by the organized charitable work of church groups, and he imitated the organizational structure in several lay Buddhist associations dedicated to charity.

Taixu's chief religious critique of East Asian Buddhism at the beginning of the 20th century is that it focused almost exclusively on the dead and the realm of spirits, rather than on the living. It emphasized the hereafter, rather than the here and now. It is in contrast to this that he asserted that Buddhism should focus on living human beings in this world. He called on Buddhists to take an active role in politics and to improve the economic conditions of the country. He also called for temple properties, which traditionally passed through family lineages as private property, to become the collective property of the *Sangha*.

Though the lineage in which he had been ordained was Chan (or Zen) there was, as in most of China, great influence from Pure Land Buddhism. Taixu believed and taught that the Pure Land was not an other-worldly realm to be attained through the grace and merits of Amitabha or the other great Bodhisattvas of the Mahayana tradition. Rather, the Pure Land is something that ordinary earthly Bodhisattvas should build in this world through selfless action on behalf of others, making this world a place of liberation for all sentient beings.

It almost goes without saying that he faced serious resistance from more conservative and traditionally-minded monks – especially the ones who owned the temples. In an incident remembered as the Jinshan Temple Uprising, the 23 year old Taixu and his associates were threatened with violence and driven from the place which they had made their base.

Taixu's life coincided with one of the most turbulent periods of Chinese history, witnessing the end of two millennia of monarchy, failed first attempts at establishing a republic, and a civil war that ended only two years after his death with the declaration of the People's Republic in 1949. It was, perhaps, a less than opportune time to ask the country to worry about religious reform.

Master Yin Shun

While, in his own lifetime, Taixu had limited success in achieving his goals, the work of reform was carried on by some of his disciples, especially by Masters Yin Shun and Dongchu, who refined and promoted the teaching of Humanistic, or Socially Engaged, Buddhism. Yin Shun, like several Buddhist leaders, followed the Kuomintang government to Taiwan after the Chinese Revolution. It is there that he had a great, and long influence: he lived into his 100th year... more than twice as long as Taixu.

Like his mentor, Yin Shun was discouraged by the state of the *Sangha* in his youth, and by the criticism that Buddhism focused on funeral rites, and was irrelevant in the modern world. He described the transformative insight he received on reading a verse from the *Agama Sutra*... "All Buddhas arise in the human world; no one achieves Buddhahood in heaven."

Yin Shun was less politically active than his predecessor. By disposition it seems he was a more retiring figure—though deeply respected by the younger generation of Buddhist masters establishing themselves in Taiwan. As mentioned earlier, he is credited with having a profound influence on the four great dharma masters, or “Four Heavenly Dharma Kings,” as they are known today.

The Four Dharma Mountains

These teachers are: Wei Chueh, founder of Chung Tai Shan; Sheng-Yen, the abbot of Dharma Drum Mountain; Hsing Yun, of Fo Guang Shan; and Cheng Yen, the Taiwanese nun who founded Tzu Chi. The latter three, especially Master Cheng Yen, claim a direct influence from Taixu, through the teachings of Yin Shun.

Fo Guang Shan and Tzu Chi, in very different ways, have made a mark on Buddhism in Nepal, which is where I live and work. Fo Guang Shan, which means “The Mountain of Buddha’s Light,” is Taiwan’s largest monastery. It celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2017. In addition to the extremely large original monastic complex in Kaoshiung, Taiwan, they have 173 branches overseas, with over 3500 monks and nuns. Though Hsing Yun, the founding abbot, is from the same Chan lineage as Taixu, he decreed that Fo Guang Shan would include all eight schools of Chinese Buddhist thought.

Master Hsing Yun, unlike Yin Shun, has had no hesitation in expressing strong political opinions in Taiwan, sometimes controversial ones. He has also been criticized by some for holding very traditional and somewhat patriarchal views of the role of women in society. But I think this should be evaluated in a balanced way. Fo Guang Shan has an enormous range of social advancement, medical and educational programs, including four universities—and women play active roles in the running of them. More importantly, from the Nepal perspective, he has been a strong proponent of women’s full ordination as *Bhikkhunis*.

Probably because Nepal is not an historically Theravada country, the traditional customs and conservative attitudes one might find in Sri Lanka, Burma or Thailand are not so deeply ingrained here. There is less resistance to innovation. As a result a significant number of Nepalese Theravadan women have opted to take full *Bhikkhuni* ordination.

The ordination of Nepal’s most famous Theravada nun, Guruma Dhammawati, took place in an event organized by Fo Guang Shan at its branch monastery, Hsi Lai, in Los Angeles in 1988. Fo Guang Shan has since organized a number of ordination ceremonies, including large ones in Bodhgaya, in which Nepalese nuns have taken part.

Buddhist Tzu Chi Foundation

The group I would like to focus on, in the context of Humanistic and Engaged Buddhism, however, is the Tzu Chi Foundation established by Cheng Yen. This is simply because it's the group I know best, and know personally. And It's always better to talk about what you know, rather than about what you don't know.

Tzu Chi is usually translated “compassionate relief” – which indicates the primary focus of this community. Master Cheng Yen was described by *Time* magazine in an article about her organization as the “Mother Theresa of Asia.” This leads one to wonder if *Time* magazine knows where Calcutta is. Mother Theresa was the Mother Theresa of Asia. Perhaps a better way to put it would be to describe Chang Yen as Buddhism's Mother Theresa.

After the April 2015 earthquake Tzu Chi was one of the very first disaster relief organizations to arrive in Nepal with medicine, surgical supplies, temporary shelters and food. Within a day of learning about the earthquake Tzu Chi mobilized outstanding volunteer teams of doctors, surgeons, nurses and engineers. Over the next several months these volunteer teams came in several contingents, giving many days of their time and committing hundreds of thousands of dollars to relief, recovery and reconstruction.

Although Tzu Chi is based in Hualien, on the east coast of Taiwan, it has branches throughout Asia and North America, with outposts in Europe. It has a strong presence in the overseas Chinese communities of these countries. It also has a significant presence in the People's Republic of China, where it is a recognized and well-respected NGO. Over the past few decades disaster relief work in Mainland China has become what Cheng Yen describes as a “bridge of love” between the People's Republic and the Republic of China

Founded by Cheng Yen in 1966, Tzu Chi started with a group of 30 local women. It now counts over 10 million members, an astonishingly rapid growth over the past 50 years. Originally a self-ordained nun, Cheng Yen became a disciple of Yin Shun, and took full ordination in 1963. Yin Shun impressed on her the principles of Humanistic Buddhism and, in particular, inspired her to promote the Buddha's teachings through compassionate service to others.

During the years after her ordination, Cheng Yen lived at Pu Ming Temple in Hualien and devoted herself to studying the Lotus Sutra, especially the text that is sometimes described as its prologue, the “Sutra of Innumerable Meanings”. This text forms the basis of most of her teachings, which are broadcast throughout Taiwan.

While at Pu Ming she had what she describes as a life-changing encounter with three Catholic Taiwanese nuns who came to pay a visit. The Catholic sisters praised the profound Buddhist teachings about compassion,

but then pointed out that, while the church was involved in building schools and hospitals for the poor, the same could not be said for local Buddhists. In effect they asked her “What do Buddhists actually do to help other people?” This question lodged in her heart, and is one of two watershed incidents that prompted her to found Tzu Chi.

The organization has some distinctive features. Its motto is “The Four Endeavors and the Eight Footprints.” The first of the four endeavors is simple charitable support, their initial work. This expanded to include medicine, education and the promotion of culture. Tzu Chi now runs some of the finest hospitals in Taiwan and has a university with several campuses – all of which are accessible to the poor. The eight footprints include such things as disaster relief, bone-marrow donation and transplant, environmental protection and education of the poor.

Unlike Mother Theresa, Cheng Yen readily embraces the advances of modern science. Their bone-marrow registry is said to be the world’s largest and most effective. Their medical research team does very advanced research on umbilical cord stem cell research, which gets around the ethical dilemma that entangles embryo-derived stem cell research.

In Chinese culture, the integrity of the body at the time of one’s funeral is essential. Therefore donating organs, or leaving one’s body to science, is taboo. Tzu Chi has made an amazing contribution in this area. They have created something called the “Silent Mentor” program in their medical school. Young doctors-in-training, as Anatomy students, are taught to treat those who have gifted their bodies as *Bodhisattvas*—making a gift for the future health of others.

The bodies are treated with genuine reverence and respect. Rather than working on anonymous cadavers, the medical students get to know the families of the deceased, and sometimes meet those who are donating their bodies during their final weeks of life. Afterwards the medical students help organize and take part in very moving memorial services, in which they express their gratitude toward the deceased, whom they regard as their teachers. The medical school corridors are a shrine to the memory of these Silent Mentors, with photos and biographies of donors prominently displayed.

Unlike Taixu, whose principle of Humanistic Buddhism she espouses so profoundly, Cheng Yen and her followers adhere to a strict policy of avoiding politics in the context of their relief work. Similarly, their charitable work is never linked with proselytizing. In Indonesia they have built mosques and madrassas –Muslim schools. In the Philippines they have built churches. For Tzu Chi, this is simply an application of skillful means: allowing them to overcome resistance to their work and message.

Cheng Yen’s monastery in Hualien has a small community of nuns, for whom she serves as teacher; but Tzu Chi is, overwhelmingly, a lay

organization, with a large *Sangha* of lay men and women. While she delivers teachings each morning that are drawn from her study of the Lotus Sutra, she insists that her role is not that of a scholar or philosopher; and that she is not promoting any special interpretation of Buddhism.

Nonetheless, one can argue that Cheng Yen articulates a very specific and profound interpretation of the Buddha's *Dharma* for the modern world. Tzu Chi sees the Eightfold Path as more than a guide for personal growth. It is, rather, a practical guide for effective action in the world and a model for human interaction. It is only through compassionate action on behalf of others that one experiences progress on the path. Altruism, she teaches, is a practice that leads directly to enlightenment and is, finally, constitutive of enlightenment.

Engaged Buddhism, as understood by Thich Nhat Hanh, has clear roots in the "Buddhism for the human realm" that Taixu first envisioned. Though his ideas had a limited influence during his own lifetime, they have—through the quiet teaching of Yin Shun—eventually flowered in several movements, particularly the large and growing Tzu Chi Foundation which offers a very unique interpretation of how to live the Dharma in the modern world.

Violence and Non-Violence in Buddhism

Noel Sheth, S.J.

Introduction

There are two forms of Buddhism, Hinayana and Mahayana. In Hinayana only one school is living, namely Theravada, whose original texts are in the Pali language.¹ In Mahayana there are many schools existing, and their original texts in India were in Sanskrit.²

Non-violence in Buddhism

Non-violence is a key virtue in Buddhism. The very first precept mentioned in the five precepts of moral training (*panca-sila*) that all Buddhists are required to observe is abstention from the destruction of life. In instructing the householder Singalaka on the evil actions to be avoided, the very first one the Buddha mentioned was the destruction of life.³ Buddhist Non-violence (*avihimsa, ahimsa*), like that in Hinduism and Jainism, includes not only physical or bodily non-violence, but also vocal and mental Non-violence.

The *Dhammapada* exhorts one to guard against bodily, vocal, and mental anger, to control the body, speech, and mind, and avoiding evil conduct with respect to all three, to practice good behavior instead.⁴ In fact, great emphasis is given to mental non-violence, for it is hateful thoughts that lead to abusive language and violent actions. The *Dhammapada* begins by stating this truth: the mind is the fore-runner of all our conditioned states (*dhamma*). If one speaks or acts with an evil mind, then suffering follows like the wheel follows the hoof of the ox that draws the cart; if one speaks or acts with a pure mind, then happiness follows just like one's shadow.⁵ Buddhism wants to nip violence in the bud by cutting out its root, namely, an

¹ Unless otherwise stated, all references to the Buddhist Pali texts are to the Nalanda edition, published by the government of Bihar. However, references to the *Dhammapada-atthakatha* and the *Jataka-atthakatha* are to the edition published by the Vipassana Research Institute, Igatpuri, Maharashtra.

² Unless otherwise stated, all references to the Buddhist Sanskrit texts are to the Darbhanga edition, published by the Mithila Institute.

³ See *Singalasutta* in *Dighanikaya*, Part III, 8.2.4, p. 140.

⁴ See *Dhammapada*, vv. 231-233, in *Khuddakanikaya*, Part I, p. 39.

⁵ See *Dhammapada*, vv. 1-2, in *Khuddakanikaya*, Part I, p. 17.

aggressive mentality.⁶ Although Non-violence is a negative term, indicating what one should not do (that is, not injuring), it also has a positive meaning because it involves positive acts of kindness, compassion, affection, and love. We shall first take up Non-violence in its negative sense, and then deal with its positive thrust.

Non-violence towards Vegetative life

From quite ancient times, Indian tradition extended Non-violence not only to human beings but also to animals and plants. In Jainism, the most non-violent religion in the world, one has to refrain as far as possible from harming even so called non-living or material things such as earth, water, and fire. Buddhism does not go to such lengths, but it is against the unnecessary destruction of vegetative life. A monk should abstain from destroying the growth of seeds and vegetables.⁷ The destruction of plant-life by monks is a *pacittiya* ("expiation")⁸ type of offence which requires confession.⁹ Monks were of course permitted to eat vegetables, to use twigs to brush their teeth or to use herbal medicines.¹⁰ The basic idea is to avoid unnecessary violence even to plant life and to develop sensitivity to the whole of nature. In fact, it is a *pacittiya* fault even to dig the earth or cause it to be dug.¹¹ This is in order to avoid doing violence to the living organisms and seeds in the earth.

Non-violence toward Animals

Gotama Buddha died of blood dysentery after eating a dish called *sukara-maddava* (soft pork).¹² Scholars have different opinions as to whether this *sukara-maddava* was pork or a vegetarian dish made from such items as a sprout or a mushroom, etc. However, the earliest Pali commentaries identify it as pork.¹³ In the *Amagandhasutta*, it is pointed out that destruction of life, cutting, binding, injustice, harshness, anger, envy, slander, injury, cruelty, disrespect, greed, hostility, etc. have the foul odor of rotting meat, but not so the eating of meat.¹⁴ When Buddhist monks went on their begging rounds, they were expected to accept whatever was put into their begging bowls. Early Buddhists were therefore not strict vegetarians.¹⁵ Nevertheless, in

⁶ See Tahtinen, *Ahimsa: Non-Violence in Indian Tradition* (London: Rider and Co., 1976), 67-69.

⁷ See *Culahatthipadopamasutta*, in *Majjhimanikaya*, Part I, 27.2.8, p. 230.

⁸ In reality, there is no expiation required, but only confession; see I. B. Horner, trans., *The Book of the Discipline*, vol. 2, *Sacred Books of the Buddhists*, vol. 20 (London: Pali Text Society, 1957), 3, n. 4.

⁹ See *Pacittiya*, no. 11, in *Vinayapitaka*, 5.11.89-96, pp. 54-56.

¹⁰ See Horner, 229, n. 4

¹¹ See *Pacittiya*, no. 10, in *Vinayapitaka*, 5.10.84-88, pp. 52-54.

¹² See *Mahaparinibbanasutta*, in *Dighanikaya* Part II, 3.19.62, p. 98.

¹³ See Edward J. Thomas, *The Life of the Buddha as Legend and History* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1927), 149, n. 3.

¹⁴ See *Amagandhasutta*, in *Suttanipata*, 2.2.22-28, pp. 305-306.

¹⁵ This does not mean that they were not sensitive to animal life.

time, Theravadins became increasingly vegetarian. A monk had to avoid eating animals which were seen or heard by him, or suspected to have been deliberately killed for him.¹⁶ Theravada Buddhists should not be butchers, hunters, and fisher folk, and should avoid any job that entails cruelty such as being an executioner or jailer. If they take up such occupations, they are tormentors of others.¹⁷

Buddhism also reacted against the sacrificial killing of animals.¹⁸ In his 5th Pillar Edict, King Asoka exempted several animals from slaughter, for example, parrots, geese, swans, bats, boneless fish, etc., and certain animals when they were pregnant. He also prohibited the killing of fish and certain animals on particular auspicious days.¹⁹ In his 1st Rock Edict, he forbade the sacrifice of all animals in his palace. Formerly many living beings were killed daily for his table; but he decreed that only three would be slain: two peacocks and one deer, and the latter would not be killed invariably. In fact, he said, even these would not be slaughtered in the future.²⁰

There also developed the practice of setting up sanctuaries for birds and animals as well as tanks for fish, where they could move about freely without being hunted or caught. This was called *abhaya-dana* (the gift of fearlessness).²¹

Coming now to Mahayana, the eighth chapter of the *Lankavatarasutra* is wholly dedicated to making people turn away from meat-eating. Although a good part of the chapter is in reference to Bodhisattvas,²² it is clearly meant for all the Buddha's disciples (*sisya*). In contrast to the earlier exceptions made by Theravada texts, the *Lankavatarasutra* categorically states that it is not true that meat is permissible when it is not killed or caused to be killed by oneself and not deliberately prepared for oneself by another. It further asserts that, even though exceptions have been made here and there in canonical texts (*desanapatha*, lit. directive or instructional texts), in this *sutra* flesh is unconditionally forbidden for all, in whatever form, manner, or place.²³

In most of the chapter it puts forward many reasons for avoiding non-vegetarian food. For example, given the fact that transmigration has been going on for a very long time, there cannot be any animal or bird who

¹⁶ See *Jivokasutta*, in *Majjhimanikaya*, Part II, 5.1.2, p. 39.

¹⁷ See *Kandarakasutta*, in *Majjhimanikaya*, Part II. 1.4.8, p. 8.

¹⁸ See *Brahmanadhammikasutta*, in *Suttanipata*, 2.7.88-93, pp. 313-314.

¹⁹ See Radhagovinda Basak, *Asokan Inscriptions* (Calcutta: Progressive Publishers, 1959), 103.

²⁰ See *ibid.*, 4.

²¹ See Shuyu Kanaoka, "Abhaya-dana," in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, vol. 1, ed. G. P. Malalasekera, 20-21.

²² Special beings who, particularly in Mahayana, delay their salvation for the sake of helping others, take on the sufferings of others, transfer their merits to them and give them grace.

²³ See *Mamsabhaksanaparivartah*, in *Saddharmalankavatarasutra*, 8, p. 103, lines 10-11, 24-26; see also vv. 12 and 19, p. 105. The reference to earlier canonical texts that did make exceptions to pure vegetarianism indicates that Buddhism did permit meat-eating in former times.

at one time or another has not been one's own mother or father or some other relative. How then can one bring oneself to eat a living being which is of the same nature as oneself? Flesh, which is born of semen, blood, etc., pollutes one's purity; it brings demerit, leads to rebirth as a carnivorous animal and in various demonic forms; it prevents knowledge, and is an obstacle to salvation (*moksa, nirvana*). Out of compassion we should refrain from consuming meat, for when an animal sees a meat-eater, it is frightened for its life. Flesh has a foul smell even when burned, and spoils one's good name among noble (*arya*) people, whose food is vegetarian; meat-eating invites censure against Buddhism.²⁴ Looking upon all beings as our very own (child), we should refrain from devouring their flesh. Non-vegetarians suffer from disturbed sleep, terrible dreams, and ill health. The consumption of meat successively results in pride, erroneous imagination, passion, delusion of the mind, and lack of liberation.

Similar to the case of Theravada, the custom, and even ceremony, of freeing living creatures arose in Mahayana, too. It consisted in purchasing birds, animals, and fish that had been captured and setting them free in their own habitats. In China and Japan, too, different kings prohibited the eating of meat and advocated Non-violence towards animals, birds, and fish.²⁵ It should be noted, however, that some Mahayana schools are non-vegetarian, while Theravada is vegetarian.

Non-violence toward Human Beings: The Doctrine

Like many other religions, Buddhism accepts a certain, at least relative and temporary, hierarchy of lower and higher forms of life, such as plants, animals, and human beings. The slaying of human beings is more serious than the killing of animals, for the former are a more developed form of life than animals.²⁶ It is natural to expect that its nonviolent attitude would make Buddhism fight shy of going to war. The Buddha avoided telling stories of war, armies, kings, etc. As a king in a former life, he did not use weapons or force.²⁷

The intentional slaying of a human being, including causing the abortion of a fetus (*gabbhapatana*), made a monk lose his monastic character.²⁸ Such killings as well as other acts such as suicide, inciting others to die, and causing euthanasia, made a monk guilty of an offence called *parajika*

²⁴ The somewhat defensive attitude of the text in the face of actual criticism against Buddhists consuming meat seems to indicate that the text's pure vegetarianism is proposed as a reaction to this criticism; see Daisetz Teitaro Suzuki, trans., *The Lankavatara Sutra* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1932; reprinted 1956), 211, n. 1.

²⁵ See Akira Hirakawa, "Ahimsa," in *Encyclopedia of Buddhism*, vol. 1, ed. Malalasekera, 291-92.

²⁶ See Tahtinen, *Ahimsa: Non-Violence in Indian Tradition*, 113-14.

²⁷ See *ibid.*, 95.

²⁸ See *Mahavagga*, in *Vinayapitaka*, 1.70.129, p. 101.

("defeat" in fulfilling his goal as a monk), which was punished by expulsion from the Order.²⁹

Even in the case of punishment for crimes, unlike several Hindu texts that, in addition to expiation and reformatory punishment, also prescribe retributive and deterrent punishment, Theravada texts recommend punishment only after all other means of settling a dispute have been tried out, such as discussion, appeal to reason, repentance, etc., and even then, the punishment to be meted out is more on the milder and lighter side.³⁰ Theravada texts do not advocate capital punishment. So also Mahayana texts are against capital punishment and amputation, and caution that, when punishment is to be administered, it should be with compassion.³¹ It should be clarified however that, although justice in the near future is not always insisted upon, eventual justice will of course surely take place, for it is based on the law of *karman* (Pali *kamma*).³²

Non-violence, however, is not confined to the avoidance of physical harm, which we may call gross or easily perceptible or tangible violence. One must also be non-violent in words, thoughts, and emotions: this is a more subtle form of Non-violence, and the more important one. Buddhism has much to say in this respect. Let me therefore proceed to the Buddhist understanding of this more refined form of Non-violence.

In the ten-fold list of perfections (*paramita*) that the Mahayana Bodhisattva strives to specialize in, forbearance (Pali, *khanti*; Sanskrit *ksanti*) is usually listed as the third perfection, and it is praised to the skies in Buddhist literature. Forbearance consists mainly in absence of anger, hate, and malice, and the forgiving (*marsana*) of offences by others (*parapakara*).³³ A Theravada text declares that whoever bears enmity even to thieves who sever one's limbs, one by one, with a saw, does not carry out the teaching of the Buddha. Even in such a circumstance, one should not be harsh to the thieves or hate them, but rather one should be kind and compassionate and cultivate friendliness (*metta*) towards them as well as towards the whole world.³⁴ Mahayana texts exhort that one must forgive all types of offences

²⁹ See *Parajika*, in *Vinayapitaka*, 1.3, esp. 1.3.143, p. 88; 1.3.147, p. 90; 1.3.157, p. 97; 1.3.164, p. 105; 1.3.169, p. 108.

³⁰ See Tahtinen, *Ahimsa*, 102-103.

³¹ See Hirakawa, "Ahimsa," 291.

³² *Karman* and *karma* refer to the same concept (that is, the later results of one's deeds), but the spelling is different. The international convention is to spell the Sanskrit word as it is found in the dictionary. In the dictionary, the word is *karman*. When we use this dictionary term in the Sanskrit language, more specifically, in the nominative case, it becomes *karma*. The instrumental case is *karmena*, and so on. Some people, including some scholars, write *karma* because it has become a popular word among non-specialists, too. However, since the convention is to use the form as it is found in the dictionary, we should write *karman* (that is, with the 'n' at the end). As a purist, I prefer to write *karman*.

³³ See Har Dayal, *The Bodhisattva Doctrine in Buddhist Sanskrit Literature* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner and Co., 1932), 209.

³⁴ See *Kakacupamasutta*, in *Majjhimanikaya*, Part I, 21.5.20, pp. 172-173.

(injury, insult, abuse, criticism), everywhere (in private and in public), at all times (past, present, and future), in all circumstances (in sickness or health), in thought (not entertaining angry thoughts), word (not speaking harshly) and deed (not harming physically), without any exception (whether friend, enemy, or indifferent person), and however wicked the offending person or however terrible the injury may be.³⁵

To achieve this high ideal is no easy task, but the Bodhisattvas in particular strive to reach this cherished goal, trying all the time not to bear malice or ill will towards anyone even when their life is in grave danger. If, on the other hand, they fail to reach this lofty goal, the Bodhisattvas can repent and confess their fault and reflect how they fall short of the ideal and resolve not to engage in acrimonious disputes, not to reply harshly, not to harbor malice or bear ill will, and so on and so forth.³⁶

In the Buddhist texts, one finds many reasons to motivate oneself to avoid resentment towards the offenders. Buddhaghosa, a Theravada Buddhist, includes the following reasons in his *Visuddhimagga*: remembering the scriptural passages that exhort one to practice forbearance and avoid hatred, reflecting on the harmful effects of anger on oneself, developing compassion for one's enemies who will suffer in purgatories due to their succumbing to anger, recalling to mind the many examples of the Buddha, who in previous lives, as a human adult or child and even as an animal, did not entertain the slightest hatred towards his tormentors, reflecting that one's enemy may have been one's loving parents or brothers or sisters or sons or daughters in previous lives, realizing that the one with whom one is angry is not a substantial soul, but merely a series of momentary aggregates of various elements, and therefore one cannot make that person the target of one's anger.³⁷

Similarly, Mahayana texts, too, try to motivate one to practice forgiveness. Firstly, one should follow the teaching and example of the Buddhas in forgiveness. The Buddhas will not forgive people unless they forgive others who offend them. Secondly, in reference to the person to be forgiven, one may reflect in this manner: the present enemy may have been one's friend or relative or teacher in a former birth. Since Buddhism does not believe in a finite soul, strictly speaking, there is no perpetrator of injuries and insults, nor is any one injured or insulted.³⁸ All beings are evanescent and subject to pain and suffering, and so one should rather lighten one's burden than be angry and unforgiving. The adversaries are conditioned by

³⁵ See the texts cited in Dayal, *Bodhisattva Doctrine*, 209-210.

³⁶ See *Astahasrika Prajnaparamita*, 24, pp. 208-209.

³⁷ *Visuddhimagga*, 9.15-38; see also Nyanamoli, *The Path of Purification*, 2nd ed. (Colombo: A. Semage, 1964), 324-332.

³⁸ It is interesting to note the contrary case in the *Hindu Bhagavadgita* (2.19), where Krishna urges Arjuna to fight against the Kauravas since the soul—which constitutes the essence of a person and, in some Hindu traditions, is inactive—is neither a slayer nor is slain.

the results of their deeds (*karman*) in past lives, and are therefore not acting freely. Thirdly, one may also think with regard to oneself in the following vein: One is suffering insult and injury as a consequence of one's own evil deeds in previous existences. One's enemies are actually one's friends and beneficiaries for they preserve one from such possessions as wealth and fame, and give one the golden opportunity to practice forbearance, which leads to salvation. Fourthly, one should ponder over the ill effects of an angry and unforgiving attitude: it results in terrible punishments in various purgatories, and wipes out the merit one has gained through several lives. Hence, it is better to bear the comparatively negligible sufferings inflicted on one in this life than face terrible tortures in the future. Revenge always brings evil consequences on oneself. Being at peace with others results in great happiness to oneself. Often one is unforgiving because of pride, which needs to be replaced by the spirit of humble service. Finally, mercy and love urge us to forgive others.³⁹

It also helps us to realize in our meditational practice that those who inflict pain on us are acting thus because of their suffering, caused perhaps by the inexperience of their parents, who in turn may have been victims of their parents. Once we understand the circumstances on account of which a person has misbehaved, our anger ceases, we become compassionate towards that person, and we can forgive even without that person being present.⁴⁰

It is noteworthy that many of these reasons are mentioned also by modern writers on forgiveness and reconciliation. They speak of shifting the focus of attention from oneself to the aggressor: instead of asking "Why me?" one asks "Why them?" In doing so, one realizes that the enemy, too, is driven by fear and other conditioning factors. This enables the victim to feel compassion for the offender.⁴¹ This compassion is not sympathy, but rather empathy for the aggressor's humanity.⁴² They have also pointed out that examples of extraordinary people who practiced forgiveness in extremely difficult situations and even sacrificed their lives for the cause of reconciliation can inspire victims to find the courage to forgive.⁴³ It is also helpful to realize that we too, have our faults for which we deserve

³⁹ See the texts cited in Dayal, *Bodhisattva Doctrine*, 210-12.

⁴⁰ Thich Nhat Hanh, cited by Heidi Singh, "Forging a Kind Heart in an Age of Alienation," in *Buddhism through American Women's Eyes*, ed. Karma Lekshe Tsomo (Ithaca, NY: Snow Lion Publications, 1995), 23-24.

⁴¹ See Olga Botcharova, "Implementation of Track Two Diplomacy: Developing a Model of Forgiveness," in *Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Religion, Public Policy, and Conflict Transformation*, ed. Raymond G. Helmick and Rodney L. Peterson, Foreword by Desmond M. Tutu (Radnor, PA: Templeton Foundation Press, 2002), 299-300.

⁴² See Donald W. Shriver, Jr., *An Ethic for Enemies: Forgiveness in Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 8.

⁴³ See Everett L. Worthington, Jr., "Unforgiveness, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation and Their Implication for Societal Interventions," in *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, 186-87.

punishment, and yet are often not penalized for them.⁴⁴ The spirit of humility is important in the process of reconciliation.⁴⁵

On the other hand, we can easily see that some of the reasons proposed spring from the specifically Buddhist worldview. For example, strictly speaking, no one offends nor is any one offended, for there are no finite souls or substantial agents: every finite being is a series of momentary aggregates. In Theravada, the aggregates are real, but they exist only for a moment; so who is offending whom? The aggregates of the succeeding moment are different from those of the previous moment. One cannot therefore hold the aggregates of the succeeding moment responsible for what was perpetrated by those of the previous moment.⁴⁶ In Mahayana, the aggregates do not even exist; in fact, nothing exists except the one Supreme Reality, the Adi Buddha. It is interesting to note that the law of *karman* is invoked not to condemn the offender, but to understand the aggressor's predicament. Theravada does not accept a God, so there is no question of recourse to the Christian idea that God forgives us and therefore we, too, should forgive others, or that God will not forgive us if we do not forgive others. But Mahayana does propose a similar motive: the Buddhas, who are manifestations of the supreme Adi Buddha, will not forgive those who do not forgive others.⁴⁷

There is a well-known Buddhist saying: "Never does hatred cease by hatred, but hatred ceases by love. This is the eternal law (*dhamma*)."⁴⁸ Anger and hatred are great obstacles to the practice of Non-violence. Buddhism emphatically points out that wrath and animosity affect the unforgiving enraged or hostile persons more than the ones on whom they vent their spleen. The person who is full of rancor experiences mental agony and anguish, while the one who bears no resentment does not feel such pain and grief.⁴⁹ Anger may or may not make the other person suffer, but it definitely makes oneself suffer. Moreover, in accordance with the law of *karman*, it will not lead to liberation but to damnation in purgatories. An infuriated person is like one who wants to hit another with a burning ember or feces in one's hand, but actually ends up being the one to suffer burns or to stink.⁵⁰

⁴⁴ See John Dawson, "Hatred's End: A Christian Proposal to Peace-making in a New Century," in *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, 247-48.

⁴⁵ See John Paul Lederach, "Five Qualities of Practice in Support of Reconciliation Processes," in *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, 198-99

⁴⁶ Of course, by the same logic, there is no forgiver either and there is no reason to forgive, for the aggregates that were offended and hurt are different from the aggregates of the succeeding moment. Buddhists, however, chose the other alternative rather than this one.

⁴⁷ Note, however, that in Mahayana all this is only on the practical level for, from the point of view of the absolute truth, everything is illusory, except the one Reality, the Adi Buddha.

⁴⁸ *Dhammapada*, v. 5, in *Khuddakanikaya*, Part I, p. 17.

⁴⁹ See *Anguttaranikaya*, 5.18.4, Part II, p. 451.

⁵⁰ See *Visuddhimagga*, 9.22-23; see also Nyanamoli, *Path of Purification*, 326-27.

Some Buddhist Examples of Non-violence

Concrete examples not only spell out and explain a little more the Buddhist understanding of non-violence, but also complement the theory to some extent. They also illustrate the ideal as well as other levels of Non-violence. We shall mention a few instances from the texts, from history, and from the contemporary world.

From the Texts

Let me begin by briefly narrating the three most celebrated stories in Buddhism illustrating non-violence. Of these the most famous is that of Khantivadi. In one of his previous lives as a Bodhisattva, Gautama Buddha was born as Kundalakumara, who was later known as Khantivadi [Sanskrit Ksantivadin], that is, "One who preached the doctrine of forbearance." Angry with Khantivadi, King Kalabu tested his forbearance by inflicting one agonizing torture after another: he first had him scourged all over his body, then had his hands and feet chopped off, and then his nose and ears cut off. Even though he was taunted by the king after every torment, Khantivadi never got angry, declaring himself to be a preacher and practitioner of forbearance. Finally, the king kicked him on his chest near the heart and walked off in a huff. The commander-in-chief requested Khantivadi to vent his wrath only on the king, but to spare the others and the kingdom. However, instead of taking revenge, Khantivadi uttered a blessing, "Long live the king!"⁵¹

Another well-known anecdote is that of Punna [Sanskrit, Purna] who opts to stay in a place called Sunaparanta [Sanskrit, Sronaparanta], but the Buddha warns him that the people are fierce and rough and asks him how he would react if they were to abuse and revile him. Punna answers that he would consider them very good, since they would not strike him with their hands. The Buddha then asks him how he would respond if they were to strike him with their hands, to which he replies that he would think of them as very good, since they would not pelt him with clods of earth. Punna proceeds in this way, every time excusing them for not being worse: for their not hitting him with a stick, and not stabbing him with a knife. If this last were to happen, he would rejoice that he would be freed of his body without his even looking for a knife to take his own life, of which he was so ashamed and disgusted. The Buddha then congratulates him for his great control and calmness, which results in such a laudable attitude of forbearance.⁵²

⁵¹ *Khantivadijatakavannana*, in *Jataka-atthakatha*, 4.2.3, no. 313, vol. 72, pp. 34-37. A Sanskrit version is found in the *Ksantijataka* in the *Jatakamala*, 28, pp. 189ff

⁵² See *Punnovadasutta*, in *Majjhimanikaya*, Part III, 45.2.2, pp. 358-60. A Sanskrit version, belonging to the Sarvastivada School, is found in the *Purnavadana*, in the *Divyavadana*, 2, pp. 23-24.

Dharmavivardhana, better known as Kunala, was the virtuous son of King Asoka. His stepmother Tisyaraksita declared her burning love for him because of his beautiful eyes. On being rejected by him, she ordered his eyes to be pulled out. But accepting this as the fruit of his own past deeds (*karman*), he did not bear any malice towards her. He then went about with his wife begging on the streets, and making his living by singing and playing the *vina* (a musical instrument). Later when Asoka heard of her dastardly deed, he wanted to put her to death by pulling out her eyes, cutting off her tongue, poisoning her, etc. But Kunala asked the king to spare her life, declaring that he harbored no anger towards her. Kunala then miraculously regained his eyes. Nevertheless, the king had Tisyaraksita burnt alive in a lac house (*jatugrha*).⁵³

We notice in these instances that the ideal is not even to feel anger or hatred even in the most trying circumstances. In the context of the views of many Western writers on forgiveness and reconciliation, it should be pointed out that the emphasis in Buddhism is in the first place on not even feeling hurt or on remaining unperturbed by even the most cruel and vehement aggressor. We could say that, strictly speaking, there is nothing to forgive, for there is no offence taken in the first place. The ideal is to practice forbearance, to put up with the trials and sufferings inflicted by others and not bear any grudge or malice toward the opponents. If one does not succeed in this stoic ideal, and experiences hurt and resentment, one must try and bring oneself to forgive the perpetrator. Although desired, reconciliation is not so actively sought for. If the aggressor is moved to repentance and becomes reconciled, it's well and good, but it is not the deliberate goal of every act of forbearance and forgiveness. Justice, and reparation, too, are not insisted upon in every instance.⁵⁴

The ordinary person of course cannot reach such heights of equanimity as illustrated above. Occasionally, the Buddhist texts do give more down-to-earth examples of people who get annoyed with one another but eventually do get reconciled. Two monks residing in Kosambi quarreled with each other. Then this enmity between the two spread not only to their monastic disciples but also to their friends and others, who thus took sides with one or the other monk. In spite of many efforts made by the Buddha to reconcile them, they refused to do so. It was only when they felt the pinch of being deprived of food offerings from the lay folk that they came to their senses, and decided to forgive each other and be reunited. Finally, the two factions also begged the Buddha's forgiveness.⁵⁵

⁵³ See *Kunalavadana*, in *Divyavadana*, 27, pp. 261-70.

⁵⁴ In the case of the Buddhist Confession, both reconciliation and justice are integral parts of it, but Confession is reserved only for monks and nuns.

⁵⁵ See *Kosambakavatthu*. in *Dhammapada-atthakatha*, 1.5, Part I, vol. 50, pp. 34-40; see Eugene Watson Burlingame, trans., *Buddhist Legends*, 3 parts, Harvard Oriental Series vols. 28-30 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1921), Part I, 176-183.

On occasion the Buddha himself brings about reconciliation. In the Introduction to the Kunalā Jataka, it is reported that when the Koliya and Sakyan tribes were about to engage in a bloody battle over the right to the waters of the river Rohini, the Buddha persuaded them to desist from fighting by making them realize that there was no point in killing warriors of priceless value for the sake of some water that had comparatively little worth.⁵⁶ Not all, however, paid heed to the Buddha's mediations. He was unable to persuade the stubborn monk Tissa to ask forgiveness for not welcoming some visiting monks with respect and hospitality. Tissa was unforgiving because he was angry with those monks for having abused him for this fault of omission. In fact, in a previous life, too, he was not willing to ask pardon.⁵⁷

There were times when the Buddha was harsh with some of his interlocutors, even humiliating them at times.⁵⁸ But it is explained that he occasionally used disagreeable words out of compassion, just as we would remove a stick or a stone from a child's mouth, even if it pains the child.⁵⁹ Even so, one can cite some texts that speak disparagingly of other traditions or even of other Buddhist sects. For example, the followers of Theravada are accused of not being true followers of the Buddha and, hence, do not attain salvation. The Theravadins on the other hand are said to consider Mahayana as a heretical religion.⁶⁰ One of the chronicles of Sri Lanka, the Mahavamsa, often portrays the island's Tamilians as enemies of the Sinhalese. Even though he had conquered King Elara, King Dutthagamani was disconsolate for he realized that he had slaughtered millions in the battle. But some Arahants⁶¹ consoled him by telling him that his action would not prevent him from attaining a temporary heaven. He had killed only one and a half human beings, that is, those who had declared themselves to be Buddhists, fully or partially. The rest were unbelievers and immoral, not worth any more than mere animals. He would bring glory to Buddhism and so should not let his heart be troubled.⁶² To our modern sensibilities, in this age of dialogue, it is shocking to read that, according to the writers of this book, which of course was composed in a different era, people who have attained liberation consider the vanquished non-Buddhists as sub-humans.⁶³ Hatred

⁵⁶ See *Kunalajatakavannana*, in *Jataka-atthakatha*, 5.21.4, no. 536, vol. 74, pp. 408-410.

⁵⁷ See *Tissatheravattu*, in *Dhammapada-atthakatha*, 1.3, Part I, vol. 50, pp. 25-29; see also Burlingame, *Buddhist Legends*, Part I, 166-70.

⁵⁸ See Noel Sheth, "Buddhism and Communalism," *Religion and Society* 35, no. 4 (December 1988): 60.

⁵⁹ See *Abhayarajakumarasutta*, in *Majjhimanikaya*, Part II, 8.1.3-8.2, pp. 68-70.

⁶⁰ See *Saddharmapundarikasutra*, at 2.37, p. 29; 2.54-55, p. 31; 12.8-9, p. 164.

⁶¹ Those who have attained *nibbana* or liberation while living.

⁶² *Mahavamsa*, 25; see Wilhelm Geiger, tran., *The Mahavamsa: The Great Chronicle of Ceylon* (London: Pali Text Society, 1912), 177-178, lines 103-111.

⁶³ For a feeble attempt to give a more charitable interpretation, see Mahinda Deegalle, "Is Violence Justified in Theravada Buddhism?" *The Ecumenical Review: The Quarterly of the World Council of Churches* 55, no. 3 (July 2003): 126.

often dehumanizes the enemy and thus gets rid of possible qualms of conscience.⁶⁴

From Buddhist History

Let us now leave the traditional texts and cite a couple of illustrations from Buddhist history. In the 13th Rock Edict, Emperor Asoka publicly expresses his remorse and confesses how the carnage at Kalinga caused him great anguish. He also declares that he pardons, as far as it is possible, all those who had wronged him. He makes peace with the people living in the forests. He wishes all beings to be free from injury and to enjoy gentleness or joyousness.⁶⁵ He even took care to omit the 13th Edict from the texts carved on the rocks in Kalinga, lest even his words of repentance would serve as a spark to re-ignite adverse emotions in the Kalingas by reviving the memory of his fateful attack on their country.⁶⁶ The father of Honen, the leader of the Japanese Jodo-shu school, was fatally wounded by a gang of robbers who attacked their home. On his deathbed, his father exhorted his son never to take revenge but rather to pray for the salvation of his father as well as of the attackers.⁶⁷

From the Contemporary World

We now turn to some examples in the contemporary world. His Holiness the Dalai Lama, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, has always embraced the policy of peaceful resistance to the Chinese, who invaded Tibet in 1950. He refers to the Chinese as his brothers and sisters and is motivated by tolerance, compassion, and love. While wanting autonomy, he admits the fact that Tibet would continue to be linked with China.⁶⁸ He said, "Tolerance can be learnt only from an enemy. Therefore, in a way, enemies are precious, in that they help us to grow.... Compassion and love are necessary in order for us to obtain happiness or tranquility. [Human nature is one.] When we return to this basis, all people are the same. Then we can truly say the words *brother, sister*.... This gives us inner strength."⁶⁹ Realizing the oneness of humanity, is one of the ways that facilitate forgiveness or at least reduce

⁶⁴ See Donald W. Schriver, Jr., "Forgiveness: A Bridge across Abysses of Revenge," in *Forgiveness and Reconciliation*, 160-161.

⁶⁵ See Basak, *Asokan Inscriptions*, 71-72.

⁶⁶ Romila Thapar, cited by Rajmohan Gandhi, *Revenge and Reconciliation: Understanding South Asian History* (New Delhi: Penguin Books, 1999), 52.

⁶⁷ See Masaharu Anesaki, *History of Japanese Religion: With Special Reference to the Social and Moral Life of the Nation* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, 1930; reprint ed., Rutland, Vermont and Tokyo, Japan: Charles E. Tuttle, 1963), 171-72.

⁶⁸ See Gandhi, *Revenge and Reconciliation*, 400.

⁶⁹ Cited by John D'Arcy May, "Reconciliation in Buddhism," in *Reconciliation in Religion and Society*, ed. Michael Hurley (Belfast: Institute of Irish Studies, Queen's University of Belfast, 1994), 178.

unforgiveness.⁷⁰ It should be noted, however, that this oneness in Mahayana is radical and metaphysical, and not just a sort of psychological unity or a common humanity shared with one another, for, according to Mahayana, there is only one Reality, and everything else is an illusion; everything is identical with that one Reality.

The Thai Buddhist Sulak Sivaraksa also appeals to the sense of the one human family: "We must come to see that there is no 'other.' We are all one human family. It is greed, hatred and delusion that we need to overcome."⁷¹

The Vietnamese monk Thich Nhat Hanh did not bear any hatred towards the Catholic Diem regime that persecuted him, or to the Viet Cong or the American soldiers who attacked Vietnam. He could find excuses for the atrocities perpetrated by American soldiers in Vietnam, attributing these to their hard life in the swamps and jungles infested by mosquitoes and other insects, and to their being in constant danger of death. Although initially angry, he did not blame a sea-pirate who had raped a twelve-year old girl, thinking that if he had had the same historical, economic, and educational background as that pirate, he would probably have behaved in the same way. This attitude of Thich Nhat Hanh is based on the Buddhist doctrine of Dependent or Conditioned Co-production (*pratitya-samutpada*; Pali *patticca-saumuppada*), according to which no being or event arises without a conditioning factor: this (resulting) being or event is because that (preceding) being or event is; this (resulting) being or event is not because that (preceding) being or event is not.⁷² It thus helps the Buddhists to pay attention to attenuating circumstances, and hence be more understanding and forgiving.

Another principle on which Thich Nhat Hanh bases his tolerant and reconciliatory spirit is the Mahayana doctrine of the oneness of all reality, which he interprets in practical life as an attitude of "inter-being," of identifying oneself with the other. He identifies himself with that twelve-year old girl who jumped into the sea after being raped, and with the pirate who raped her, thinking of his own heart which is not yet capable of seeing and loving, but wanting to discover his own true being, and thus keeping the door of compassion open in his heart. In his own words, "Inter-being means that you cannot be a separate entity. You can only inter-be with other people and elements."⁷³

In war-torn Cambodia, Maha Ghosananda, five-time Nobel Peace Prize nominee, led nine *Dhammayietras* [= *Dharmayatras*] or Pilgrimages of Truth to promote peace. Often opponents met and walked together in the spirit of reconciliation. In his first *Dhammayietra*, he preached repeatedly as follows,

⁷⁰ See Worthington, "Unforgiveness, Forgiveness, and Reconciliation," 181.

⁷¹ Cited by May, "Reconciliation in Buddhism," 179.

⁷² See Donald Nichols, "A Buddhist Contribution to Peace Spirituality," *Dialogue*, NS 12, nos. 1-3 (January-December 1985): 2-3.

⁷³ May, "Reconciliation in Buddhism," 179-80.

"The suffering of Cambodia has been deep. From this suffering comes Great Compassion. Great Compassion makes a peaceful heart. A peaceful heart makes a peaceful person. A peaceful person makes a peaceful family. A peaceful family makes a peaceful community. A peaceful community makes a peaceful nation. A peaceful nation makes a peaceful world."⁷⁴

The Sri Lankan monk H. Uttarananda, who was a member of the now defunct Humanist Bhikkhus'⁷⁵ Association (*Manava-hitavadi Bhikkhu Sangamaya*), proposed a Buddhist-Humanist view of the national ethnic problem in Sri Lanka. Following the typical Buddhist "middle path," he wanted to avoid the two extremes of a Sinhala Buddhist State and a free Eelam State. He acknowledged the inhuman atrocities perpetrated on Tamils in 1983 and thereafter by racist fanatics and governments, and was able to sympathetically understand the exasperated violent reactions of Tamils whose pent-up rage boiled over due to the prolonged racist attitudes of successive governments. He called for reconciliation and strengthening of racial unity and peace.⁷⁶ Apologies, whether private or public, do help in the process of reconciliation and peace.⁷⁷

In a Press Conference in Tokyo on June 3, 2002, the four Mahanayakes or "Patriarchs" of the Theravada Buddhist Order of Sri Lanka publicly released a Press Statement, which declared that the order was for peace and development in Sri Lanka, and solicited the support of the Japanese people in the peace process and in confidence-building measures which would benefit all three communities affected by the war, namely, the Sinhalese, the Tamils, and the Muslims.⁷⁸ The Sri Lankan newspaper, *The Island*,⁷⁹ reported that the Mahanayake of Asgiriya conferred his blessings on both the UNP Government of Ranil Wickremasinghe as well as the LTTE, in their efforts to restore peace through peace talks in Thailand.

On the more modest scale of the family, Heidi Singh narrates how she was able to eventually become reconciled with her estranged father by practicing the meditation of friendliness (*metta*), reflecting on appropriate Buddhist texts given to her by her Buddhist teachers, reciting Buddhist scriptural passages, and observing the precepts of moral life.⁸⁰

Thus, in Buddhism we come across several outstanding instances of heroic Non-violence, magnanimous forgiveness, and unconditional reconciliation, as manifested in the texts, in history, and in the contemporary world.

⁷⁴ "Letter from Cambodia," March 2002, p. 1.

⁷⁵ *Bhikkhu* literally means a mendicant and refers to a Buddhist monk: the initial practice of begging for food is now defunct, except in a couple of countries like Thailand and Myanmar.

⁷⁶ See H. Uttarananda, "Sihala Buddhist Monks and the Rights of the Tamils," *Dialogue*, NS 18, nos. 1-3 (January-December 1991): 6-9, 12-13.

⁷⁷ See Shriver, "Forgiveness," 163.

⁷⁸ From the text of the Press Release, sent to me by the Japanese Committee of the World Conference on Religion and Peace.

⁷⁹ November 5, 2002, p. 1.

⁸⁰ See Singh, "Forging a Kind Heart," 15-24.

Non-violence toward Oneself

So far we have treated Buddhist Non-violence towards others, both human beings and sub-human beings. We shall now briefly deal with the aspects of Non-violence towards oneself.

Early in his spiritual quest, Gautama Buddha practiced severe asceticism, but soon realized that it did not help his progress.⁸¹ He therefore decided to follow the middle path (*majjhima patipada*) between extreme austerity and excessive sensuality, and taught it to others.⁸² Moderate mortification is necessary, but hankering after extreme penances does not lead to liberation. Those who advocate mortification, make it essential, and are attached to it, are unable to cross the flood (to the other shore of liberation).⁸³ Severe asceticism is not only useless; it is a form of violence on oneself. Similarly, self-mutilation is also unacceptable; it is a grave offence (*apatti*).⁸⁴ While the Jains recommend religious suicide (*sallekhana*),⁸⁵ Buddhists reject suicide all together. A monk who intentionally takes his own life or persuades others to commit suicide commits a *parajika* offence that requires expulsion from the Order.⁸⁶ On the other hand, for instance, some Vietnamese monks immolated themselves in protest against the government.⁸⁷ Even in Christianity theologians have wondered whether, for instance, the suicides done in protest by certain Northern Irish prisoners fighting for the freedom of Northern Ireland, could be justified. Buddhism, furthermore, does not approve self-defense, unlike Christianity and certain Hindu texts. A Brahmin⁸⁸ who releases a blow (*muncati*) on his attacker is worse than the one who strikes a Brahmin.⁸⁹

Non-violence in the Positive Sense

Although one cannot totally separate the negative and positive sides of Non-violence, since they are two sides of the same coin, yet, in the above treatment, we have mostly concentrated on the negative sense of Non-violence, that is, what one should not do. We shall now proceed to the positive aspect of Non-violence. In this context the Buddhist should practice four important virtues called *Brahma-viharas* (Sublime States), namely, *metta* [Sanskrit *maitri*] (friendliness), *karuna* (compassion), *mudita* (joy), and

⁸¹ See Thomas, *Life of the Buddha*, 64-67.

⁸² See *Mahavagga*, in *Vinayapitaka*, 1.7.13, p. 13.

⁸³ See *Salhasutta*, in *Anguttaranikaya*, 4.20.3-4, Part II, p. 214.

⁸⁴ See *Cullavagga*, in *Vinayapitaka*, 5.4, p. 199.

⁸⁵ Jains distinguish this form of religious suicide from the usual, ordinary suicide, pointing out that the motives and purpose are different.

⁸⁶ See *Parajika*, in *Vinayapitaka*, 1.3.143-156, pp. 88-97

⁸⁷ See Sheth, "Buddhism and Communalism," 45.

⁸⁸ Here the word *brahmana* (*Brahmin*) does not refer to the Brahmin class (*varna*), but to a virtuous and wise person. Buddhism reinterprets caste in ethical terms; see Noel Sheth, "The Buddha's Attitude to Caste," *Negations* 1, no. 4 (October-December 1982): 25-26.

⁸⁹ See *Dhammapada*, v. 389, in *Khuddakanikaya*, Part I, p. 54.

upekkha [Sanskrit *upeksa*] (equanimity). All these four Sublime States are to be cultivated or developed through meditation: it is not enough to just make a good resolution; it is meditation that brings about the necessary transformation.

While in Theravada the exclusive practice of these virtues resulted only in rebirth in the temporary, heavenly world of the god Brahma, in later Mahayana it led to *nirvana* or salvation. *Metta* or *Maitri* is practiced towards those who are happy; its contrary is malice. *Karuna*, on the other hand, is directed to those who suffer and are unhappy. Theravada gives more importance to *metta*, while Mahayana emphasizes *karuna* more.⁹⁰ Of these four virtues, we shall focus briefly on friendliness (Pali *metta*; Sanskrit *maitri*).⁹¹

Metta essentially consists in the wish that all beings may be happy. Just as a mother would protect her only child at the risk of her own life, even so one should cultivate unlimited love towards all beings.⁹² The cultivation of *metta* is the best way to prevent anger from arising and to remove anger in case it has arisen.⁹³ The mind of one who has acquired perfection in *metta* cannot be affected even by the most hostile person, just as the earth cannot be destroyed, space cannot be painted on, and the river Ganga cannot be burned.⁹⁴

Before embarking on the development of *metta*, one must engage in preliminary reflections on the dangers of hate and the advantages of forbearance (*khanti*). Then one proceeds through meditation to cultivate *metta* in order to protect the mind from the dangers of anger and lead it into the advantages of forbearance. One begins by practicing *metta* towards oneself, wishing welfare and happiness to oneself. After this, one concentrates on engendering *metta* towards one's teacher, then towards a dear friend, next towards a neutral person, and finally towards a hostile person.⁹⁵ Several reflections are suggested to enable one to overcome resentment towards one's enemy. This *metta* is to be perfected in such a way that eventually one makes no distinction between oneself, the dear person, the neutral person and the enemy. *Metta* reaches its climax when more and more beings are included in the range of one's *metta*, until it extends to all beings, human, animal or plant, and is radiated in all the directions of the universe.⁹⁶

⁹⁰ See Dayal, *Bodhisattva Doctrine*, 227-228.

⁹¹ For a comparison of Buddhist *metta* with Christian love, see Noel Sheth, "The Buddhist Understanding of Forgiveness and Reconciliation," *Jnanadeepa: Pune Journal of Religious Studies* 6, no. 2 (July 2003): 92-95.

⁹² See *Mettasutta*, in *Suttanipata*, 1.8, in *Khuddakanikaya*, Part I, pp. 290-291.

⁹³ See *Aunguttaranikaya*, 1.2.7, Part I, p. 5.

⁹⁴ See *Kakacupamasutta*, in *Majjhimanikaya*, Part I, 21.4.16-18, pp. 170-171.

⁹⁵ It will be noticed that the meditation begins with oneself, then proceeds to friends and neutral persons and only later moves on to enemies. Thus, it is in accord with our human psychology: if we straightaway begin meditating on a person whom we cannot stand, we are not likely to develop friendly feelings towards that person.

⁹⁶ See *Visuddhimagga*, 9.1-76; see also Nyanamoli, *Path of Purification*, 321-40.

A similar meditational order, but with some variation, is followed for the cultivation of *karuna* (compassion), *mudita* (joy), and *upekkha* (equanimity). In the development of these qualities, just as in the case of *metta*, perfection is obtained by making no distinction between anyone, and suffusing all the directions of the universe with that particular virtue.⁹⁷

In the context of our topic of Non-violence, therefore, the Buddhist should practice friendliness, compassion, joy, and equanimity towards a hostile person, even to the extent of not making any distinction between the hostile person, a neutral person, a dear one, or oneself. These virtues are extended not only to one or other individual friend or enemy, but also to all human beings, nay, even to all animals and plants, and are radiated in all directions. Thus non-violence, in the Buddhist perspective, is all inclusive, encompassing not only all human beings, but also the whole of nature.

While traditionally these four *Brahma-viharas* were generally applied only in the purely spiritual realm, nowadays Buddhists are gradually spelling out the wider social implications of these sublime states. In many countries, there is emerging an “engaged Buddhism” where even monks are becoming socially involved and work towards community development. For instance, Phongphit describes the social contributions of eight monks and three laymen in Thailand, all of whom are motivated by these four virtues as well as by other Buddhist attitudes.⁹⁸ In the context of compassion (*karuna*), for instance, Phongphit points out, “A rich man who does not care for the miserable conditions of the poor lacks this quality.... Those who shut them-selves up in ivory towers, in the midst of an unjust world, cannot be called compassionate.”⁹⁹

Violence in Buddhism

(1) In Buddhist tradition

Buddhism has been one of the more peaceful religions in the world. The historian Toynbee wrote, “The three Judaic religions have a record of intolerance, hatred, malice, uncharitableness and persecution that is black by comparison with Buddhism’s record.”¹⁰⁰ This does not mean that Buddhism has always been snow-white: it presents a record that is grey, perhaps light grey.¹⁰¹ No sooner had the Master passed away than there were rival claims over possession of his relics.¹⁰² Later, Buddhists fought with each other to

⁹⁷ See *Visuddhimagga*, 9.77-89; see also Nyanamoli, *Path of Purification*, 340-43.

⁹⁸ See Seri Phongphit, *Religion in a Changing Society: Buddhism, Reform and the Role of Monks in Community Development in Thailand* (Hong Kong: Arena Press, 1988).

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁰⁰ Arnold Toynbee, *Change and Habit: The Challenge of Our Time* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), 167.

¹⁰¹ See Noel Sheth, “Freedom from Fundamentalism in Buddhism,” in *The Church in India in the Emerging Third Millennium*, ed. Thomas D’Sa (Bangalore: N.B.C.L.C, 2005), 219-21.

¹⁰² See *Mahapariniibbanasutta*, in *Dighanikaya*, Part II, 3.26.110-113, pp. 126-28.

acquire the sacred tooth relic.¹⁰³ In Burma, King Anuruddha (Anawratha) of Punnagama (Pagan) attacked the kingdom of Sudhammapura (Thaton) in order to seize a copy of the Scriptures (*Tipitaka*) and the relics of the Buddha, which King Manohari (Manuha) had refused to send him when requested to do so.¹⁰⁴ In Sri Lanka, a Theravada king seized a Mahayana monastery and burnt its scriptural texts.¹⁰⁵ In Tibet, the monk Dpal-gi-rdo-rje (Pelgyi Dorje) assassinated King Glandarma (Lang Darma) because he persecuted Buddhism. The Dge-lugs-pa (Gelugpa) sect often persecuted other Buddhist schools, attacking and destroying their monasteries and books. Tibetan Buddhists fought many wars against each other.¹⁰⁶ A number of Chinese messianic groups, particularly the White Lotus Sect (Pai Lien Ts'ai) resorted to armed rebellions. In Japan, Nichiren's militant sect vehemently attacked other schools. For centuries medieval Japanese monasteries had their own armies which attacked each other.¹⁰⁷ From the sixteenth century right up to the beginning of the twentieth century, the Buddhists rabidly persecuted Shamanism in Mongolia: images and other sacred objects were destroyed and shamans were burnt alive or forced to renounce their faith.¹⁰⁸ In the face of these facts, the assertion of Rahula Walpola,¹⁰⁹ namely, that Buddhism had never persecuted or caused bloodshed in converting others and propagating its faith, will have to be modified.

(2) In Modern Times

Coming to modern times, in India, there are frequent clashes between *dalit* Buddhists and Hindus. The renaming of the Marathawada University after Dr. Ambedkar, the posthumous publication of Ambedkar's controversial *Riddles in Hinduism*, the case of the writer Bhave being elected as president of the Maharashtra Sahitya Parishad, and incidents like that of placing a garland of slippers on the statue of Dr. Ambedkar in Paithan, are some of the burning issues that have sparked virulent criticism, protest marches, and even widespread violence.

In Sri Lanka, a monk assassinated Prime Minister Bandaranaike in 1959; in 1966 monks were involved in a *coup d'état* attempt; and in 1971 the insurrection erupted. In the ethnic conflicts between the Sinhalese and

¹⁰³ See *The Dathavamsa: A History of the Tooth-relic of the Buddha*, ed. and trans. B. C. Law (Lahore: Motilal Banarsidass, 1925), which chronicles the vicissitudes of the tooth-relic in its travels from Orissa to Sri Lanka.

¹⁰⁴ See B. C. Law, trans., *The History of the Buddha's Religion (Sasanavamsa)*, Sacred Books of the Buddhists, vol. 17 (London: Luzac and Co., 1952), 69-70.

¹⁰⁵ *Nikayasangraha*, cited by Phra Khantipalo, *Tolerance: A Study from Buddhist Sources* (London: Rider and Co., 1964), 105.

¹⁰⁶ See R. A. Stein, *Tibetan Civilization*, trans. J. E. Stapleton Driver (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1972), 69, 81.

¹⁰⁷ See Edward Conze, *Buddhism: Its Essence and Development* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1959), 65-66.

¹⁰⁸ See Walther Heissig, "Mongol Religions," in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, vol. 10. ed. Mircea Eliade, 55-56.

¹⁰⁹ See Walpola Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught*, rev. ed. (New York: Grove Press, 1974), 5.

Tamilians, there have been nationwide riots and massacres; temples have been destroyed and images desecrated. In Myanmar, monks were involved in the terrible Buddhist-Muslim riots of 1938. In spite of His Holiness the Dalai Lama's plea for Non-violence, Tibetans, including monks, have been reacting violently against the Chinese regime. In Cambodia, Pol Pot¹¹⁰ and the Khmer Rouge committed extensive genocide. All this and more underscores the sad fact that Buddhism in Asia is indeed "a faith in flames."¹¹¹

In this context of Buddhist violence, there have been a few sporadic attempts in modern times to justify violence, at least in extreme situations.¹¹² In Sri Lanka, for instance, some justify the slaughter of Tamilians by citing the above-mentioned incident narrated in the *Mahavamsa* in which the Arahants glorified King Dutthagamani's killing of King Elara and millions of other Tamilians.¹¹³ Sayings of the Buddha such as "O monks, behave for the benefit of the people" have also been used by monks in Sri Lanka to register violent protests.¹¹⁴ One also meets with occasional reference to the "pious" argument that one may kill people out of compassion in order to prevent them from committing more sins.¹¹⁵ In general, however, Buddhism has not developed a systematic doctrinal justification of violence.¹¹⁶

The prevalence of violence in Buddhism has also raised the question of whether one should take an essentialist view of authentic Buddhism and oppose it to the existential situation of violent Buddhism. For example in Sri Lanka, Jayewardene, who advocated an apolitical stance for monks, was first praised by his followers, but later, many monks and lay people who were members of the violent Janata Vimukti Permuna (JVP) criticized his nonviolent policies as anti-Buddhist and called him a traitor for not waging a full scale war on the LTTE. Sometime after Premadasa assumed the office of President of Sri Lanka, he unleashed a large scale attack on the JVP monks and lay people. Portraying his government as Buddhist and the JVP as anti-Buddhist, he released death squads to wipe them out. When Chandrika Bandaranaike became president, she depicted the Premadasa government as anti-Buddhist! Thus, the identification of what was authentic Buddhism—and what was not—kept changing as the historical events unfolded in Sri

¹¹⁰ He stayed in a Buddhist monastery for six years, two of which were spent as a monk. Later, however, he joined the Cambodian Communist Party.

¹¹¹ Jerrold Schecter, *The New Face of Buddha: Buddhism and Political Power in Southeast Asia* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1967), xi.

¹¹² See Gunapala Dharmasiri, "Buddhism and Marxism in the Socio-cultural Context of Sri Lanka," *Dialogue*, NS 12:1-3 (January-December 1985): 65.

¹¹³ See Deegalle, "Is Violence Justified in Theravada Buddhism?" 126-27.

¹¹⁴ See Ananda Abeysekara, "The Saffron Army, Violence, Terror(ism): Buddhism, Identity, and Difference in Sri Lanka," *Numen: International Review for the History of Religions* 48, no. 1 (2001): 29-32.

¹¹⁵ For various such examples of unethical behavior interpreted as acts of compassion (*karuna*) and justified as means to a good end, see Dayal, *Bodhisattva Doctrine*, 207-208; and see also Aloysius Pieris, "Buddhism and Marxism in Dialogue: A Comment on Dr. Dharmasiri's Paper," *Dialogue*, NS 12, nos. 1-3 (January-December 1985): 78-79.

¹¹⁶ See Pieris, "Buddhism and Marxism in Dialogue," 78.

Lanka. This is not to say that Buddhism and terrorism are not opposed to each other, but that in the existential realm, it is not so easy to label what is authentically Buddhist and what is not, because of different perspectives and viewpoints.¹¹⁷ After all, a person who is a terrorist for one group can be a hero or martyr for another group.

Reflections on Non-violence¹¹⁸

Although on rare occasions violence too, can spring from courage, yet often enough we observe in our daily life that it is frequently the weak, for example, those who experience a sense of an inferiority complex, who try to dominate others. It is the truly great who are truly humble. In Luke 6:29, Christ teaches, "If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also." This is no meek submission. There is tremendous strength and power in such an action. There are very few people who will dare to strike back at a person who offers the other cheek. In fact, such opponents are generally so taken by surprise that they lose their balance and poise as it were. The lack of physical resistance from the nonviolent person is so unexpected, that the adversaries become confused and helpless and do not know how to deal with this new situation. Moreover, when, contrary to their expectations, the antagonists experience kindness and compassion instead, this may move them to reflect on their actions and open their hearts to conversion.

On the other hand, if, instead of offering the other cheek, the person strikes back, we can be sure the fight will not stop there. Even if opponents are not physically strong enough to retaliate, they will strike back in other ways, like getting other people to do the dirty job, scheming against those persons, or speaking ill of them, etc. Violence breeds violence. However, it is doubtful whether Non-violence can always be effective in a brutal, totalitarian regime, against "a diabolic universal steam-roller," as Buber put it.¹¹⁹ While it is true that human nature is basically good, the fact is that some people are so pathologically warped, that they are practically impervious to any wholesome influence on the mind or the heart.¹²⁰ "Different circumstances require different responses, and violence might sometimes achieve results that Non-violence is either incapable of or can achieve only at an unacceptably high price in human suffering."¹²¹ Violence is often fueled by hatred, but on rare occasions violence can spring from love as, for example, when parents scold their children out of love.

Many a non-vegetarian does not feel anything when eating chicken, or mutton or beef or pork because it is placed before us all camouflaged and

¹¹⁷ See the whole article of Abeysekera, "The Saffron Army, Violence, Terror(ism)."

¹¹⁸ See Noel Sheth, "The Non-Violence of Mahatma Gandhi," *Jnanadeepa: Pune Journal of Religious Studies* 4, no. 1 (January 2001): 73-76.

¹¹⁹ Cited in Bhikhu Parekh, *Gandhi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 60.

¹²⁰ See *ibid.*, 59-60.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, 61.

dressed with sauce and curry. However, I am told that many who work in the slaughter houses just cannot bring themselves to eat meat, because they see before their very eyes the severed heads and rivers of gushing blood and hear the blood-curdling screams of pain. But then, when you come to think of it, from the Buddhist point of view, even the consumption of vegetarian food constitutes violence. Using the logic of the *Lankavatarasutra* mentioned above, one's relatives could not only have been reborn in the past as birds or animals, but also as plants. The Christian tradition does not have to face this problem, not only because it does not believe in rebirth, but also because it holds that there is an essential distinction between humans, animals, and plants. Sub-human beings, according to Christian tradition, are to be used as means by human beings, who are ends in themselves. (This of course has landed Christianity into other problems, such as the conquest and exploitation of nature.) In any case, many a Christian—and also many a Hindu, Buddhist, or whoever—is unnecessarily violent towards insects, birds, and animals. I have seen people conversing with one another and, at the same time, even without being sufficiently aware of it, crushing underfoot some harmless ants (the ones that do not bite) moving about on the floor. Those ants are not going to bring the building down, and yet we go merrily ahead, blissfully oblivious of the sacredness of life.

In Christian Spain and countries that were colonized by Spain, we have the cruel sport of bullfighting. Briefly, this is how it came across to an amateur like myself when I watched it once on television in Spain. The bull is systematically weakened by being pierced by lances and by three pairs of sticks with sharp barbed points that are hooked on to its neck and left hanging there, as the blood trickles down its neck. The matador strides into the arena several times to tease the bull and make him see red. If the skillful matador succeeds, as he often does, in tiring out the bull and making it give up the fight, he slays it with a special sword, deeply piercing it between the bull's shoulder blades. The crowd of spectators in the arena as well as those glued to the TV sets take sadistic delight in all this, loudly cheering *olé!* Maneka Gandhi, India's best-known animal rights activist, has chronicled atrocities by Hindus on animals like foxes, which are hunted during the festival of Makara Sankranti, or on snakes, which are captured during the feast of Nagapancami. One has only to browse through her books entitled *Heads and Tails* and *The Second Heads and Tails*,¹²² to be stunned into disbelief at the senseless cruelty that is daily meted out to countless animals of various kinds, to fish, coral, birds, and butterflies. An international organization called the People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) shot incriminating footage in the Deonar abattoir in India, revealing the barbarous and inhuman treatment of animals before they are slaughtered.¹²³ The Indian government's Committee for the Purpose of

¹²² See Maneka Gandhi, *Heads and Tails* (Mapusa, Goa: The Other India Press, 1994); *The Second Heads and Tails* (Mapusa, Goa: The Other India Press, 1996).

¹²³ See "PETA Slaughters Treatment of Cattle at Deonar Abattoir," *The Indian Express* (Pune ed.), December 22, 2000, p. 2.

Control and Supervision of Experiments on Animals (CPCSEA) reported the miserable conditions under which horses are kept by the King Institute in Chennai, which manufactures anti-snake venom serum.¹²⁴

Many vegetarians do not realize that curds (yoghurt) are non-vegetarian because of the live lactic bacteria in them. There are some who are stricter than most vegetarians in that they avoid even animal products like milk. Nowadays they are called Vegans. In any case, modern life makes it very difficult for a strict vegetarian to avoid all contact with animal flesh and animal products. Many cakes of soaps are made from tallow, which is animal fat.¹²⁵ Numerous brands of ice cream contain animal fat and a sort of glue produced by boiling down certain parts of animals.¹²⁶ Why, even sweets that have silver or gold foil on them are not pure vegetarian fare: thin sheets of silver or gold are placed between fresh bullock or buffalo intestines and repeatedly beaten to form the fine foil. In this process, of course, tiny bits of the animal gut and fluids mesh with the foil, and such sweets are even served in temples.¹²⁷

Much of the booming business of cosmetics thrives on animal cruelty. All of us are aware of the sources of fur coats and bags made from live crocodiles, lizards, and snakes. We all know from where silk comes, even if we do not realize that some 20,000 silk moths are boiled alive to make just one kilo of silk. But perhaps few of us are aware that several types of talcum powder, lipstick, and hair dye are made safe for human use by testing them on squirrel monkeys, to find out at which dosage these monkeys die. A number of aftershave lotions are made burn-proof by testing them on the bare skin of guinea pigs, after their hair is pulled off. Many a perfume is made from civet musk. The civet is whipped, so that when it is in pain, it secretes its musk into its pouch. The latter is then forced open and scraped with a spatula. Musk is also obtained from musk deer, which are caught in spiked traps. The litany continues with pearls from tortured oysters, fur from strangled rabbits, and so on and so forth.¹²⁸

The newspapers regularly report murders, rapes, and other violent crimes. But some of us can be blissfully unaware of other forms of violence in our society; in fact, we may not even see them as examples of violence. We may pride ourselves as being more civilized than people in ancient times. We think we are not as barbarous as the gladiators and duelists of old. But this is far from the truth. Take boxing, for instance. Here is a sport in which one human being physically hurts a fellow human being. They are "punished" and "knocked out," to use just a couple of the expressions so common in describing boxing. Not only are the boxers badly bruised and

¹²⁴ See "Institute Fails to Improve Conditions under Which Animals Are Kept," *The Times of India* (Pune ed.), January 8, 2001, p. 6.

¹²⁵ See Gandhi, *Second Heads and Tails*, 70-71.

¹²⁶ See *idem.*, *Heads and Tails*, 61.

¹²⁷ See *idem.*, *Second Heads and Tails*, 68-70.

¹²⁸ See *idem.*, *Heads and Tails*, 52-54.

severely injured; some have even died in the ring. One has only to glance at the bloodthirsty spectators, the way they gesticulate, shout and cheer, and even go at each other: it just shows the extent of violence in our society. This "civilized" sport is a multi-million dollar business! The same can be said of similar sports like wrestling, especially free-style wrestling. It is all in the name of entertainment! Similarly, whether it is pigeon shoots in the U.S.A, where up to 25,000 pigeons are released and shot-gunned by shooters,¹²⁹ or cockfights in our villages, we keep on brazenly amusing ourselves at the expense of animals, too.

Apparently even plants have (rudimentary) feelings. Experiments have found that when we "talk to plants" and show them attention, they grow and flourish much more than plants that are ignored, even if these latter are given the same water, manure, etc. as the former. If in hot summer we walk past a withering tree or a parched plant, do we pause for even a moment in sympathy, thinking of the poor plant thirsting for water? Some may think that these are ridiculous examples, but it is in such ways that we can develop sensitivity towards all life.

It is worth pointing out that Non-violence also benefits the agent of Non-violence. The Templeton Foundation has recently funded an ongoing "Forgiveness Research" Program. This research, led by the director of the program, Everett L. Worthington, Jr., is making it amply clear that forgiveness and reconciliation are good for the well-being not only of the soul, but also of the psyche and the body. In a program entitled "Eye for an Eye," telecast on May 16 and 17, 1999, CNN showed how rage and the thirst for revenge not only consume the soul and rob it of its inner peace, but also tear apart the body. Instead of hurting the hated person, it hurts oneself. Laboratory experiments proved that in unforgiving conditions one's blood pressure, heart-rate, and sweat-rate shot up. The conclusion is clear: revenge is not sweet, but bitter; while forgiveness and reconciliation take the hurt away. Moreover, experiments with chimpanzees indicate that there seems to be even an evolutionary basis for forgiveness: it is vital for the survival of the species. There is now a scientific confirmation of what we have observed in daily life: have we not noticed an infuriated person becoming flushed? Have we not observed such a person's stammering speech and quivering lips? Buddhists have always maintained that anger and hatred harm the perpetrator more than the victim. A deeper realization of this has dawned on the consciousness of the modern world only in recent years.

Non-violence in its complete and perfect form is surely utopian, but one cannot deny its importance and significance for the world of today and tomorrow, and if we choose to ignore it, our very survival is at stake. A nuclear war, for instance, will bring total destruction. In this nuclear age, the only way open to us is peaceful dialogue.

¹²⁹ See "To Shoot or Not to Shoot Pigeons?" *The Times of India* (Mumbai ed.), August 23, 1998, p. 11.

What does the future hold for us? Our future lies in our children. Are we preparing them for peace or for annihilation? Some of the signs are definitely disturbing. Violence is on the increase in movies, TV programs, and even cartoon books. One has only to enter a toyshop to see the great variety of toys related to war: toy guns, tanks, battle ships, and bomber aircraft. So many of the computer or video games too, are full of violence. We seem to be telling our children that war is fun, an enjoyable game.

In Buddhism, too, as in all religions, there is doubtless a gap between theory and practice, between the ideal and the existential. Nevertheless, Buddhism has not been so belligerent as some other religions. If Buddhism has at times strayed from the path of Non-violence, tolerance, and peace, it is due more to socio-economic and political reasons than to its religious character.¹³⁰ Besides, it can draw inspiration from its rich spiritual resources, which enable it to shun violence and maintain a broad-minded and dialogical attitude towards others.¹³¹ Be that as it may, while granting that divergent worldviews result in differences with regard to the nature, motivation, and expression of Non-violence, Buddhists and others need to hearken to the call of Non-violence, peace, and reconciliation so that we can work together to heal a broken world and build bridges of friendship and harmony.

¹³⁰ See Sheth, "Buddhism and Communalism," 63-64.

¹³¹ See *ibid.*, 46-60.

Maha Ghosananda & Thich Nhat Hanh, Two Modern *Bhanakas*: Constructing a Culture of Compassion and Fraternity

Ven. Vy Sovechea

I prepared this brief paper to be presented at the 7th Buddhist-Christian Colloquium, that was planned to be held at the Pontifical Urbaniana University in Rome, from 28-29 April 2020. The conference was canceled due to the Covid-19 pandemic. I am grateful to have received a chance to share it in this book. I was requested to present the *Jataka* tales of the Buddha related to the colloquium topic: constructing a culture of compassion and fraternity. For my presentation, I did not select *Jataka* tales from the Pali canon. I chose instead stories of two modern-day *Jataka Bhanakas* (Jataka tale storytellers): Maha Ghosananda and Thich Nhat Hanh, since in this way I could contribute to the conference's spirit in a more appropriate manner. In this paper I maintain the oral presentation style for readers, in order that they may understand my original intention.

I wish to begin by saying that it is my privilege to be invited to participate in this auspicious gathering for Buddhist-Christian dialogue, dealing with constructing a culture of compassion and fraternity.

I am particularly grateful to H. E. Monsignor Enrique Figaredo SJ, and Rev. Fr. Ingun Kang SJ, two Jesuits here today. They left their countries out of great compassion to come to serve the people of my homeland, Cambodia. We have become dear friends and companions on the same path of compassion.

There is a famous conversation between the Lord Buddha and one of his beloved disciples, Ananda. The disciple Ananda said to the Buddha, "This is half of the holy life, Blessed One: admirable friendship, admirable companionship, admirable camaraderie." But then the Buddha replied: "Don't say that, Ananda, don't say that. Admirable friendship, admirable companionship, admirable camaraderie are actually the *whole* of the holy life."¹

I once again proffer my sincere gratitude to my two admirable friends and companions, Kike and Ingun. Our fraternal friendship makes our whole life turn out to be holy.

¹ Dhammadipa Sak, "The Great Compassion and Fraternity in Mahayana Buddhist Traditions," *Claritas: Journal of Dialogue and Culture* 4, no. 2 (October 2015): 94.

I was born in a nation that was at war, and I became a novice monk when the Paris Peace Accords were being enacted. I have lived my entire ordained life as a monk in a land struggling to recover from 30 years of civil war.

Early in my life as a monastic I came to know of a humble Khmer Buddhist monk named Maha Ghosananda, who led Peace Walks called *Dhammayietra* across a war-weary land. The term “*Dhammayietra*” means to “walk in the Dhamma,” that is, to walk for peace. I recall people welcoming the first *Dhammayietra* at my home temple in 1992. Maha Ghosananda used to say:

The suffering of Cambodia has been deep.
 From this suffering comes great compassion.
 Great compassion makes a peaceful heart.
 A peaceful heart makes a peaceful person.
 A peaceful person makes a peaceful family.
 A peaceful family makes a peaceful community.
 A peaceful community makes a peaceful nation.
 A peaceful nation makes a peaceful world.
 May all beings live in happiness and peace.
 Amen.²

These words have become the peace prayer of Cambodia today.

Maha Ghosananda was blessed with the gift of tongues. It is said that he could communicate in fifteen different languages. For me, reflecting back, his most important ‘tongue’ was the ability to speak a language to a country’s people who had suffered far too much, who had been at war far too long, who hungered for any word of hope, or any promise of peace.

At that time, Cambodia was emerging from genocide, physical starvation, deep spiritual hunger, and endless civil war, and the religion that was totally banished during the time of the Khmer Rouge Regime (1975-1979), was slowly coming back to life. During the 1980s, only men over the age of 55 were allowed to become monks, since the youth were needed to fight.

Then, down the dusty national highway appeared a procession of saffron-robed monks and white-clothed nuns and laypeople, led by Maha Ghosananda, whose Pali name means the ‘Voice of Joy’ or ‘the Joyful Proclaimer.’ In one of his earliest messages, Maha Ghosananda reminded us of the ancient teaching from the *Metta Sutta* that says: “Hatred never ceases by hatred, but by love alone is healed.”³

² Santidhammo Bhikkhu, *Maha Ghosananda: Buddha of the Battlefield* (Bangkok: S.R. Printing, 2009), 83.

³ Maha Ghosananda, *Step by Step: Meditations on Wisdom and Compassion*, ed. Jane Sharada Mahoney and Philip Edmonds (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1992), viii, 18.

Maha Ghosananda would inform the people that now was the time for peace. Buddhist monks and nuns would be the fifth army in Cambodia, the army of the Buddha.⁴ This army had ammunition, namely bullets of loving-kindness, and mindfulness was its armor. It was an army so courageous that it would turn away from violence, and its goal was to bring an end to suffering.⁵ This was a language a war-weary people *heard* and *understood*.

Maha Ghosananda was a marvelous storyteller. He narrated stories that brought people back to their Buddhist roots, and his stories often left his audience in tears of laughter and joy. One might say he was full of *Jataka* tales if you will, re-telling tales of the Buddha's earlier lives as a Bodhisattva, as a man, as a woman, a distinguished member of the animal kingdom, a lonely tree, and so on.

You are probably aware that it has been asserted that Buddhism is in the blood of the Khmer people. If that be so, the *Jataka* tales, which Cambodians learn from the time of their birth, keep their blood flowing. Their influence has been genuine from the time of Buddhism's introduction into Khmer history until today, and even during some of the most painful periods of our recent past.

Maha Ghosananda had a way of interweaving the *Jataka* tales with simple Dhamma teachings, so as to enable people to reflect upon them and relate those stories to the situations in which they found themselves.

A concrete example is the following. At one time in Cambodia, people were afraid that there were more landmines in the ground than there were feet to walk upon them. It was a land littered with landmines, a legacy of the war that Cambodia is still dealing with today.⁶ Maha Ghosananda would halt the Peace Walk procession whenever the walkers passed a deminers team along the road. He would then give a special water blessing and teaching to the walkers. He would declare that these de-miners are the Bodhisattvas of Cambodia today, for they risked their lives to prevent the suffering of others – regardless of whether the others were human beings or animals.

Likewise, Maha Ghosananda would explain: The mothers of the landmines in the ground are the landmines of our own hearts – greed, hatred, and delusion. If Cambodia is ever to have peace, we must first demine our own hearts. He said, "We can overcome greed with the weapon of

⁴ There were four Khmer military factions at the civil war in the Cambodian conflict. Maha Ghosananda was proposing a Fifth Army.

⁵ Ghosananda, *Step by Step*, 77.

⁶ Cambodia recorded 77 landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) casualties in 2019, up 33% compared to the previous year's report by the Cambodian Mines Action and Victim Assistance Authority (CMAA). Since 1979, 19,780 people died from landmines and 45,075 injured or amputated by mines/UXO. An estimated 4 million to 6 million landmines and other munitions were left over from three decades of the civil war.

generosity. We can overcome hatred with the weapon of loving-kindness. We can overcome ignorance with the weapon of wisdom.”⁷

All *Jataka* tales in some form, manner, or way speak of the three poisons of greed (*lobha*), hatred (*dosa*), and delusion (*moha*), or, if not of the harmful qualities then of the three wholesome ones, namely generosity (*dana*), loving-kindness (*metta*), and wisdom (*panna*).

In a way, on the *Dhammayietra*, Maha Ghosananda had the inspiration to make all of us part of a living *Jataka* tale, right there in the very rice paddies of Cambodia.

Now if you permit me I would like to speak briefly of another Buddhist monk. He is a contemporary of Maha Ghosananda, and of the Mahayana Buddhist tradition. He too has been schooled in the *Jataka* tales, and is a master storyteller in his own right. I speak of the Vietnamese Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh, who is referred to by his followers and friends as ‘Thay,’ meaning ‘teacher.’

Thich Nhat Hanh is a prolific writer and poet, and has authored over 100 books over the past half-century. In particular, his books entitled, *Being Peace*, *Touching Peace*, *Be Free Where You Are*, *Old Path*, *White Clouds: Walking in the Footsteps of Buddha*, and *Living Buddha, Living Christ*, were formative in my own spiritual training as a young monk.

Both Thay and Maha knew great compassion, which grew out of the suffering of war. Both spoke and acted out of deep silence, a silence of meditation, mindfulness, and prayer. Both preached the first Buddhist precept of ‘do not kill’ to the warring factions in their homelands. Maha used to exhort villagers in country temples to remember the first precept alone if they could not remember all five precepts, namely the precept ‘do not kill,’ for then the war would end.

I believe that the lives of both monks embodied what we are speaking of together these days, as people of faith. Both monks did much to encourage and help rebuild a culture of compassion and fraternity in their times and places. They did it by words and storytelling, and by sharing the Lord Buddha’s teachings in a way whereby people could understand. To use the old expression, ‘they walked their talk,’ quite literally.

In his later years, Thich Nhat Hanh would say, “I’ve been a monk for 65 years, and what I have found is that there is no religion, no philosophy, and no ideology higher than brotherhood and sisterhood.”⁸ Amen! Amen!

As I was preparing for this presentation, I remembered a talk that Thay gave many years ago. Thay spoke of his favorite *Jataka* tale, which he first heard as a small boy of 7 years age. While he did not understand the story

⁷ *The Serene Life: a Documentary*, directed by Alan Channer (London: FLT Films, 1996), 13.

⁸ A quotation of Thich Nhat Hanh on his second return trip to Vietnam in 2007.

fully at that time, it remained with him for the rest of his life. In this tale, the Buddha, in one of his former lives, was in hell. Before he became the Buddha, he had suffered a lot, both as a victim of suffering and as the cause of suffering. In this *Jataka* tale, the Buddha was in hell for having done something very wrong.

There was another man along with the Buddha in hell, and both were forced to work very hard under the watchful eye of a ruthless guard, who beat them constantly. One day when the guard was beating the other man severely, the man who was to be the Buddha decided to protest, to intervene on his fellow prisoner's behalf, despite knowing full well that if he did so, he would be the recipient of the guard's blows instead. When he spoke out, the guard was so furious that he stabbed the Buddha-to-be in the chest. As a result, the Buddha-to-be died instantly, and was reborn in the body of a human being. He escaped hell just because compassion was born within him, deep compassion to have the courage to intervene on behalf of his fellow human being in hell.

The moral of this *Jataka* tale, which stayed with Thay all his life, was that *there could be compassion even in hell*. It is possible to give birth to compassion even in the most challenging situations. It was a tale that guided Thay throughout the many hells he would experience and endure in his life. Thay would say that we can care for a sister and a brother even in hell.⁹

The stories we call *Jataka* tales have been told and represented in paintings, and sculptures, to help form, encourage, and construct cultures of compassion and fraternity for millennia. Some of the earliest tales can be found in the Vedic literature. They have been taught to help develop and shape the moral fiber for many a civilization. They have striven to cultivate good behavior and moral conduct in listeners, in readers, and over the history of time.

The *Jataka* tales have also been a source of inspiration for paintings, sculptures, and architecture. Most temples in Cambodia have murals on their walls depicting the morality of *Jataka* tales, and today we can read them online. Even the Lord Buddha used the *Jataka* tales to explain concepts such as *Kamma* and rebirth in his preaching, for the stories were used to illustrate the truth of his *Dhamma* teachings.

Most if not all the *Jataka* tales would fall under the broad umbrella of the three poisons (unwholesome qualities) of greed, hatred, and ignorance, or the three wholesome qualities of generosity, loving-kindness, and wisdom. These are what Maha Ghosananda described as the landmines of the heart.

Myriads of *Jataka* tales seeks to teach and encourage what Buddhists call the Ten Perfections, namely Generosity, Morality, Renunciation, Wisdom, Perseverance, Patience, Truthfulness, Determination, Loving-kindness, and Equanimity.

⁹ Thich Nhat Hanh, *Be Free Where You Are* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 2000), 13.

Another set of stories invite readers and coax listeners to embody the four sublime states of mind, that is, Loving-kindness, Compassion, Sympathetic Joy, and Equanimity. While on the Peace Walks, Maha Ghosananda called these four sublime states “the nearly forgotten secret to peace in Cambodia.”¹⁰

The *Jataka* Tales are referred to as stories, fairy tales, fables, and parables. They are stories about ‘the Buddha-to-be,’ as depicted in one of Thich Nhat Hanh’s favorite tales, stories of the earlier lives of the Buddha, or stories of Bodhisattvas that appear as men, women, animals, or even inanimate objects.

On glancing through a list of titles of *Jataka* tales, one sees Bodhisattvas appear in many forms, such as a mountain lion, a barber, a very wise tree, a happy monk, a miracle-performing fish, a poor farmer, an old crow, a drummer boy, a snake doctor, a dancing peacock, a well-known teacher, a prince of monkeys, a monk-like king, a banyan tree, a best friend, a wise bird, as two stupid children, a king with one grey hair, and dirty bath water, to name a few.¹¹

It is said that even as early as the time of the Buddha, there were people appointed to be *Jataka* tale storytellers. They were called *Jataka Bhanakas*. In this presentation, I have tried to describe two modern-day *Bhanakas*.

So in conclusion, let me say. I believe that we are here together as people of different faith traditions to reflect upon and draw on the wisdom of the old *Jataka* stories, to create ways of building a better world. As the old walking-Khmer storyteller, Maha Ghosananda, used to say: “The world is our house and all human beings are our brothers and sisters – to love them, to help them, and to serve them, is our duty and our religion.”¹²

May the same walk continue. Let the walk begin today! Thank you very much indeed, my admirable sisters and brothers.

¹⁰ Ghosananda, *Step by Step*, 76.

¹¹ Kurunegoda Piyatissa, *King Fruitful*, Vol. 2, (New York: Buddhist Literature Society, 1996), 307-8.

¹² *The Serene Life: a Documentary*, 11.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Channer, Alan, director. *The Serene Life: a Documentary*. London: FLT Films, 1996.
- Ghosananda, Maha. *Step by Step: Meditation on Wisdom and Compassion*. Edited by Jane Sharada Mahoney, and Philip Edmonds. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1992.
- Nhat Hanh, Thich. *Be Free Where You Are*. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 2000.
- . *Being Peace*. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1987.
- . *Living Buddha, Living Christ*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1995.
- . *Old Path, White Clouds: Walking in the Footsteps of the Buddha*. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1991.
- . *Touching Peace: Practicing the Art of Mindful Living*. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1992.
- . "Transforming Negative Habit Energies." Dharma Talk in Plum Village, France, August 6, 1998.
- Paddock, Richard C. "Thich Nhat Hanh, Preacher of Mindfulness Has Come Home to Vietnam," *New York Times*, May 16, 2019.
- Piyatissa, Kurunegoda et al. *King Fruitful*. Vol. 1. New York: Buddhist Literature Society, 1994.
- . *King Fruitful*. Vol. 2. New York: Buddhist Literature Society, 1996.
- Sak, Dhammadipa. "The Great Compassion and Fraternity in Mahayana Buddhist Traditions." *Claritas: Journal of Dialogue and Culture* 4, no. 2 (October 2015): 87-94.
- Santidhammo, Bhikkhu. *Maha Ghosananda: The Buddha of the Battlefield*. Bangkok: S.R. Printing, 2009.
- Whitaker, Justin. "Thich Nhat Hanh Honored with Global Peace Prize." *Buddhistdoor Global*, June 25, 2019. Accessed April 11, 2021. <https://www.buddhistdoor.net/news/thich-nhat-hanh-honored-with-global-peace-prize>.

Insights from Asian Indigenous Peoples in Light of *Fratelli Tutti*¹

Jojo M. Fung, S.J.

Introduction

The indigenous peoples in Asia constitute approximately 80% of a global indigenous population of 302.45 million (a figure which itself constitutes approximately 4.4% of the global population, but around 10% of the global poor). These indigenous communities face the relentless onslaught of the plural sociocultural, religious, economic and geopolitical processes of globalization. These processes result in the de-territorialization of indigenous ancestral homelands. They cause the de-religionization of their traditional spiritualities. And they threaten their economic survival and cultural resilience. As a result, in the Asia-Pacific region “indigenous peoples suffer gravely in the face of technological expansion and resource exploitation, where their rights are lost in the drive for development”.²

In precolonial India, the erstwhile landmass of Jharkhand was really a “land of forest” belonging to the Adivasis. The Director of *Jharkhand Jangal Bachao Andolan* (‘Save the Jharkhand Forest Movement’), Samar Buso Mullick writes:

A neolithic culture of forest-based civilization dominated over the surplus-producing, agriculture-based feudalism. The land under swidden cultivation (*daha/dhya* or *jara*) was very common. Only in some pockets plough agriculture was introduced by the medieval ‘jungle’ states. But in both the cases the notion of land belonging to the king as the ‘lord’ paramount of the soil was absent. Community enjoyed total control over the land and forest, and their produce. Forest was an integral part of the economic system. Forests were dense and full of wild animals. Forests are the dwelling place of the deceased ones. When the village is settled by clearing forests, a patch of the virgin forest

¹ This article was a Keynote address as a LSRI Affiliate Scholar, delivered as a recorded session on 11 February, 2021, the first day of a two-day colloquium, organized jointly by Laudato Si’ Research Institute (LSRI) and Campion Hall, Oxford University, UK, to explore the issues of encroachment on indigenous peoples’ land, forests and waterways, the need to ensure respect of their rights in practice around the globe, and the contribution of the Catholic Social Teaching, particularly *Fratelli Tutti*.

² Task Force on Ecology, Social Justice and Ecology Secretariat, *Healing A Broken World: Special Report on Ecology, Promotio Justitiae*, no. 106 (2011): 22.

is kept untouched with the belief that it is the abode of the mother earth (*jaer era*) or 'lady of the sacred grove' and other spirits. This 'sacred grove' or *sarna* or *Jaer* (*Jaher of the Santals*) is the only place of propitiation of the benevolent spirits of all the indigenous peoples of Jharkhand.³

In 2000, Jharkhand was formed with the objective of furthering the 'Development' agenda. This ideology has turned the Adivasis' homeland into what M. Gadgil and R. Guha posit as the "internal colonies" of the nation-state and its national elites, those who engineered the Bombay Plan of 1944-45 with its "mixed economy".⁴

'National interest' was the 'log in name' and 'Development' became the 'password' to have a smooth access to the natural resources of the country for their inhuman exploitation and criminal expropriation. Public servants, police and politicians formed a nexus to this end. Where colonialism left off, development took over. While Dams and mines displaced millions of peasants and tribals, destruction of forests caused hunger and destitution. The swelling multitude of 'ecological refugees', who constitute about one third of the Indian population, were turned into sweat labourers and treated as the dirt of development. Development in Jharkhand has been taking place under the threat of guns. Behind the repression that accompanies development lies a perception of the Adivasi peasantry as physical obstacles in the drive to gain full access to land, raw materials and natural resources.⁵

What becomes apparent is that the politics of land is inseparable from the politics of contestation. This is not unrelated to the systemic "human antagonism" in capitalism which Laudato Si' insightfully identified as the "technocratic paradigm" (LS 106-114).⁶ This battleground of resource-contestation requires ethics to provide a moral compass for government policies that guide land reform that will respond to the common good of the Adivasis, promoting the flourishing of their cultures, social identity, livelihood, and food security through just development policies.

³ Samar Buso Mullick, "The Land the People and the Law In Jharkhand: A Study Conducted under the Land Rights Macro Study of Pradan," Research Paper (Jharkhand Jangal Bachao Andolan, 2020), 1-115, here 60.

⁴ M. Gadgil and R. Guha, *Use of Nature* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000), 4; Mullick, "The Land the People and the Law In Jharkhand," 49 & 51; Felix Padel, *The Sacrifice of Human Being: British Rule and the Khonds of Orissa* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1995), 288.

⁵ Susan Devalle, *Discourses of Ethnicity: Culture and Protest in Jharkhand* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1992), 104-105; Sarah Jewitt, "Europe's Others? Forestry Policy and Practices in Colonial and Post-Colonial India." in *Jharkhand*, edited by Corbridge & Stuart et al., (New Delhi, Oxford University Press, 2004), 143; Mullick, "The Land the People and the Law In Jharkhand," 42, 71.

⁶ **The systemic antagonism, in Herbert McCabe's opinion, stems from the asymmetric class war "intrinsic to capitalism...The tension and struggle between the workers and capitalists is an essential part of the process itself...Capitalism is a state of war, but not just a state of war between equivalent forces; it involves a war between those who believe in and prosecute war as a way of life, as an economy, and those who do not."** See Herbert McCabe, OP, "The Class Struggle and Christian Love," accessed December 24, 2020, <https://christiansocialism.com/herbert-mccabe-class-struggle-capitalism-marxism-christianity/>.

My first section will articulate how global/national interests facilitate a systemic encroachment upon the indigenous homeland in Asia, and particularly in India.

1. Encroachment By Global and National Interests on Indigenous homeland

Land encroachment by the national elites in cohort with the global, central/federal, and local governments constitutes a blatant violation of the inalienable dignity of the indigenous peoples and a decimation of the inherent value of their land, livelihood, and resources. Deeming the homeland to be the sacred abode of mother earth (*jaer era*), or the 'lady of the sacred grove' and other spirits, this amounts to a sacrilegious desecration of the sacredness of indigenous ancestral homeland.

In Malaysia, Anne Lasimbang, an indigenous director of PACOS, a community-based organization, has suggested that land encroachment takes place through the construction of "mega projects such as big dams, plantations owned by global-national multinationals, mining and highways, and the establishment of national parks from which indigenous communities themselves are excluded. In Sabah, East Malaysia, the local government also gazetted land into 'Forest Management Units' (FMUs); these included indigenous territories. FMUs can be turned into first-class or second-class forest conservation areas, which are then converted to plantations managed by multinational companies. Indigenous communities who were previously resident in these FMUs are considered encroachers and are persecuted by the government, some are even jailed for entering this land.⁷

In Thailand, Prasert Trakansuphakon contends that the state's aggressive enclosure policy has disenfranchised indigenous communities by "the Forestry Department's promotion of conservation policies through a process of increasing protected areas, including national parks, wild life sanctuaries, and class 1 watershed areas".⁸ Through the Royal Forestry Department, the Thai state centralized its control over the natural resources with the Forest Act of 1987, 1941, the Reserved Forest Act 1964, the Land Reform Act 1975, the Wildlife Sanctuary Act 1992, the Code of Laws on Land 2004, and the Community Forest Management Act 2008.⁹ With the National Economic and Social Development Plans, the Master Plan for Community Development and Environmental, the Suppression of Narcotic

⁷ Email communication, January 24, 2021.

⁸ Prasert Trakansuphakon, "Space of Resistance and Place of Local Knowledge in the Northern Thailand Ecological Movement," (PhD diss., Chiangmai University, 2007), 221.

⁹ Naiyana Vitchitporn, "The Transformation of Gender Roles in Resource Management of a Karen Community in Northern Thailand," (MA thesis, Chiangmai University, 2001), 38; Vitit Muntarbhorn, "Shadow Report on Eliminating Racial Discrimination on Thailand." Submission to the CERN Committee Meeting on August 9-10, Geneva, Switzerland, 2012, no. 82.

Plant in High Areas, and the Cabinet Act of 1989, protected areas claimed by the state amount to 28.78% of Thailand's land surface.¹⁰ As a result, Muntarbhorn claims, "indigenous communities which continue to practice shifting cultivation in protected areas live in fear, because they are unsure whether they will be arrested or relocated".¹¹ On this basis, Trakansuphakon adds, "in 1989, about 2000 ethnic highlanders were relocated from Doi Luang National Park to Pha Chaw in Lampang Province".¹²

In India, Samar Bosu Mullick posits, extractive industries such as mining, metal industries, and the construction of mega-dams such as the Koel-Karo Multipurpose Project, the erstwhile Multipurpose Hydro-Electric projects, such as Damodar Valley Corporation and Subarnareka Multipurpose Project in the Jharkhand, "have already displaced about 1,710,787 people from their homes and hearths, with the loss of 24,15,698 acres of forestland".¹³ Jharkhand itself "has more than 25% of the total coal reserves" of India "and over 80% of them lie in the Damodar river basin." The "Damodar river valley is now dotted with coalmines that produce 60% of India's medium grade coal," with "33 limestone mines, 5 copper mines and 84 mica mines along the banks of the Damodar," and "the lower valley of the Damodar had a 65% forest cover in the past; while today it stands at a meagre 0.05%."¹⁴

Mullick adds: "between 1950 and 1991, mining displaced about 2.6 million people in the country. During 1998-2005, 216 mining projects were granted forest clearance annually. Government estimates put the total forestland diverted for mining across the country during the period 1980-2005 at 95,003 hectares. What is perhaps more shocking is that 1,198 mines were granted forestry clearance during 1980-2005, for operating in forest areas under the provisions of the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980."¹⁵ Ecological devastation has completely broken the chain of food security. According to an official estimate, 10% of the people in Jharkhand today frequently suffer from hunger, and 2% suffer from chronic hunger.¹⁶ Displacement of millions of peasants and tribals has resulted in "ecological refugees,"¹⁷ constituting about a third of the Indian population. Of the 15,03,017 displaced in Jharkhand between the years 1951-1995, 620,372 belong to scheduled tribes, 212,892 belong to scheduled castes, and 676 to other categories.¹⁸

¹⁰ Vitit Muntarbhorn, "Shadow Report on Eliminating Racial Discrimination on Thailand," no. 84.

¹¹ Muntarbhorn "Shadow Report on Eliminating Racial Discrimination on Thailand," no. 44.

¹² Trakansuphakon, "Space of Resistance and Place of Local Knowledge in the Northern Thailand Ecological Movement," 222.

¹³ Mullick, "The Land the People and the Law In Jharkhand," 74.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 74.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁷ M. Gadgil and R. Guha, *R. Use and Abuse of Nature* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁸ Mullick, "The Land the People and the Law In Jharkhand," 64.

These constitute violations of the inalienable dignity of indigenous peoples, and a decimation of the sacred value of their land. These violations, as explained in the second section, have increased the need to develop government policies from the perspective of social justice.

2. Policy Development: Social Justice Perspectives

National development policies can perhaps draw their initial inspiration from Pope Francis. In his latest book, *Let Us Dare To Dream*, Pope Francis argues that “true change comes about not from above, but from the margin where Christ lives. To go to the margin in a concrete way, as in this case, allows you to touch the suffering and the wants of a people, but also allows you to support and encourage the potential alliances that are forming.”¹⁹

Government policies need to promote, in the words of Amartya Sen and Jean Drèze, “the demands of social justice, which is integrally linked with the expansion of human freedom” and the recognition of “land property rights (right to livelihood resources), people’s active participation in making policies (democracy), human capacities (like health and education), and social justice,” including “the agency of women and equitable distribution of (political) power.”²⁰ At the same time, policies need the mutuality of economic growth and expansion of human capability, “while also keeping in mind the basic understanding that the expansion of human freedom and capabilities is the goal for which the growth of the GDP, among other factors, serves as an important means. Growth generates resources with which public and private efforts can be systematically mobilized to expand education, healthcare nutrition, social facilities and other essentials, of a fuller and freer human life for all. And the expansion of human capability, in turn allows a faster expansion of resources and production, on which economic growth ultimately depends.”²¹

Dev Nathan and Virginius Xaxa’s insights on inclusion expand on Sen and Dreze’s notion of human freedom and capabilities: “with provisions of infrastructure and essential services, education and health in particular, and with security of tenure in their land and other productive resources, such as common forests, there is no reason why there should not be a process of inclusion that is also developmental, in the sense that the outcome of inclusion is a superior state of well-being.”²² More specifically, Alex Ekka, an Adivasi director of the Xavier Institute of Social Service, argues

¹⁹ Pope Francis and Austen Ivereigh, “A Time to See,” in *Let us Dream: The Path to a Better Future*, part 1 (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney and Delhi: Simon & Schuster, 2021), 3.

²⁰ Mullick, “The Land the People and the Law In Jharkhand,” 54-55.

²¹ Jean Dreze and Amartya Sen, *An Uncertain Glory: India and its Contradictions* (London: Penguin Books 2014), ix-xi.

²² Dev Nathan and Virginius Xaxa, ed., *Social Exclusion and Adverse Inclusion: Development and Deprivation of Adivasis in India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012), 5; Mullick, “The Land the People and the Law In Jharkhand,” 54.

that Adivasis have to be given options “for sustainable or alternative development practices like organic farming, community based mini hydro and thermal power generation, herbal and traditional medical practices for health care, and weavers’ cooperatives in the cottage industry sector.”²³

In lieu of such injustices and land-dispossession, peoples’ movements such as *Narmada Bachao Andolan* call for “a democratic eco-socialistic economy with decentralized planning,” and a dispersed and participatory decision-making process that focuses on decentralized “rural area-based small-scale industrialization, where there would be a need-based production by masses, not greed-based ‘mass production’ as in capitalism.”²⁴ The *Chipko Movement* ‘demanded agro and forest produce-based industry, and replacement of the Forest Department with cooperatives of local people, village councils, and forest councils.’²⁵ The *Niyangiri Movement* advocates “tribal rights over livelihood resources and indigenous culture and strongly opposes mining,” emphasizing a “sustainable way of life in symbiosis with nature.”²⁶

First and foremost, social justice demands that government policies on development be severed from the historical paradigm that Pope Francis denounces. This paradigm regards indigenous homeland as “an inexhaustible source of supplies for other countries without concern for its inhabitants,” and proposes “neo-extractivism and pressure exerted by business interests that want to lay hands on its petroleum, gas, wood, gold, and other forms of agro-industrial mono-cultivation.”²⁷

Fratelli Tutti (FT) offers a critique of neoliberalism for “simply reproducing itself by resorting to the magic theories of spillover or trickle as the only solutions to societal problems,” with “little appreciation of the fact that the alleged spillover does not resolve the inequality that gives rise to new forms of violence threatening the fabric of society.” It calls for proactive policymaking directed at “promoting an economy that favours productive diversity and business creativity.” And it cautions that “in addition to recovering a sound political life that is not subject to the dictates of finance, we must put human dignity back at the centre and on that pillar build the alternative social structures we need.” (FT 168).

²³ Alex Ekka, *Jharkhand: Status of Adivasi/Indigenous Peoples Land Series-4* (Delhi: Aakar Books, 2011), 112; Mullick, “The Land the People and the Law In Jharkhand,” 58.

²⁴ Subhash Sharma, “Why People Protest: An Analysis of Ecological Movements,” Publication Divisions, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India (New Delhi, 2009), 194-5; Mullick, “The Land the People and the Law In Jharkhand,” 56.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, 56.

²⁶ Mullick, “The Land the People and the Law In Jharkhand,” 56.

²⁷ Address of the Holy Father, Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Pope Francis To Chile And Peru (15-22 January), accessed January 8, 2020, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2018/january/documents/papa-francesco_20180119_peru-puertomaldonado-popoliamazzonia.html.

FT unequivocally advocates that “indigenous peoples are not opposed to progress, yet theirs is a different notion of progress, often more humanistic than the modern culture of developed peoples. Theirs is not a culture meant to benefit the powerful, those driven to create for themselves a kind of earthly paradise” (FT 220). Reinforcing this message, Dr. Ambedkar states: “it is through enlightened developmental policies that we can resolve such dilemmas. One pre-condition for the success of developmental projects in our extensive tribal areas is that we should take into confidence the tribals and their representatives, explain the benefits of the projects to them, and consult them in regard to the protection of their livelihood and their unique cultures. When they have to be displaced, resettlement schemes should be discussed with them and implemented with sincerity.”²⁸

At the same time, FT reiterates that “development must not aim at the amassing of wealth by a few, but must ensure human rights – personal and social, economic and political, including the rights of nations and of peoples” (FT 122). The global commons and common good of the dispossessed dictate that “the right of some to free enterprise or market freedom cannot supersede the rights of peoples and the dignity of the poor, or, for that matter, respect for the natural environment, for if we make something our own, it is only to administer it for the good of all” (FT 122). The principle of the common use of created goods dictates “a natural and inherent right that takes priority over others. All other rights having to do with the goods necessary for the integral fulfilment of persons, including that of private property or any other type of property, should – in the words of Pope Saint Paul VI – ‘in no way hinder [this right], but should actively facilitate its implementation’” (FT120).

According to this vision, Adivasis development plans initiated by the government need to be inspired by solidarity (not tactics of divide and rule). This means “thinking and acting in terms of community. It means that the lives of all are prior to the appropriation of goods by a few. It also means combatting the structural causes of poverty, inequality, the lack of work, land and housing, the denial of social and labour rights. It means confronting the destructive effects of the empire of money” (FT116). At the same time, solidarity has to be infused with solidity that is “born of the consciousness that we are responsible for the fragility of others as we strive to build a common future” (FT 115). Only in solidarity and solidity can development “be clearly directed to the development of others and to eliminating poverty, especially through the creation of diversified work opportunities” (FT 123).

More particularly, solidarity and solidity enjoins development policies for indigenous communities to be inspired by the common good of the

²⁸ Ministry of External Affairs, mea.gov.in, cited in Mullick, “The Land the People and the Law In Jharkhand,” 55.

dispossessed as expressed by the term *agathosyne* in Greek. This word “expresses attachment to the good, pursuit of the good [...] a striving for excellence and what is best for others, their growth in maturity and health, the cultivation of values and not simply material wellbeing.” We might also add the Latin term *benevolentia*, a virtue that “wills the good of others, a yearning for goodness, an inclination towards all that is fine and excellent, a desire to fill the lives of others with what is beautiful, sublime and edifying” (FT 112).

Finally, as expressed in the joint document *Human Fraternity*, the principles of solidarity and solidity enjoin governments to honor “the concept of *citizenship* based on the equality of rights and duties, under which all enjoy justice [and] full citizenship, and reject the discriminatory use of the term *minorities* which engenders feelings of isolation and inferiority, hostility and discord [...] this takes away the religious and civil rights of some citizens who are thus discriminated against.”²⁹ Government policies need to be imbued with the spirit of the neighborliness of the Good Samaritan, who embraced “the bruised and abandoned person on the roadside” whom he did not regard as “a distraction, an interruption from all that,” or as someone “hardly important, a “nobody,” undistinguished, irrelevant to their plans for the future” (FT 100).

With this context, my third section will examine how issues of social identity, culture, livelihood, and food security can be examined through a study of land reform.

3. Land Reform: Enhancement of Social Identity, Culture, Livelihood and Food Security

Land reform that enhances indigenous communities depends first and foremost on a change in perspective. Land for most nation-states has been primarily (mis)-perceived as *terra nullius*. This idea has been discredited.³⁰ Land reform therefore constitutes a commitment on the part of the government to enact laws and to enforce the implementation of policies of land reform, that put right the present injustices exacerbated by centuries of dispossession and marginalization.

Land reform, as Frank Brennan suggests, needs to facilitate the acquisition of native titles rights and self-determination:

²⁹ Pope Francis and Ahmad Al-Tayyeb, “Human Fraternity For World Peace And Living Together,” Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Pope Francis to The United Arab Emirates, February 3-5, 2019, accessed February 10, 2019, http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/travels/2019/outside/documents/papa-francesco_20190204_documento-fratellanza-umana.html.

³⁰ See Footnote 55. [1975] ICI 12, 39, in Frank Brennan, “Confessions of an Erstwhile Land Rights Advocate,” 23, accessed January 18, 2021, <http://classic.austlii.edu.au/au/journals/NewcLawRw/2008/2.pdf>.

Indigenous peoples without land rights and without a modicum of self-determination are denied the place and opportunity to maintain themselves with a distinctive cultural identity in a post-colonial, globalised world. Indigenous peoples with land rights and a modicum of self-determination are individuals and societies with an enhanced choice about how to participate in the life of the nation state and the global economy, while being guaranteed the place and opportunity to maintain their cultural and religious identity with some protection from state interference and from involuntary assimilation into the predominant postcolonial society.³¹

In lieu of the native title rights to land, the Adivasis of Jharkhand forced the British to enact the *Chotanagpur Tenancy Act* (CNTA) of 1908. This “provided not only for the creation and maintenance of land records, but also ensured that land comes under a special tenure category of *Mundari khuntkattidars* (considered to be the original settlers of the land among Mundas), and restricted the transfer of tribal land to non-tribals.”³² More importantly, “the CNTA provided for the recording of various customary community rights in land and other resources, such as the right to take produce and to graze cattle, as well as the right to reclaim wastes or convert land into *korkar*.”³³ However land reform during zamindar abolition altered the tenure system in Jharkhand. The Bihar Land Reforms (BLR) Act of 1950 “provided for the vesting in the state of all lands, estates and interests (other than raiyati lands), abolishing all intermediate tenures, and the transfer of all land recorded in the names of zamindars and other tenure-holders to the state.”³⁴ The 1954 amendment to this act ensured that *bhuinhari* and *mundari khuntkattidari* tenancies were exempted, resulting in only two categories: the *mundari khuntkatti* and “vested” (*raiya*) land tenure.

Subsequently the Chotanagpur Landlord, and Tenants Procedure Act of 1879, and then the Commutation Act of 1897 were enacted to “supersede and consolidate the Acts in force, to improve and amplify the procedure, and to improve and complete the substantive law by embodying in it certain provisions of the Bengal Tenancy Act, 1885, including some additional provisions which affirmed “local customary rights and usages,” and extended legal rights to land and its produce for the first time to women.³⁵ *The Bihar Scheduled Areas Regulation* of 1969 was adopted to amend Section 71 of the CNT Act of 1908 and Section 20 of the SPT Act of 1949, aimed

³¹ Brennan, “Confessions of an Erstwhile Land Rights Advocate,” 28.

³² Carol Upadhyaya, “Community Rights in Land in Jharkhand,” accessed January 14, 2021, file:///Users/jojodear3054/Desktop/2019/TALKS%202021/Carol-Community_rights.pdf.

³³ ‘Korkar’ refers to upland, jungle or wasteland that is converted into don or rice land by terracing or embanking, but in legal parlance it refers to any land reclaimed by raiyats of a village who are not khuntkattidars. The CNTA provides for the right of every cultivator or landless laborer resident in a village or contiguous village to convert land into korkar with prior permission of the DC. See Upadhyay, “Community Rights in Land in Jharkhand,” 4435.

³⁴ Upadhyay, “Community Rights in Land in Jharkhand,” 4436; Malhotra, V and R Ranjan, *Commentaries on Bihar Land Reforms Act, 1950* (Patna: Malhotra Books, 2002), 7.

³⁵ Mullick, “The Land the People and the Law In Jharkhand,” 26.

at initiating a process of “restoration of land belonging to the members of the Scheduled Tribes that has been unlawfully ceded by fraudulent means, transferred to members of other communities and castes within the period of last thirty years, from the date of the said amendments.”³⁶

In the same period, the *Forest Rights* movement and the *Anti-CNT and SPT Acts Amendment* movements managed to ensure that the state process continued to respond positively to the demand of the people for their rights to forest, land, and participation in decision-making, with the legislative approval of three radical legislations: the 73rd and 74th Amendment of the Constitution 1992; Provision of Panchyat Extension in Scheduled Areas Act 1996, and Scheduled Tribes and Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Forest Rights) Act 2006, which was amended in 2012. Moreover, ‘The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (also Land Acquisition Act, 2013),’ was passed to replace the colonial Land Acquisition Act of 1894.³⁷

Land reform needs to ensure land security that honors the communal, relational, religio-cultural, and political meaning of indigenous homeland:

The land belonged to the lineage or in some cases to the village community. That was the time people cleared the forest, settled villages, and prepared cultivable fields in cooperation with one another. Families were the usufructs of the land, not the owners. Land was considered to be a part of Mother Nature that demanded regular propitiation of the guardian spirits. Swidden and settled agriculture gave rise to a distinct cultural life along with the spiritual significance of land. New settlements developed a political system of decision-making on the basis of consensus about the usage and management of land.³⁸

Land is the space for the full flourishing of the ancient heritage of indigenous cultures. FT points to an “art and culture of encounter” with indigenous peoples, and encourages us all to be “passionate about meeting others, seeking points of contact, building bridges, and planning a project that includes everyone. This becomes an aspiration and a style of life” (FT 215, 216). This aims at building a polyhedral society in an open world symbolized as “a many-faceted polyhedron whose different sides form a variegated unity, where the whole is greater than the part.”³⁹

This is a society where differences coexist, complementing, enriching and reciprocally illuminating one another, even amid disagreements and reservations. Each of us can learn something from others. No one is useless and no one is expendable. This also means finding ways to include those

³⁶ Ibid., 35.

³⁷ Ibid., 57-58.

³⁸ Ibid., 13.

³⁹ Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium, Apostolic Exhortation* (November 24, 2013), 237; AAS 105 (2013), 1116.

on the peripheries of life. For they have another way of looking at things; they see aspects of reality that are invisible to the centres of power where weighty decisions are made. (FT 215).

Correspondingly, a polyhedral society will reject “a false openness to the universal, born of the shallowness of those lacking insight into the genius of their native land or harbouring unresolved resentment towards their own people” (FT 120). What is called for is the constant need “to broaden our horizons and see the greater good which will benefit us all” through “sinking our roots deeper into the fertile soil and history of our native place, which is a gift of God that beings on a small scale, in our own neighbourhood, but with a larger perspective [...] The global need not stifle, nor the particular prove barren” (FT 120). By contrast, “intolerance and lack of respect for indigenous popular cultures is a form of violence grounded in a cold and judgmental way of viewing them. No authentic, profound and enduring change is possible unless it starts from the different cultures, particularly those of the poor” (FT 120).

Therefore, land reform has to “begin by creating institutional expressions of respect, recognition and dialogue with native peoples, acknowledging and recovering their native cultures, languages, traditions, rights and spirituality,” for “recognition and dialogue will be the best way to transform relationships whose history is marked by exclusion and discrimination.”⁴⁰ Indigenous peoples must be regarded as “principal dialogue partners, especially when large projects affecting their land are proposed.”⁴¹ Only dialogue engenders the “need to respect the rights of peoples and cultures, and to appreciate that the development of a social group presupposes an historical process which takes place within a cultural context and demands the constant and active involvement of local people *from within their proper culture*” (FT 144).

Furthermore, land reform needs to promote the flourishing of indigenous social identity. In Asia, a Filipino Jesuit anthropologist of Ateneo de Manila University, Dr. Albert Alejo, draws attention to what he advocates as indigenous “strategic identity assertions”:

We need to allow the unfolding of the many selves in the indigenous people’s self-determination, and this could point the way to the corresponding multiple ways that local, national, sectoral, and global actors can engage in conflict or solidarity with these strategic identity assertions. Solidarity work, then, should and could be diversified, strategized and aligned—but not necessarily simplified—in response to the evolving multiple identities which globalization paradoxically both endangers and engenders.⁴²

⁴⁰ Address of the Holy Father, Apostolic Journey of His Holiness Pope Francis to Chile and Peru (January 15-22, 2018).

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Albert E. Alejo, “Strategic identity: Bridging self-determination and solidarity among the indigenous peoples of Mindanao, the Philippines,” *Thesis Eleven* 145, no. 1 (2018): 38–57, here 50.

The failure to recognize indigenous strategic identities, Alejo argues, results in the emergence of “a complex juxtaposition of frustration and despair expressed in the eruption of spontaneous acts of tribal defiance with sympathetic external elements providing resources, organization, and knowledge of the outside system.”⁴³ The eruption of defiance is in opposition to the concerted efforts of the expressed solidarity of the Church, other cause-oriented organizations, and tribal support networks, which can be perceived as serving “as agents of colonization, control, and normalization deployed by the state, hiding behind an image of compassion and legitimized by a discourse of development.”⁴⁴

Women-led movements like *Chipko*, *Narmada Bachao andolan*, *POSCO Pratirod andolan*, *Niyamgiri pahar bachao andolan* and in recent times the *anti-Koel-Karo* movement in Jharkhand, have enhanced the gendered strategic identities of Adivasi women.⁴⁵ They ensure that Adivasi women continue to gain more grounds in the clan exogamy and patrilineal inheritance of cultivable land through “communal ownership of means of production, and dependence on forest as livelihood resources, which was largely the domain of women,” as well as surplus production that has provided women with more opportunities to engage in agriculture and thus gain a foothold in the male-dominated economic structure.⁴⁶

Ultimately, land reform needs to work within a political framework known as the *Radical Ecological Democracy* or RED, which is “a framework of social, political and economic arrangements in which all citizens have the right and full opportunity to participate in decisions impacting their lives; and where such decision making is based on the twin principles of ecological sustainability and human equity.”⁴⁷ The realization of this political framework depends on a political charity that “is also expressed in a spirit of openness to everyone. Through sacrifice and patience, they can help to create a beautiful polyhedral reality in which everyone has a place [whence] something else is required: an exchange of gifts for the common good” (FT 190).

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ A. Contreras, “The discourse and politics of resistance in the Philippine uplands’ in *Kasarinlan: A Philippine Quarterly of Third World Studies* 7, 4 (1992): 34–50, here 50; Alejo, “Strategic identity,” 50.

⁴⁵ Mullick, “The Land the People and the Law In Jharkhand,” 107.

⁴⁶ Ibid., 104.

⁴⁷ Aseem Shrivastava and Ashish Kothari, *Charming the Earth: The Making of global India* (New Delhi: Viking, 2012), 256; Mullick, “The Land the People and the Law In Jharkhand,” 59.

Conclusion

The idea of “the politics of land” can be understood as a territorial resource contestation with interlocking complexities, within the ancestral homeland of the indigenous peoples of Asia. Examining territorial contestation via an ethic framework, we can see that federal and local encroachment of land with its resultant dispossession, displacement, and destruction of indigenous livelihood and outmigration, is a wanton violation of the dignity and inherent value of the ancestral land and all the resources contained therein. Social justice and popular outcry for total well-being have to guide government policy. Development and land reform needs to draw inspiration from the idea of a “polyhedral” society, and effectively promote the strategic identities of the indigenous communities through RED (*Radical Ecological Democracy*). In this way, governments may respond more justly to the popular demands of the indigenous movements for the eventual restoration of their territorial integrity, for food security, and for the flourishing of the indigenous religio-cultural wisdom, social identities and spiritualities that uphold the sacredness of their homeland in Asia and in our common home.

Religious Fundamentalism, Tolerance, and the Buddha

S. Eucharist Lawrence, S.J.

In 6th century BC Northern India, there existed numerous philosophers, religious thinkers, and speculators who were engaged in grappling with issues such as God, Soul, World, Origins, Eternity, Sin, Suffering, Liberation and so on, and these included diverse groups of thinkers having marked variances regarding their perception and interpretation of issues linked to human origin, existence, destiny etc. However, the most interesting and yet confusing and intriguing aspect of the whole situation was the fact, that each philosopher or thinker asserted that he alone possessed the absolute truth concerning reality, and that the others were deluding people by the use of fabrications and falsehoods. What we observe here is a case of the presence of fundamentalist attitudes among the religious thinkers of the 6th century BC, and as an aftermath to this (as we witness even today among dissimilar religious groups of our current world), often there arose discussions, debates, disputes, and at times conflicts among those varied groups of thinkers and philosophers. Indeed, it was as though they competed among themselves to attract and gather more followers than others.

These are the circumstances under which Prince Gautama Siddhartha (who later became the Buddha) was born, in a family that believed in and practiced the rites and rituals of the Brahminical traditions of his time. He led an opulent and carefree life within his three palaces, erected for the three different seasons of the year. Yet shock and suffering engulfed his life, on his realizing that sickness, old age and death were part and parcel of human existence. He felt crushed with pain on realizing that he too would have to contend with illness, old age, and death in our suffering-laden human existence, and pondered and probed the issue as to whether a life free of sickness, old age, and death was possible.

At this juncture, on seeing a recluse walking with a peaceful face, Gautama Siddhartha understood in his heart that a suffering-free life was possible. He felt that life as a recluse would aid him in seeking both the truth as well as a way to gain a life of peace and serenity, which would be free of all forms of suffering. He believed in the ability of human beings to liberate themselves through diligent spiritual efforts, and hence assumed

upon himself the obligation of finding truths related to the misery and liberation of human beings.¹ The rites, rituals, sacrifices, and beliefs of his family-religion did not provide him satisfying answers to his questions, and hence he renounced all the pleasures, wealth, power, and glory of his royal life, and clothed as a recluse he wandered about seeking a solution to human suffering and sorrow.

Prince Siddhartha was unwilling to blindly follow the religious beliefs and practices of his family and society. He questioned the potentials and capacities of his traditional religion with regard to liberating people from their sufferings, and hence became critical of his own religion. He desired to confirm its truthfulness, effectiveness, and fruitfulness with regard to delivering people from their woes, and hence it is clear that Prince Siddhartha did not have any fundamentalist stance towards his traditional religion. Rather, he was gifted with a candid and searching mind that urged him to evaluate his own childhood religion, and find the true path that led to liberation, peace, tranquility, and inter-personal and communitarian harmony.

Gautama Siddhartha's Search and Spiritual Journey

Like a recluse he wandered about, seeking the true path to liberation. He searched around for teachers who would guide him in finding the rightful path to deliverance. He practiced under famous spiritual leaders of his time, namely Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, in order to arrive at the truth. He mastered very soon the knowledge attained by those two mystical leaders and became their equal, by securing all the spiritual skills of those two saintly teachers. On noting the rapidity with which he had mastered the spiritual skills and wisdom they themselves had acquired after years of meditation and devout practices, both the Gurus, namely Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta came to value him, and requested him to lead their disciples in their monasteries, sharing equal authority with them. The offer of leadership from these great spiritual Gurus would have provided him with power, glory, and honour. Nevertheless however to the searching Siddhartha, gaining merely fleeting Concentration and Tranquillity (spiritual skills) such as what he had learned from his teachers, Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, did not fully satisfy him.²

¹ *Atta hi attano natho ko hi natho paro siya attana hi sudantena natham labhati dullabham. Dh., no. 160.*

² *"Tassa mayham bhikkhave etad-ahosi: Nāyaṃ dhammo nibbidāya na virāgāya na nirodhāya na upasamāyanaabhiññāyanasambodhāyananibbānāyasaṃvattati, yāvad-eva ākiñcaññāyatananūpapattiyā ti. So kho ahaṃ bhikkhave taṃ dhammaṃ analankarivā tasmādhammā nibbijjāpakkamim."* M.I., 165. Using these words of dissatisfaction with the attainments that he gained from Ālāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, the Buddha left them and went ahead in search of the path that leads to Nibbana, by himself.

Since the spiritual wisdom he gained from these two great religious Gurus did not provide him with the answers he looked for, he quit their company and proceeded further with fortitude, to discover the truth that would liberate him from all his sorrows. Later he assumed the practice of *attakilamathānuyoga*, an extreme form of self-mortification. Although the six years of his life spent in self-mortification with severe austere practices made him physically very weak, even to the point of death, all the same they did not lead him to the answers he was looking for, in order to solve the problem of human suffering.³

Having recognized the futility of austere practices with regard to realizing the truth, Prince Siddhartha thereupon decided to abandon extreme forms of self-mortification and follow a middle path, in his spiritual quest to arrive at the truth. Here we see that Siddhartha dispensed with fundamentalist beliefs in the efficacy of immoderate forms of self-mortification. Eventually however he became the Buddha, when he gained enlightenment, realized the truth, and purified himself entirely, of the mental defilements of craving, hatred, and the delusion that one is a self-sufficient eternal being. On freeing himself of the suffering-causing mental impurities of craving, hatred, and the delusions, of 'I, Mine and Me' (which are no more than cries of our ego or pride), the Buddha grew very serene, composed, blissful, and wise.

The Buddha on discovering a new and true path to liberation, had no desire to communicate his teachings in order to gain many disciples and acquire much popularity, as many religious leaders of his time were doing. On the contrary, he wavered about preaching his new path to people, fearing that it may be something hard for them to understand and practice. Later however, it was owing to a request from a divine being who urged him on due to the fact that through his teaching there would arise many human beings who would gain liberation, that the Buddha began to communicate to others his new path.⁴ Thus we see that the only reason why the Buddha preached and propagated his new path, was to liberate people from their sufferings and ignorance. His intention in preaching the path he discovered was to impart wisdom to people, so that they might avoid evil, do good, and grow in the purity and peacefulness of their hearts.⁵ Also, while preaching, he did not fritter away his time on mere speculations and traditional belief systems. Rather, he affirmed that his proclamation dealt with just two issues: 'Suffering and the Cessation of Suffering,' as expressed in his following utterance, "Bhikkhus, both formerly and now what I teach is suffering and the cessation of suffering."⁶

³ "Na kho panāhaṃ imāya kaṭukāya dukkarakārikāya adhiḡacchāmi uttarim̐ manussadhammā alamariya nāṇadassanavisesaṃ, siyā nu kho añño maggo bodhāyāti." M.I., 246.

⁴ MT (2009), 261.

⁵ Dhḡ., no.183.

⁶ "Pubbe caḡhaṃ bhikkhave etarahi ca dukkhañ- c'eva paññāpemi dukkhassa ca nirodhaṃ.." M.I., 140.

Also, the Buddha never imposed his views on others with a fundamentalist attitude. On the contrary, he even advised his disciples to examine and investigate himself (the Buddha), in order to gain confirmation with regard to the true value of his teachings. When a set of people of his time called Kalamas enquired of the Buddha as to how they might judge the truth or falsity of a teaching, the Buddha replied, "O Kalamas, do not be led by reports, traditions, or hearsay. Be not led by the authority of religious texts, nor by mere logic or inference... nor by the idea: 'this is our teacher.' But O Kalamas, when you know for yourselves that certain things are unwholesome, wrong, and bad, then give them up.... And when you know for yourselves that certain things are wholesome and good, then accept them and follow them."⁷ From these words of the Buddha we see that he endorsed both the freedom of thought of human beings, as well as their capacity to judge what is good and bad in life. Thus he resisted blind faith, and instead urged his disciples to personally experience, experiment, reason out, verify, and acquire confirmation, before accepting any view, faith, or teaching.

Moreover, the Buddha compared his path to a raft used to cross a sea or river, and then left free after crossing the body of water. After giving the example of a raft, the Buddha in his own words declared: "In this manner, O Bhikkhus, I have taught a doctrine similar to a raft—it is for crossing over and not for carrying (lit. getting hold of)."⁸ This shows that not a tint of fundamentalism or attachment was to be found in the Buddha, with reference to his own teaching.

His Views Regarding Other Religions

The Buddha taught that with reference to a faith that an individual liked, he may speak thus: "This is my faith." However, if he were to say, "My faith alone is true and all other faiths are false," he would not be speaking the truth.⁹ Also, the Buddha declared, "To be attached to one thing (a certain view or faith) and to look down upon other things (views or faiths) as inferior, — this wise men call a fetter."¹⁰ These words of the Buddha reveal the extent of his reverence and esteem for the religions or faiths of others.

Here we have a classic life-event that brings out the respect, reverence, and religious tolerance of the Buddha towards other religions and their followers. Upali, a well-known and rich lay disciple and benefactor of Lord Mahavira, the founder of Jainism, came to argue with the Buddha and defeat him. However in the course of the argument Upali saw himself defeated, and was greatly impressed by the wisdom of the Buddha. Hence

⁷ AN (Colombo, 1929), 115.

⁸ MT (2009), 352-53.

⁹ MT (2009), 780.

¹⁰ Sn (PTS), 151 (v.798).

he promptly desired to become a lay disciple of the Buddha, but the Buddha advised him not to be in such a hurry but rather to ponder over the issue, since he was an eminent disciple and benefactor of another great teacher of that time. However, since Upali nonetheless kept repeatedly insisting that he be accepted as a lay disciple the Buddha accepted him, yet he requested him to continue respecting and supporting his old religious teachers, just as he had so far done.¹¹ This event reveals that the Buddha had no desire for any rivalry or defaming of other religious groups. Rather, he always sought understanding, respect, peace, concord and harmony, among different religious traditions.

Religious Tolerance in Buddhist History

Following in the footsteps of the Buddha, his disciples too abided by the values of compassion, forgiveness, concord, and harmony with other religious traditions. A very good example of the practice of inter-religious understanding, tolerance, harmony, and co-existence in Buddhist history, lies in the life and rule of the renowned Buddhist Emperor Asoka of the 3rd century BC. He honoured and supported all other religions in his vast empire. In one of his Edicts carved on rock, he declared:

One should not honour only one's own religion and condemn the religion of others, but one should honour others' religions for this or that reason. So doing, one helps one's own religion to grow and renders service to the religions of others too. In acting otherwise one digs the grave of one's own religion and also does harm to other religions. Whoever honours his own religion and condemns other religions... injures his own religion gravely. So concord is good. Let all listen, and be willing to listen to the doctrines of others.¹²

Violence between Religions and its Solution

Despite the fact that Buddhist history abounds in peace-promoting values and events, yet sad to say in modern times and in certain nations, some followers of Buddhism are resorting to violence towards people of other religions. Here we need to bear in mind the fact that people with fundamentalist attitudes who cause conflicts and violence are present not just among Buddhists, but among people of other religious traditions as well. No religion in the world preaches hatred and violence towards followers of other religions. Yet when followers of religions do not practice the noble teachings of their own religious traditions, but obey instead their own venal and egotistic inclinations, then conflicts and cruelty erupt among people of different faiths.

¹¹ MT (2009), 484-85.

¹² Rock Edict, XII.

Whether in India or any other nation, why do people linked to a majority religion persecute and oppress those of minority religions by ignoring the noble teachings of their own religious traditions? The reasons for such inter-ethnic and inter-religious conflicts are many, and besides they range from economic to political, cultural, social, religious, and others. In each country inter-religious and inter-ethnic conflicts and violence have their own specificity and historical context, and hence violence in each nation needs to be studied with sensitivity, impartiality, and empathy.

However to me, as an individual engaged in studies related to spirituality and religion, the chief cause for such inter-religious (or inter-ethnic) conflict lies in the lack of psycho-spiritual growth and maturity in the persons concerned. When people or groups affiliated to any religion seek their happiness, security and fulfilment in earthly possessions like wealth, power, prestige and sovereignty, they are bound to feel threatened and insecure by the growth and well-being they witness in people of other (minority) religions or ethnicities. The idea that in due course those of the minority (or other) religions or ethnicities will subdue them and snatch away all the glory of their culture and religion along with their power, prestige, and dominion, evokes fear within them. They feel alarmed that their own future may turn uncertain and insecure, due to the rise of these others (minorities) who differ from themselves, who are strangers to themselves, and whom they feel they cannot trust.

Hence, they conclude that those people (the minorities) who are strangers to themselves and whom they cannot trust have to be held in check, and that they should not be permitted to gain prominence in any way. They believe that in order that these minorities be held in check they need to be deterred and threatened with violence, persecution, and other such means, in order that they may remain low, insecure, and secondary, unable to grow or develop further. By the adoption of such a mindset they (of the majority religions who are insecure) evoke discord, conflict, and violence against those they dislike and distrust, chiefly the growing minorities who rouse fear within themselves. In the meantime, certain followers of minority groups (who reject the noble and human values of their own religion) also have recourse to arms and resort to violence, in order to counter the violence of the majority. These combatants of minority groups are often termed 'terrorists' by those of the majority, and in this way violence and counter-violence continues. This is the scenario that has occurred and is still occurring in several nations of Asia and the world. Hence, in the current situation, world peace and harmony are at stake! Is there a means to end this inter-religious and inter-ethnic violence? What is the way out? Is there a model before us?

There is no need for us to give in to despair or frustration. Indeed, in recent times we have had a shining light amidst the wilderness of anger and violence, in the person of Venerable Maha Ghosanda of Cambodia. When

the whole of Cambodia was sinking within the gloom of division, distrust, anger, violence, revenge and despair, Venerable Maha Ghosananda, a Buddhist monk, like a true spiritual son of the Buddha, marched fearlessly in the streets of Cambodia with a message of compassion, forgiveness, and love, and built trust among the different warring groups of the nation. He went about diffusing the words of the Buddha that hatred does not extinguish hatred, but love and compassion do it effectively.¹³ Through his tireless Peace Walks he created understanding, forgiveness, friendship, hope, and trust among groups inimical to each other, and thus transformed Cambodia into a modern-day peaceful nation via the reconciliation-promoting activities of the organization entitled, Inter-religious Mission for Peace in Cambodia, which he founded in 1980 with a few Christian friends.¹⁴

Yes, by joining hands with friends of diverse religions in Cambodia and by promoting Inter-religious dialogue, understanding, trust, and harmony, he turned a hostile country into a peaceful one. Thus this (Inter-religious Dialogue for Peace and Harmony) is a well-proven way of establishing peace and harmony in nations, where inter-religious and inter-ethnic divisions, conflicts, and mayhem are razing human society today. Hence in the world today, wherever inter-religious conflicts and violence occur, it is high time people of all faiths come together to promote inter-religious dialogue, understanding, trust, and cooperation in order that Peace, Harmony and Concord may grow, for the benefit of humanity and the entire Universe.

Conclusion

From the life, spiritual journey, and discovery of the Buddha around 2500 years ago, and the peace-promoting lives of his followers in history, the values, principles, and morals we can learn and practice for world peace and harmony even today are as follows:

- 1) We need to maintain a searching and questioning mind with reference to the problems and sufferings we face in our human existence.
- 2) We should not follow any faith or religious practice blindly (as fundamentalists do), simply because we happen to be born into them. It is necessary always to critically question the religious practices we follow, in order to discover whether they are relevant and effective in solving our day-to-day and perennial sufferings and problems. Before we criticize or seek to correct the religious faith or practices of others, we need to have the honesty, courage, and creativity to discard practices linked to our own religion that have grown irrelevant, meaningless, or harmful. Religious and spiritual attainments are not to be used for earthly power, authority and glory. Rather, they are to be used for

¹³ Dhp., no. 5.

¹⁴ Mahan Ghosananda, *Step by Step: Meditation on Wisdom and Compassion*, ed. Jane Sharada Mahoney and Philip Edmonds (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1992), 20.

our growth in inner peace and to promote communitarian harmony and unity.

- 3) Purification of oneself and attainment of Personal Spiritual Integrity is a sine qua non for all those who wish to provide credible religious leadership. Authenticity, Truthfulness and Compassionate Wisdom lead to liberation and peace.
- 4) The chief target and goal of religious pursuits should be to assist people in liberating themselves from suffering and its causes, and promote personal and communitarian peace and harmony. Utilizing religion to divide people and arouse conflicts and wars would constitute a misuse, which would lead to the destruction of the dignity, honour, and greatness of those religions.
- 5) It is by honouring and respecting other religions that we earn honour and respect for our own.
- 6) Inter-religious dialogue, understanding, friendship, trust, and collaboration are essential requisites, for the promotion of Peace, Harmony, Concord, Unity, Truth, Wisdom, Happiness and Cooperation in the world.
- 7) The Buddha always lived and meditated by being close to Nature. Hence, by our closeness to Nature, our care for Mother Earth, and our growth in inner freedom through harmony with all beings, we too in the fullness of time can attain individual, universal, and cosmic Liberation.

By way of tribute to one of our modern-day peacemakers and in order that we may be reminded of his ever-valuable and exemplary life, I end this article with the words of Venerable Maha Ghosananda, who true to his name was a Great Proclaimer of Joy, Hope, and Peace, during his lifetime.

The suffering of Cambodia has been deep.
 From this suffering comes Great Compassion
 Great Compassion makes a Peaceful Heart.
 A Peaceful Heart makes a Peaceful Person.
 A Peaceful Person makes a Peaceful Family.
 A Peaceful Family makes a Peaceful Community.
 A Peaceful Community makes a Peaceful Nation.
 A Peaceful Nation makes a Peaceful World.
 May all beings live in Happiness and Peace.¹⁵

¹⁵ Ibid., 28.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations

AN	<i>Āṅuttara Nikāya</i> (PTS, 1929)
Dhp	<i>Dhammapada</i> (1986)
MN	<i>Majjhima Nikāya</i> (PTS, 1888-2002)
M.I.	<i>Majjhima Nikāya</i> , Part One
MT	<i>Majjhima Nikāya</i> (2009)
PTS	Pali Text Society (London)
Sn	<i>Suttanipata</i> (PTS, 1913-1984)

Andersen, Dines, and Helmer Smith, eds. *Suttanipāta*. London: Pali Text Society, 1913-1984.

Buddharakkhita, Acharya, trans. *Dhammapada*. Taipei: The Corporate Body of the Buddha Educational Foundation, 1986.

Devamitta, Thera. ed. *Āṅuttara-Nikāya*. London: Pali Text Society, 1929.

Ghosananda, Maha. *Step by Step: Meditation on Wisdom and Compassion*. Edited by Jane Sharada Mahoney, and Philip Edmonds. Berkeley: Parallax Press, 1992.

Ñanamoli, Bhikkhu, trans. *Majjhima Nikaya* [The Middle Length Discourses of the Buddha]. Translated, edited, and revised by Bhikkhu Bodhi. Boston: Wisdom Publications, 2009.

Trenckner, V., R. Chalmers, and C.A.F. Rhys Davids, eds. *Majjhima Nikaya*. 4 vols. London: Pali Text Society, 1888-2002.

A Universal Spirituality–The Need of The Hour!

S. Eucharist Lawrence, S.J

In our current age of communal conflict, religious hatred, and tyranny, as well as inter-state border rivalries, racial divides, and global virus infections, fostering a Universal Spirituality appears to be the grave need of the hour. People of all nations and within nations as well are split into a multiplicity of conflicting groups, opposing each other on issues like identity, rights, dominions, primacies, ownership, and glory, and abiding by their own specific dogmas, agendas, values, worldviews, and religious beliefs. For instance, although the Indian ethos is typified by the approval and accommodation of multiple thoughts and beliefs, and most of our Hindu brethren in India tend to adhere to the spirituality of Universal Familyhood (Vasudeva Kutumbakam), yet, for the sake of their own supremacy and dominion over a multi-cultural and multi-religious India, zealots and other bellicose units of Hinduism are splitting the Indian people, by contending that Hindus are ‘true Indians,’ while others are lesser or non-Indians. Their belief and creed is that India is for Hindus alone, and other minority groups may either live in India as second-class citizens, or quit India. People having such beliefs and mindsets tend to pursue a doctrine of segregating citizens on the basis of religion, and disseminating hatred, violence, enmity, fear and distrust, among people of dissimilar faiths.

On the global level, we witnessed the ISI in the Middle East following the identical creed of self-glorification, violence, persecution, and slaughter, to attain religious supremacy over the world. A few decades past in our history, Christians viewed their religion as being both superior and the sole truth in contrast to other world religions, and with this mindset they toiled widely for the conversion of all others to Christianity. In recent times China has been accused of practicing the policy of territorial invasion and economic dominion over the nations of the world, in order to establish its political and economic supremacy on a global level. Thus we have multiple cases of diverse groups of people and nations in our world, who abide by such riving, risky, vicious and unsafe codes of conduct. Briefly stated, it is as a consequence of acts performed by such divisive and dictating policies and beliefs of various groups in the world, that we perceive today around us hostility, war, murder, rape, ecological decline, natural disasters, absence of peace and harmony, and global distress.

Having now reached the 21st century with its manifold scientific, medical, and technological developments, should humanity reel under such folly, dimness, pain, and anguish in this super-modern digital age? Should humans who boast of their ascendancy over nature and living beings recklessly raze themselves in the pursuit of mutual supremacy over one another? Is there a way out? Is there a light or path that can lead mankind to mutual respect and care, peaceful co-existence, mutual progress, joyful alliances, a harmonious world order, and a hopeful and sustainable future? My answer to this would be: "Yes! There is a way, there is hope, and there is light, and this light is none other than the practice of a Universal Spirituality by all Mankind." Now what do we mean by a Universal Spirituality?

In our current world we notice that religious, cultural, or national groups tend to pursue their own sectarian, dividing, specific, and praetorian spirituality, so as to enhance their own predominance over others, and thus pave the way for conflicts to arise. However a Universal Spirituality is an entity common and of value to all groups, irrespective of whether their religions, nations, cultures, races, or traditions differ, and what's more, it nurtures the peace, harmony, friendship, teamwork, and shared progress of all people and nations of the world. Hence such a Universal Spirituality will undeniably be agreeable and pleasing to all, and it is in truth the need of the hour for our current problematic world. What would be the salient features of such a Universal Spirituality?

Prior to tackling the salient features of a Universal Spirituality, we need to define our terms. What do we mean by 'Spirituality?' A simple definition would be: True Spirituality is a dynamic living process or rather a psychological or immaterial process of action that emanates from an individual, and transcends that individual to reach all realities enveloping the individual or having a relation to him. The 'ego' is an inward-pulling, self-centered centripetal psychological force that limits a person's heart to his/her own material body and egoistic pride, but 'Spirituality' in contrast is an outward-extending, other-oriented centrifugal psychological force that expands one's heart to the unlimited universe, to beings, to eternity, and to the Super-being (God). Hence, Spirituality always enhances a harmonious relationship, that exists between a person and all beings and realities encircling him. The igniting force or missile behind a person's ego or Spirituality lies in the belief system, worldview, values, and attitudes of the concerned person, and hence, based on the manner of belief and value system we have miscellaneous Spiritualities, such as Catholic, Buddhist, Islamic, Tribal Spirituality and so on.

Although Spiritualities of religions and traditions are centrifugal by nature (that is, transcending self and reaching out to others), and they are endowed with numerous common features, yet a particular religious spirituality may not appeal to those affiliated to a differing religion. Hence, the strong-willed imposition of one's personal value system and

spirituality on another individual or community may perhaps arouse hatred, conflict, and violence, a situation amply visible in our present-day world. Consequently, discovering a Universal Spirituality that would be pleasing and welcome to people of all religions and traditions, and also useful, significant, relevant, fruitful, humane, and vital to all, is the need of the hour. As a Universal Spirituality of this brand fosters mutual respect, care, cooperation, sharing, peace, trust, joy, and mercy, among individuals of all affiliations, it is incumbent on us to promote it everywhere in the world, by every means possible. How do we go about this? What are the values, attitudes, and guiding principles that would ignite and fuel such a Universal Spirituality?

That leads us to ponder here over the values, attitudes, and guiding norms that would ignite a Universal Spirituality within human beings, which in turn will serve to generate a situation of peaceful co-existence, involving mankind, healthy ecology, and sustainability, in our world of today. To me, the prime guiding norms of a Universal Spirituality would undoubtedly be:

1. Care for our Common Home, Mother Earth (Eco-Spirituality).

Today, concern for Ecology and Mother Earth is a fact that is highlighted by scientists, ecologists, and spiritual leaders, like His Holiness Pope Francis¹ and His Holiness the Dalai Lama, besides others. Many religions also underscore the value of caring for Mother Earth,² for there is no physical entity affecting us more intimately than our mother Earth. The Earth as our mother provides all needs that sustain both mankind and the biosphere, namely air, water, fire, food, clothing, shelter, minerals, technology, medicine, life, contentment, hope and spiritual experiences. Shortage, pollution or imbalance in any of these basics in any part of the world alters the well-being of all mankind, and the best illustration of this is the experience we now have of the global infection of the coronavirus, which began in a corner of the world, but yet today is agitating all corners of the world. This experience provides ample evidence of the fact that caring for Mother Earth and its elements (eco-spirituality), is the primary and principal concern Universal Spirituality should adopt as its guiding principle.

2. Care for Human Solidarity and Morality

Caring for human solidarity and morality needs to be our second guiding principal, since effective care for mother Earth and Ecology implies the

¹ Pope Francis's encyclical letter *Laudato Si'* (May 24, 2015) deals entirely with the issue of 'Caring for Mother Earth.'

² "The Lord God then took the man and settled him in the Garden of Eden, to cultivate and care for it" (Gen. 2: 15).

presence of the virtues of solidarity, collaboration, and cooperation among all nations, in order to protect and preserve Mother Earth from all conceivable hazards. Even if a single one of the world's nations was to embark upon a path of unscientific industrialization it may affect the eco-system of the entire world, since we are so much inter-connected. Hence, human solidarity and mutual efforts among nations are a must, in order to protect Mother Earth. Enhancing human solidarity demands addressing the issue of human morality, since a lack of morality leads to division, oppression, and exploitation, as well as the annihilation of ourselves and the earth. In our world today, evils like ecological imbalance, deforestation, poverty, and violence, are the outcome of the failure of humanity with regard to moral values, attitudes, and behaviour. Morality reminds human beings of the dignity, honour, obligations, duties, and imperatives they are called on to follow, for the sake of just and peaceful co-existence. Thus, Universal Spirituality, which aims at a just and peaceful social order, has to essentially foster a Universal Morality for the promotion of Human Solidarity. This in turn evokes the issue as to what it is that ensures mankind's growth in Solidarity and Morality, and that eventually leads to the third guiding principle of Universal Spirituality.

3. Building of Inter-Religious Relations and Spiritual Development

Religion in its truest sense is supposed to bind people together along with the Supreme Power (generally known as God but as Dharma in Buddhism), and promote morality and spirituality among people. However, as witnessed earlier, individual religions at times can be triumphalist, sectarian and divisive. Hence, Universal Spirituality needs to ceaselessly promote 'Inter-religious Engagement and Enrichment,' so that religions of the world may strive for the cooperation, group effort, unity, and solidarity of humanity, rather than their contrast, rivalry, division, and domination. Hence Inter-Religious Engagement and Enrichment³ is a preeminent way of promoting human solidarity. Further, inter-religious pursuits for the moral and spiritual development of humanity, assist us in arriving at the genuinely true and shared human, moral, and spiritual values, that are beneficial to people of all religions and nations. Spiritual Gurus of miscellaneous cultural and religious traditions have indicated that Greed (born of Craving), Hatred (born of Pride), and Falsehood (Ignorance), are roots of evil and immorality in the world.⁴ They explain that from the root-

³ His Holiness the Dalai Lama declares: "I have come to recognize that promotion of understanding among the world's religions is one of the most serious and important tasks facing the world today."

⁴ L. Feer and C.A.F. Rhys Davids, eds. *Smyutta Nikāya*, vol. 5 (London: Pali Text Society, 1884-2005), 359. The Buddha preached on the uprooting of the three evils of Greed, Hatred and Ignorance as freedom from suffering.

evil of Greed are born the evils of avarice, attachment, and the urge to hoard unbounded wealth, objects of pleasure, and resources, which in turn lead to inequality, poverty, exploitation of nature and unrest in society. From the root-evil of Pride (ego) emerge all evils of anger, revenge, conflict, violence, the race for arms, war, and devastations that steer humanity towards unspeakable grief, ecological catastrophes, insecurity, and despair.⁵ These two evils, namely greed and hatred, arise from falsehood or adherence to untruth. Hence, our next crucial question is, how do we liberate humanity from Greed, Hatred, Pride and Untruth, that spawn all varieties of evils and sorrows in the world? The answer to this leads us to the fourth principle of Universal Spirituality.

4. A Common Search for Truth

What significance has Truth in our lives? On observing various religions and their encounters with Truth, the following details come to light. The Hindu Vedic traditions assert, "Truth will Triumph." The Lord Buddha said, "Knowing things as they truly are and behaving accordingly, will liberate a person from all sufferings. So attain Wisdom which is the Truth of all things to liberate you." The Lord Jesus Christ stated, "The Truth will set you free"⁶ and he further maintained, "I came to bear witness to the Truth." Those declaring themselves Atheist insist, "We are ready to accept the Truth of any matter, but not the belief of any religion," and Mahatma Gandhi who arose as a 20th century world leader summed up the essence of all religions in the words, "All religions are different paths that seek the same Truth. There is no religion higher than Truth and Righteousness." From the above deliberations we note that almost all religions and even atheists contend that Truth is the source of our freedom, liberation, and happiness. Hence the most important question is, how is it that Truth has acquired such value in our lives? The reason is because adherence to truth leads to the acknowledgement of evil and sin in our lives, and inspires and evokes within our hearts a spirit of Transformation and Reconciliation towards all beings of our existence. This in turn stimulates forgiveness, justice and harmony, at all levels. Hence, a shared search for Truth in Inter-religious dealings is a key need for the promotion of morality via Reconciliation. And so, Reconciliation becomes our next critical guiding principle in Universal Spirituality.

⁵ Jesus said: "From within people, from their hearts come evil thoughts, unchastity, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, licentiousness, envy, blasphemy, arrogance, folly" (Mark 7: 21-22).

⁶ Jesus said: "If you remain in my word, you will truly be my disciples, and you will know the truth and the truth will set you free" (John 8: 31-32).

5. The Promotion of Reconciliation

Our past life encounters have no doubt informed us all that it is only when we are ready to accept hard truths (positive and negative) pertaining to ourselves, that we transform ourselves and grow as humble, honest, repentant, purified, and authentic persons. On the personal level, when an individual becomes truthful and honest towards himself, he or she accepts in a spirit of humility all faults, lapses, offenses and virtues. The person experiences self-realization, remorse, reconciliation, change, and self-acceptance, and attains inner peace and happiness. In fact, once a person encounters his or her own truths, he or she goes through a four-way process of Reconciliation. The word 'Reconciliation' means 'making peace with,' or 'making friends with,' or 'getting re-united with' both oneself and other beings or persons. In four-way reconciliation, a person begins with reconciliation with self, and then proceeds to reconciliation with the Supreme (God or Dharma), reconciliation with other humans, and finally reconciliation with nature, inclusive of its elements and creatures. The four-way reconciliation will foster the Moral and Spiritual Development of each individual, which is the 6th guiding principle of the Universal Spirituality.

6. Moral and Spiritual Development of Individuals

This four-way reconciliation spurs an individual into giving up greed, attachment, pride, and hatred, and in maturing in simplicity, sharing, humility, and compassion, and thereby enables him or her to attain personal credibility, moral authenticity, integrity and harmony with all beings of our existence leading him /her to Spiritual Perfection. This in turn fosters joy, happiness, security, hope and service-mindedness in that person, making him/her a light to the world who would strive for the transformation of society and the world, to be just and compassionate to the weakest in society. That leads us to the 7th guiding principle of the Universal Spirituality: Empowerment of the Weakest through a Justice World-order.

7. Empowerment of the Weakest through a Just World-order

The morally and spiritually developed individuals will seek for societal transformation that will ensure justice and dignity to the weakest and the marginalized in society. They will motivate their social and political leaders to acknowledge and accept the truths of the weakest and the marginalized in their societies. As a result, when a specific race, religious group, or nation are ready to accept truths about itself, it first of all acquires the candor to admit its social, structural and other forms of evil like poverty, inequality, violence, malnutrition, gender oppression and so on, that are visible in its culture and tradition. Later it takes steps to boldly and meekly transform itself, by eradicating in succession those evils of its society. From

a consumerist, materialistic, dominating and oppressive society, it changes to a society that is just, caring, sharing, respectful, dialoguing, and service-minded. Guided by truth and integrity, the concerned nation or society undergoes reconciliation with all segments and strata of people under its jurisdiction, and fosters reconciliation with its ecology and environmental issues as well.

Thus, we see that promoting the search for Truth through Inter-religious Dialogue in Universal Spirituality promotes all-inclusive reconciliation, leading to integrity, authenticity, simplicity, generosity, humility, compassion, purity and peace in individuals (moral and spiritual development). Also, it endorses reconciliation, justice, equality, fraternity, peace and harmony within a nation or a society. Reconciliation based on Truth will unquestionably impel us to do justice to the weakest and most marginalized in our nations and societies, namely those who have experienced misery for a protracted period of time. The materially poor, the physically and mentally challenged, female children, women, and the sick and aged of our society are all in need of special consideration for the sake of their safety, wellbeing, empowerment, and peaceful livelihood. Working for and empowering them will indeed foster peace, happiness, joy, hope, mercy and harmony, within them, within ourselves and within society at large.

8. Promoting the Spirit of Seeking the Meaning and Purpose of Life

The quest for meaning and purpose in life is a trend vital to all humans, and it constitutes a critical aspect of the spiritual dimension of each human life. Hence in Universal Spirituality also the proclivity of searching for the meaning and purpose of life, has to be a crucial guiding principle. To enhance this search in all, the spiritual activities of introspection, unceasing union with the Supreme (God or Truth), meditation, self-evaluation, self-purification and self-realization that give rise to inner freedom, compassion, and service-mindedness, have to be inculcated within all. It is this spiritual effort of Universal Spirituality that serves to enlighten and empower human beings towards ensuring their sincere practice of the other six guiding principles of Universal Spirituality, that we have mentioned above.

The world abounds in Churches, Mosques, Temples, Synagogues and other houses of worship fitted for adherents of each and every religion, for reasons of nurturing their faith. Likewise, fostering and sustaining Universal Spirituality as proposed in this article calls for sacred spaces and sites, where religious believers and those with no religious affiliation may

gather to seek truth, via Introspection, Meditation, Prayer, and Worship.⁷ This is in order to attain and mutually share insight, inspiration, wisdom and the Divine, and exude Joy, Peace, Mercy, and Harmony, all of which the world is in great need of today. This calls for erecting all over the world an Inter-religious Prayer or Meditation Hall for every 10,000 persons. Those among us committed to promoting spiritual transformation and reconciliation among humans, world peace and cooperation among nations, and sustainability and vibrant ecology in cultures, are we ready for such a creative venture in the world?

Conclusion

The observance and necessity of the virtues of 'Peace, Reconciliation, Harmony, Love, Compassion, Mercy and Hope are so vital in today's world, that people of all religions and even those without any religious affiliation can easily grasp their value, and acquire a longing for them in their life and society. Despite the fact that most people comprehend the need to acquire 'Peace, Reconciliation, Harmony, Love, Compassion, Mercy and Hope in their lives, yet the means to attain them is a mystery to many in the world. A Universal Spirituality is presented here as the most effective and viable pathway for the attainment of these valued and longed-for virtues. The guiding principles of such a Universal Spirituality are as follows.

- 1) Care for our Common Home, Mother Earth (Eco-Spirituality)
- 2) Care for Human Solidarity and Morality
- 3) Building of Inter-Religious Relations and Spiritual Development
- 4) A Common Search for Truth
- 5) The Promotion of Reconciliation
- 6) Moral and Spiritual Development of Individuals
- 7) Empowerment of the Weakest through a Just World Order
- 8) Promoting the Spirit of Seeking the Meaning and Purpose of Life.

It is my heartfelt desire that these guiding principles enlighten, empower, inspire, and impel us to serve as torch-bearers in today's world, as well as glowing stars⁸ of Peace, Reconciliation, Harmony, Joy, Mercy, Hope, and Happiness on earth.

⁷ Jesus said: "But the hour is coming, and is now here, when true worshipers will worship the Father in Spirit and truth" (John 4: 23).

⁸ Jesus said: "You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5: 14).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bible Translation Committee, trans. *Holy Bible: Catholic Edition, Anglicized Text, NRSV, New Revised Standard Version*. USA: Catholic Bible Press, 2020.

Dalai Lama XIV. *Towards a True Kinship of Faiths*. New York: Doubleday Religion, 2010.

Feer, L., and C.A.F. Rhys Davids, eds. *Suyutta Nikāya*. 6 vols. London: Pali Text Society, 1884-2005.

Francis, Laudato Si': *On Care for Our Common Home*. Encyclical Letter, Vatican Website. May 24, 2015. https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

EDITOR'S CONCLUSION

On his recent visit to Thailand, His Holiness Pope Francis met the Buddhist Supreme Patriarch Ariyavongsagatanana IX at the Wat Ratchabophit Sathit Maha Simaram Temple situated on Atsadang Road in Bangkok, and endorsed the pledge of the Roman Catholic Church to conduct open and respectful dialogue in the service of peace. The temple was erected during the reign of King Chulalongkorn (Rama V), who happened to be the first Thai monarch to visit the Vatican and have an audience with Pope Leo XIII.

In his address to Pope Francis, the Supreme Patriarch recalled the historic visit 35 years earlier of his predecessor Pope John Paul II to Thailand, and listed visits made by Thai Kings to various Popes in the Vatican, as for example to Pope Leo XIII in 1897, to Pope Pius XI in 1934, and to Pope John XIII in 1960. He also spoke of a deep and lasting friendship, and a coming-together in a true spirit of mutual understanding and equal partnership.

Buddhism as we know is not a religion confined to Thailand alone. There are said to be approximately 535 million practitioners of Buddhism worldwide, which constitutes about 8 to 10 percent of the world's population. These Buddhist believers are classed into a variety of groups, for apart from the major divisions of Theravada, Mahayana, and Vajrayana, we also have groupings such as the Bharatiya Bauddha Mahasabha and Triratna Bauddha Mahasangha of India, the Soka Gakkai and Risshō Kōsei Kai of Japan, and numerous others in a diversity of nations.

Acquiring an in-depth grasp of the spirituality and mysticism of these myriad assemblies is in truth a highly vital task, that lies ahead of us. I distinctly recall the occasion in Manila over 10 years ago, when I happened to be discussing the issue of Buddhism with Fr. Adolfo Nicolas SJ, our late Jesuit Superior General. Fr. Nicolas at the time was president of the Jesuit Conference of the Asia Pacific (JCAP), and I was the Asia Pacific director for Buddhist Christian Dialogue. In his efforts to assure me of the significance of the work that I was entrusted with, Fr. Nicolas declared, "Buddhism is a religion that has a profound theological value for Christianity. Hence it merits to be studied in depth." I am sure Fr. Nicolas must be overjoyed by the fact that this publication of ours contains articles not just by Jesuits, but by Buddhist monks, nuns, and lay people as well.

To close, I wish to quote the following inspiring words by his Holiness Pope Francis, words elucidating the task that lies ahead of us.

Rivers do not drink their own water. Trees do not eat their own fruit. The sun does not shine on itself, and flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves. Living for others is a rule of nature. We are all born to help each other. No matter how difficult it is... Life is good when you are happy; but much better when others are happy because of you.⁹

⁹ Catholic Business Network Singapore, "A Beautiful Message from Holy Father Pope Francis," March 19, 2020, accessed June 29, 2021, <https://www.facebook.com/CBNSG/posts/a-beautiful-message-from-holy-father-pope-francis-he-says-rivers-do-not-drink-th/10163089375905177/>.

THE WHEEL AND THE CROSS

The Wheel and the Cross (2021) is the second anthology of articles published by the Buddhist Studies and Dialogue Group of the Jesuit Conference of Asia-Pacific (JCAP). The first volume, *The Buddha and Jesus*, was published in 2015 and compiled the papers presented at the annual conferences of the group since 2010. The present volume includes academic papers, personal experiences of meditation and dialogue, and reflection pieces from various Buddhist traditions. These materials directly or indirectly show how the Buddhist ‘wheel’ of profound wisdom meets the Christian ‘cross’ of selfless love, to enhance each other along the same spiritual journey towards a world where humans as well as other beings live together in harmony.

For Jesuits and their collaborators who are celebrating the Ignatian Year in 2021-2022, this book may be an opportunity to “see all things new in Christ”, including other religions. For Buddhist readers, this collection may be an invitation to join the Christian pilgrimage to the realm of interreligious dialogue and collaboration, for deeper human solidarity against all forms of fundamentalist divisions and violent conflicts.

About the JCAP Buddhist Studies and Dialogue Group

The Jesuit Conference of Asia-Pacific (JCAP), which includes the nations of East and Southeast Asia, promotes interreligious dialogue with Islam and Buddhism. Since 2010, the Buddhist Studies and Dialogue group has been meeting annually to encounter Buddhism in different countries, always entering into dialogue with Buddhist monastics where this is possible, and to allow members to share their work with each other. The group takes a holistic approach to dialogue, trying to strike a balance among academic, spiritual, and practical activities that allow the participants to broaden their horizons and receive support from others. The group includes Jesuits from Asia-Pacific and South Asia, other Catholic priests, a Protestant pastor, Buddhist monastics, and lay people.

