Chinese Spirituality & Christian Communities
A Kenotic Perspective

Chinese Philosophical Studies, XXXI
Christian Philosophical Studies, XVII

Edited by
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

VINCENT SHEN

In response to Charles Taylor's diagnosis of today's Catholic Church in the West in four growing disjunctions between the Church and people as regards: (1) seekers and dwellers, (2) Church teaching authority or the magisterium, (3) historicity and morality, especially in the field of gender, and (4). the plurality of spiritualities now unfolding in these global times, Professor George McLean has the wisdom to appeal to the kenotic theology as the key to find a way of solution. In facing the challenges brought to us by these two proposals, the research team constituted by colleagues from Toronto, Taiwan and China will focus on the concept of kenosis in the context of Chinese spirituality in regard to Charles Taylor's fourth disjunction on the diversity of spiritual traditions. Therefore our topics will be articulated as "Chinese Spirituality and Christian Communities: A Kenotic Perspective," which is exactly the title of this volume.

To say it frankly, from a Chinese point of view, all these four disjunctions constitute at their most a diagnosis of today's Church in the West and the problems brought to other parts of the world by the West. Nevertheless, we are very pleased to join the synergy to identify a certain thoughtful solutions to these problems in Chinese wisdom and spirituality and, in the meanwhile, to express the needs of Christian communities in China.

Thus, we will explore the wisdoms implied in the resources of Chinese philosophy and spirituality (in the so-called Three Teachings: Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism) comparable to the Catholic kenotic theology and spirituality in view of inspiring the re-vitalization of the Catholic Church. Our emphasis is Christ's kenosis in his act of incarnation in the world and his crucifixion for this same world, with humility and love, ever revitalizing and creative in the movement of time. We understand that Christ enters this world of multiple cultural traditions, in order to bring them all to God. Thus Christ is there in the diverse cultures and civilizations marching towards God each in their own ways. Our focus is on the Asian (mainly Chinese) spiritual and cultural traditions. Thus, we will speak more about the original generosity and strangification that might inspire a Church of service. Under this spirit, the Church's Magisterium should invite creative and comprehensive interpretations so as to manifest Christ's wisdom and love and his kenotic presence and energetic working in the world.

We will start with a positive response to Charles Taylor and George McLean's diagnosis with a possible solutions from first of all inside the West, leading nevertheless to similar ideas in Chinese traditions. Thus we will begin with the chapter presented by Chan Tak-Kwon's "Kenotic Theology: A Perspective from "Regress" Theory traced in the Thought of Chiara Lubich and Meister Eckhart," which refers to George McLean's diagnosis of the four disjunction and their remedy as kenotic theology. Starting with the viable solutions first proposed in the West, this paper undertakes its research into 'kenotic theology' through a comparative study of the mysticism of Chiara Lubich (1920-2008) and Meister Eckhart (1260-1327/8). Chan Tak-Kwon focuses on the "regress' theory," which explains the kenotic (self-emptying) character in the theory of love of Chiara Lubich and the same character in the theory of intellect of Eckhart. "Regress theory" elucidates the way to accomplish unity from "Jesus forsaken" (Chiara) and Oneness from "detachment?" (Eckhart). Then, Professor Chan turns to the Confucian concept of *ren* (*kenosis* of love) and Daoist concept of *Dao* (*kenosis* of intellect) in the Chinese philosophical traditions. Chiara's idea resembles the ideal of *Ren* 仁 or benevolence of the Confucians, while Eckhart's idea comes close to the *dao* 道 of the Daoists. *Kenosis* of love in community making that promotes the ideal of the unity of mankind, and so resembles the benevolence of Confucianism. *Kenosis* of intellect in self-discovery uncovers the oneness of the individual with the universe and comes close to the philosophy of the Daoist. For Chan Tak-Kwon, God has shown a kenotic spirit of both love and intellect in his relation with the world, which we can appreciate and to which we can respond. In this way, he hopes to renew human spirituality and promote religious dialogue for the Church in the 21st century.

Now, a fuller comparison between Christian tradition and Chinese traditions is in order. Thus we present Vincent Shen's "Kenosis, Transcendence and Body: Comparing Christian Mysticism and Chinese Spirituality." This chapter situates the concept of kenosis and its corresponding ideas in Chinese philosophy and religion in the context of a comparison between Christian mysticism and Chinese spirituality. Indeed, from a philosophical point of view, Chinese spirituality and Christian mysticism raise a lot of interesting issues. However, this chapter only discusses three of them: the representability of the Chinese experience of spiritual transformation and the Christian mystic experience of spiritual ecstasy or transcendence; whether they are the pure experience of silence or whether this silence nevertheless leads to some kind of dialogue; and the status of the body in Chinese spirituality and Christian mystical experience, whether it is merely negative or that there is some positive role for human body to play in the mystic/spiritual

experience. From Vincent Shen's comparison, we can clearly see that both Christian and Chinese traditions show a common concern with experience of the ultimate reality and they share the idea that mystic experience, in its emptiness and darkness, is not a totally silent experience without any possibility of dialogue. On the contrary, mystic experience begins with dialogue, climaxes in loving dialogue, and should return finally to dialogue. Moreover, mystic experience can be achieved by surpassing all representations, but they do not exclude representations, which may make ultimate reality accessible to human understanding. For both traditions, symbolic representations not only prepare for the advent of mystic experience, but they also express this experience and thereby leave some traces behind that other people to come may follow. Also, mystic experience needs not deny the body and presupposes a dualistic body/mind opposition. The negation of the body has only the status of a method, just as the positive use of the body is a method when it performs meditation and rites.

The comparative study between Christian and Chinese traditions continues in the chapter written by Joseph H. Wong, "Logos and Tao: Johannine Jesus and a Taoist Sage," which focuses on comparing St. John's Gospel and Lao Tzu, in particular in regard to the nature and role of Jesus and the sage. Joseph Wong identifies certain affinities between the two traditions, such as both having two complementary functions, the cosmological and the anthropological, and the fact that, while John presents Jesus as the *Logos* incarnate, Lao Tzu conceives the Taoist sage as the embodiment of Tao. He presents the essential traits of a Taoist sage and explores similar traits on the face of the Johannine Jesus. For him, *wu-wei* (non-action), the hallmark of Tao, is also the foremost quality of a Taoist sage. Likewise, it is a distinguishing trait of the Johannine Jesus who is constantly referred to the Father. Far from being self-centered, Jesus' whole existence is orientated toward the Father: he is sent by the Father, coming from the Father and returning to the Father. Jesus came not to do his own will but the will of the Father, in humble service of humanity. Instead of a majestic and powerful kingly figure, the Johannine Jesus represents the figure of a humble, powerless servant of God. In accord with Vatican II, this servant figure should be the contemporary model of the Church in relation to the modern world.

The following chapter is Benoît Vermander's "Humility and Humiliation: Kenotic Experience in Modern Chinese Painting, and in the Historical Experience of Chinese Christians." For Benoit Vermander, kenosis, before being constructed as a concept, is first a *lived experience*, that of feeling and sharing the humility of Christ. It may be this anchorage in lived experience that has made "kenosis" a particularly productive and inspiring concept when it comes to interreligious dialogue and comparative theology. A closer look at the ambivalence of

Chinese Classics enriches biblical exegesis; individual narrations of the spiritual experiences undergone in East Asian contexts challenge Western categories of the spiritual or mystic path; Buddhist and Taoist scriptures obey hermeneutic models which challenge the usual categorization of theological discourse. Here Benoit refers to a possible conversation between Christian concept of kenosis and Buddhist concept of emptiness, such as Masao Abe's work that we will present in the next chapter. In the present chapter, Benoit's interest is in the way a "kenotic experience", more or less directly expressed through Biblical references, that can be found within two different loci: the first one has to do with 20th century Chinese art; the second is to be found within the historical experience of the Chinese Church during the last century as well as in the way this experience is now recalled and storied. Benoit Vermander does not intend to construct a "Chinese theology" from such material. He just intends to point out that, should such theology be formulated and systematized, it will necessarily be anchored in such experiences and will also need to take into account the (narrative or artistic) forms in which they are accounted for and reflected upon.

The next chapter, responding to what Benoit Vermander suggests, is Guo Shengping's "Christ's Kenosis in Christianity from a Perspective of Sunyata in Chan Buddhism: Explanation and Addition to Masao Abe." This is a chapter based on two formulations Masao Abe proposed in his essay "Kenotic God and Dynamic Sunyata" that "The Son of God is not the Son of God" and "The Self is not self," with reference to the Chinese monk Qingyuan Weixin's saying that "mountains are not mountains and waters are not waters." It attempts to connect Abe's formulations and Christology from a perspective of dynamic sunyata (emptiness) in Chan Buddhism. To understand God's kenosis in Christianity from a perspective of sunyata in Chan Buddhism, this paper first describes the constructing process of Abe's formulations in which Christ Jesus' "emptying himself" was connected with the Chan Buddhism's famous negation of Qinyuan to mountains and waters, then provides the author's own addition of the third stage that "the Son of God is really the Son of God" and "the Self is really self" upon Abe's formulations of the second stage that "the Son of God is not the Son of God" and "the Self is not the Self." Discovering the Ultimate Reality by overcoming dualism of the ego-self and no-self, this paper explains why the understanding of the third stage from Chan Buddhism's perspective is more reasonable than Abe's formulations that stopped on the second stage. Finally this paper concludes that the comprehension of Jesus Christ, the Son of God's kenotic nature from the Chan Buddhism's perspective of sunyata has its philosophical basis from Nagarjuna, considering the empting emptiness as the Ultimate Reality of the True Self.

After this comparison between Christian concept of kenosis and Buddhist concept of emptiness, we have to explore some more positive values as solution to the Catholic disjunctions in the West. We identify it as the positive virtue of generosity, and we will do it in discussing Buddhist ethics of strangification and generosity. This is done in Vincent Shen's "Theory and Practice of Ethics of Generosity in Chinese Mahayana Buddhism: Theory" that explores the theoretical and practical aspects of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism's ethics of generosity from a philosophical point of view. Buddhism is a religion *par excellence* of strangification and generosity. On the theoretical side, Vincent Shen explores the ontological foundation of the ethics of generosity in *The Awakening of Faith*, which is one of the founding texts in the history of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism that offers an ontological foundation to Buddhist generosity. It does this by the affirmation of One Mind or the Mind of All Sentient Beings as the Ultimate Reality. However, it also sets certain limits to generosity by denying difference/otherness, and sees difference/otherness as merely a delusion. On the practical side, Vincent Shen discusses three types of gift, namely the gift of material goods, the gift of no fear and the gift of teaching Dharma, and more interestingly, the practice of *huixiang* 迴向 (turning one's merit to many others) as discussed by Huiyuan in the entry "*huixiang*" of his *Dasheng Yizhang* (*The Meaning of Mahayana Buddhism*). At the end, some conclusive reflections are given so as to consider the Chinese Buddhist ethics of generosity in relation to the post-modern ethics of generosity to many others.

Now, let's turn to the issues related with Chinese Christian communities. Thus the eighth chapter is Benoit Vermander's "Religious Communities in Contemporary Shanghai and the Tasks of East Asian Theology." For Benoit Vermander, theology must remain alert to the perpetual novelty of God, expressed throughout believers' lived experiences and communal inventiveness. The ethnographer's sensitivity to the way religious communities take shape and evolve can help the theologian to reflect anew on the way God's revelation unfurls itself in the contexts and languages of our time. This article illustrates such approach by highlighting some aspects of an ongoing research on Shanghai's religious communities. Not only does it reflect upon Christian churches' growth and maturation but it also considers the religious diversity of Chinese megacities as a way to re-think Christian identity. It argues that China's religious awakening is not to be considered as a special case or a mere opportunity for Christian mission but as a field for theological critical thinking.

Now, let's take another Chinese Christian community as an example, that of Fu Jen Catholic university, with a clearly-defined mission of Catholic higher education in the areas of Chinese Culture.

Bernard Li was former President of Fu Jen Catholic University, therefore he is most qualified to write on this topic. Thus, the ninth chapter is Bernard Li's "Bring Christ to all Cultures on Earth and Bring all Cultures to Christ—Spreading the Spirit of Fu Jen Catholic University." After examining Christianity's historical experiences in China, especially that of Nestoriansm and Matteo Ricci, Fu Jen Catholic University was established with the *Analects*'s words, "Meet friends with culture; promote humanity with friendship" as its founding motto. Humanity or humaneness is central to Confucian philosophy, and friendship has been a Confucian value and the model of evangelization in China since Matteo Ricci's *On Friendship*. So, the term *fu jen* (promoting humanity) has been representing the spirit of this university since 1925, the year of its establishment in Beijing. While in 1961, when Fu Jen University was re-established in Taipei after China Mainland changed to Chinese communist atheist regime, Cardinal Yu Bin, President of the re-established Fu Jen University, also added another motto "truth, good, beauty and holiness," in order to put emphasis on the wholeness of human personality the students are expected to cultivate. When they are making progress in science, morality and art, they should also search for religious holiness supposed to be the union of Heaven and humans. Then, in 2007, when Bernard Li served as the President of Fu Jen University, he proposed two ways of reading Fu Jen University's motto, either as "truth, good, beauty and holiness", or as "holiness, beauty, good and truth." Bernard Li explains as follows, "The meaning of our university's motto could be re-interpreted in two ways, either from truth to good to beauty to holiness, or from holiness to beauty to good to truth. The first reading is the order of searching, that, by way of looking for truth, cultivating virtues and doing good deeds, and appreciating the beauty of all things in the universe, we are able to taste the ultimate holy perfection of life; while the second is the way of sharing, that we believe, as a Catholic university, only One holy and omnipotent God can share his infinite virtue and power to us so that we human beings can lead a life of truth, good and beauty. These two ways meet as the interaction of Heaven with humans. Humans can enjoy life and eternity because of God, and God can manifest though humans His Beauty, Goodness and Love to this world." Therefore, from "meeting friends with culture; promoting humanity with friendship" to "truth, good, beauty and holiness," the main purpose of Fu Jen University is to construct a community looking for truth, good, beauty and holiness in order to unify Chinese culture with Christianity, to dedicate itself to academic research for the purpose of spreading truth, to promote the well balanced development of the society and the full well-being of humankind. The Fu Jen Spirit is further defined in seven major targets: human dignity; life meaningfulness; research for truth; strong

community consciousness; exchange with different cultural traditions; dialogues and cooperation among religions; and service to humanity.

For the purpose of extending Fu Jen spirit to the whole world, recently it has established the Fu Jen Academia Catholica, which covers for the moment ten research areas: Science and Religion, scholastic Philosophy, Catholic Church History, Sinology, Literature, Peace and Justice, Ethics, Aesthetics and Arts, Christian Counseling and Sacred Music. Fu Jen Academia Catholica is making efforts to enhance itself to be the major centers of Catholic Studies in the world of Chinese culture. In the future. Also it is making plans to contact with other Catholic Studies centers in the world to coordinate a common effort in the form of a federation of Catholic Studies Centers, so as to bring Christ to cultures and to bring cultures to Christ.

Finally, for all Catholic communities in China, there is always a serious problem of religious freedom. This problem has to be dealt with first of all from the Catholic point of view. That is why we end this collection of essays with a discussion of the Catholic concept of freedom with a specific consideration of its application to the situation in China. Thus our final chapter is Thomas Yang's "Catholic Views of Religious Freedom." In regard to this issue, the Second Vatican Council's *Gaudium et Spes* and *Dignitatis Humanae* have been considered as époque making revolutionary documents of the Catholic Church. Together with the encyclical *Pacem in Terris* of John 23rd, they all regard the freedom of religious belief as a basic human right, as in the case of United Nation's Declaration of Human Rights (1948). The essence of this freedom affirmed as the basic human right does not consist only in the freedom from all external repressions, but also in the freedom of choice of one's conversion to a particular religion. Here these important Catholic documents seem not to follow with exactitude its own theological definitions, and turn towards the justification of personal freedom instead of that of objective truth.

However, there are some problems derivable from this theoretical turn towards human freedom. First, in the case of a decision made by a mistaken conscience, will it be recognized also by Catholic theology? Will that imply that all religions are equal in the determination of the truth? Is the principle of tolerance of the past not applicable today? Second, How about papal infallibility? Does it no longer exist? What is the meaning of leading a Catholic life? Third, if the answers to the previous two questions are all positive, then would it mean that Catholic faith is undergoing a change in essence? Then, this is not limited only to problems produced merely by a theoretical change. There will be practical consequences in concrete everyday life of the Church, as illustrated by the Lefebre Movement. Professor Thomas Yang will attempt to answer these questions by interpreting those Church

documents with philosophical and theological considerations. More concretely, he will focus on the Catholic social teaching and its practical consequences in the context of Asia, in particular that of China.

So, all these chapters are resulted from our team working on the implications of Chinese traditions in relation to the fourth disjunction diagnosed by Charles Taylor and interpreted by George McLean in terms of kenotic theology. One last thing I have to make clear is that we use both Wade-Giles system and ping-yin to render the phonetic translation of Chinese terms. Most of the papers are written in ping yin system, however, there are still papers in Wade-Giles system, and we respect their usage. For example, *dao* (pinyin) is also rendered as Tao (Wade-Giles), Laozi (pinyin) also rendered as Lao Tzu (Wade-Giles), Zhuangzi (pinyin) also rendered as Chuang Tzu (Wade-Giles) etc. Both systems are retained in this volume. Please enjoy reading this book.

CHAPTER II

KENOTIC THEOLOGY:
A PERSPECTIVE FROM "REGRESS" THEORY TRACED IN THE THOUGHT OF CHIARA LUBICH AND MEISTER ECKHART[1]

CHAN TAK-KWONG

According to, among others, Professor George F. McLean 'Kenotic theology' is an important issue for theology today. This paper undertakes research into 'kenotic theology' through a comparative study of the mysticism of Chiara Lubich (1920-2008) and Meister Eckhart (1260-1327/8).

Our discussion will focus on 'regress' theory, which explains the kenotic (self-emptying) character in the theory of love of Chiara Lubich and the same character in the theory of intellect of Eckhart. 'Regress theory' elucidates the way to accomplish 'unity 'from 'Jesus forsaken' (Chiara) and 'Oneness' from 'detachment' (Eckhart). Besides being a comparative study, our paper is an attempt to renew human spirituality and promote religious dialogue for the church in the 21st century.

INTRODUCTION

'Kenotic theology' has become an important issue for theology today, especially following the recommendations of Professor George F. McLean. This paper looks at 'kenotic theology' by comparing the mysticism of Chiara Lubich and Meister Eckhart. Chiara Lubich and Meister Eckhart come from different places and times: the former a contemporary leader of spirituality and mystical thinker, the latter a philosopher and mystic of the Middle Ages. Nevertheless in as much as their ways of spirituality are kenotic (self-emptying) in character, their difference is only apparent. At a deeper level they are related to one another.

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[1] This paper was at first presented at the Conference of 'Patterns of Unity: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue on the Thought of Chiara Lubich (1920-2008),' held in Fu Jen Catholic University, Taiwan, 12-13 April 2013. It has been published in Chinese under the title "Jesus Forsaken and Detachment; A Dialogue of Spirituality between Chiara Lubich and Meister Eckhart," in *Monthly Review of Philosophy and Culture* 40.10 (Oct 2013), 5-23. The present article is a revised version of that published paper.

Since mystics discover a kind of truth which comes immediately from the heart of God, our paper ventures to interpret their discovery in terms of 'regress'. This approach is apt for exercising reformation and promoting dialogue for the members of the church, responding to the signs of the times. Our paper has three parts: the first section starts from a recent account of disjunctions within the church and considers as remedy the alternative of 'kenotic theology'; the next section considers a kind of 'regress' found in the kenotic thought of Chiara and Eckhart; the final part is a study of adaptation and reformation of the church today. This is an application of the 'regress' theory to the kenotic thought of these two leaders of spirituality so as to explain the basic spirit of the documents of the Second Vatican Council (1962-65).

1. DISJUNCTIONS WITHIN THE CHURCH AND KENOTIC THEOLOGY

In 2012, George F. McLean, emeritus professor of the Catholic University of America, published articles by eleven scholars, on the general topic 'disjunctions in a secular age within the church'. The papers of that publication are perhaps one of the best studies on the problem of adaptation and reformation of the church today facing the challenges from within as well from without.[2]

1.1 *Charles Taylor's Four Disjunctions*

McLean follows the observation made by Charles Taylor on the four existential disjunctions of members of the church, which are between:[3]

(1) the 'seekers' who wish to realize in their life anew in more personally authentic, ways of being Christian and Catholic *vs* 'the dwellers' who feel that in the church all is already clear, well defined and simply to be followed assiduously;

(2) those who bring a modern sense of personal responsibility to church teaching in search of critical convergence *vs* the church as a jurisdictional authority to which obedience is due;

(3) ethical and moral praxis understood as a human, fallible and historical or existential achievement *vs* a natural law morality built on abstract, unchanging and universal essences; and

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[2] C. Taylor, *et al.* (ed), *Church and People: Disjunctions in a Secular Age*, (Washington DC: Council for Research in Value and Philosophy, 2012).

[3] G. McLean, "Introduction: Disjunctions in the 21st Century" in Taylor (ed.), *Church and People*, 1.

(4) a spirituality open to enrichment by the experiences and spiritualities of the many great religious cultures and civilizations, even the nonreligious, *vs* a stress on the completeness of the Christian spiritual tradition focused on the Second Person of the Trinity.

One may also consider the disjunctions from a wider context of the history of Catholicism.[4] Catholicism though it has many advantages, i.e. tradition and magisterium, sacraments and hierarchy, could be in the constant danger—as noticed at the Protestant crisis—of mixing up the necessity for dogma with dogmatism, the necessity for institution with the centralization of an authoritative apparatus, the necessity for liturgy with ritualism.

1.2 *'Kenotic Theology' as Response to Disjunctions*

In order to respond to the challenges of the afore-mentioned disjunctions, McLean calls for the development of a 'kenotic theology' for the Catholic Church. According to him, 'kenotic theology' —a term with Pauline theological implications—entails a shift from a top-down to a bottom-up methodology. McLean writes:[5]

> The former (top-down approach) stems from the evangelist John's descent of the Logos into time, tinged with a sense of divine glory, which has had as implications: a focus upon the perfection of the Church as Mystical Body and 'spotless bride of Christ,' whose reputation is therefore ever to be protected, which, in turn, has had the tragic consequence of calling above all for protecting the Church as institution over the welfare of its young. The latter (bottom-up approach) stems from St. Paul's theology, attested in his epistle to the Philippians.[6]

According to McLean, the bottom-up approach starts from the humanity of Christ and his sacrificial death, which opens a sense of God less as uncompromisingly absolute and immobile, but rather as able to share with the universe and as guardian of human freedom. This could also include a critique of the sense of unlimited power to do everything, which can lead to social and political conflict, and its replacement by a

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[4] C. Bressolette, "Catholicisme," in Poupard (ed.), *Dictonnaire des Religions*, 290-4.

[5] McLean, "Introduction: Disjunctions in the 21st Century", 3-5.

[6] "Though he was in the form of God, Jesus did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of man" (*Phil* 2:6-7 *RSV*).

metaphysics and ethics of the creativity of powerlessness and compromise of harmony and beauty.

1.3 *'Kenotic Theology' in Chiara and Eckhart*

Since 'kenotic theology' is in its initial stage of development, it is interesting to find that *kenosis* has been also a common term applied to the thought of Chiara and Eckhart, even by other scholars of comparative religion.[7]

Donald W. Mitchell of Purdue University talks about a kind of spiritual experience of *kenosis* found in Chiara, i.e. 'self-emptying' of love, which is not only a kenotic love for humankind bringing a new unity to the human family, but is also a self-revelation of the inner Trinitarian *kenosis* of love and the unity of mutual indwelling (*perichoresis*).[8] This spirituality of 'self-emptying' love or nothingness, allows one to be open to the world and to the presence of God in other religions.

Markus Vinzent likewise uncovers divine *kenosis* attested in Eckhart's 'detachment'.[9] It is our opinion to apply *kenosis* to Eckhart's theory of intellect, which is an essential theme of his preaching. The kenotic character of intellect is illustrated by the 'self-emptying' of intellectual forms, which could include a critique of human arrogance and imagination, and prepares for a theology of the pure manifestation of God. The resulting theory of openness is similar to that of Chiara.

Finally while it is meaningful for McLean to have observed the shift of methodology from a top-down to a bottom-up approach, we find that it is even more important to notice the 'self-empting' character of God, which is a dynamic power tracing back the inner relationship between these two approaches and bringing them back together to the unity or Oneness, beyond any sheer opposition between divine glory and humanity.

1.4 *'Kenotic Theology' and 'Regress'*

'Kenotic theology' could be interpreted in terms of 'regress'. Such a kind of 'regressive *kenosis*', following life back to its source of

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[7] Masao Abe of the Kyoto school has published an article "Kenotic God and Dynamic Sunyata," which has aroused discussion among scholars of different religious traditions, cf. Cobb & Ives (eds.), *The Emptying God: A Buddhist-Jewish-Christian Conversation* (New York: Orbis Books, 1990).

[8] Mitchell, "The mystical theology of Chiara Lubich", in *Fu Jen International Religious Studies*, 7.1 (2013), 1-20 at 2.

[9] M. Vinzent, *The Art of Detachment* (Leuven: Peeters, 2011), 1.

oneness, empowers men to act like God, where everything is said or done according to its time and season. Basically 'regress' is the character of negative theology found in mysticism.[10] Augustine (354-430), having studied the problem of the irresolvable dilemma of transcendence, claims that if "God is ineffable or beyond names", even the name 'God' should be avoided, since it creates a contradiction in terms, and the contradiction is to be passed over in silence rather than resolved verbally.[11] This response in silence opens the way of contemplation in Christian spirituality. Another response is to appeal to a dualistic way of theology, to distinguish between: 'God-as-he-is-in-himself' *vs* 'God-as-he-is-in-creatures'. Yet dualistic thinking creates bifurcations which cannot be easily harmonized. Finally there is the way of 'regress', a linguistic form of meta-language of negative theology.

The way of 'regress' is twofold: first, from a positive statement of God or thesis (affirmation) to a negative statement of God or anti-thesis (negation); second, from a negative statement of God to a more positive and purer statement of God or synthesis (negation of negation). Each time a correcting statement, an unsaying, which unsays the previous statement is in itself a saying that must be unsaid. In this way of correction, 'regress' becomes the guiding semantic force or the dynamics of a new kind of language, which is unitive and comes closer to the ultimate truth. This way of 'regress' is similar to the way of paradox, and the 'synthesis' attested is analogous to the unitive pole (*Aufhebung*) found in the dialectics of Georg W. F. Hegel (1770-1831), with a twofold function: on the one hand, cancelling the apparent opposition between thesis and antithesis, on the other conserving the opposition at a higher level of unification.

Compared with the traditional method of theology, 'regress' theory claims something similar to the three stage structure of analogy: the way of affirmation, the way of negation, the way of eminence. Yet two things are to be noticed here: first, basically it is *kenosis* or the 'self-empting' character of God or man that presents the subtle insight of paradox or dialectics; second, 'regress' theory emphasizes the dynamic oneness or interpenetration of the two ways or poles. It is in the tension between the two ways or poles that the discourse is meaningful, and communication among people is possible.

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[10] Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*, 1-13 esp. 2.

[11] Sells, *Mystical Languages of Unsaying*, 2 (Augustine, *Christian Instruction* 1:6).

2. 'REGRESSIVE *KENOSIS*' IN THE THOUGHT OF CHIARA AND ECKHART

'Regressive *kenosis*' is the core of the spirituality of Chiara (kenotic love) and Eckhart (kenotic intellect). It elucidates the way in which love and intellect operate, like the role of the negative pole leading to unification which is true unity or Oneness. 'Regressive *kenosis*' works in the thought of Chiara and Eckhart in the following ways:

Chiara: from 'Jesus forsaken' to '*kenosis* of love', through '*kenosis* of love' to 'unity'.
Eckhart: from 'detachment' to '*kenosis* of intellect', through '*kenosis* of intellect' to 'Oneness'.

The articulation of the ideals for both comes from the experience of a personal encounter with God, in participation with the relationship between Jesus Christ and his God, the kenotic attitude of the Son before God the Father.

2.1 Chiara Lubich

Chiara Lubich (1920-2008), founder of the Focolare movement, led an exceptional way of spiritual life, that has influenced the world around her and still does so today. Living in distress in Italy at the end of the Second World War, Chiara, at that time a young woman, while reading the gospel in candle light in an air-raid shelter, experienced the feeling of Jesus forsaken and yearning for unity. Chiara considers the basic features of the spirituality of the Focolare movement as 'Jesus forsaken' and 'unity', which are the two pillars of the movement, like the two faces of the same coin. The name of the movement 'Focolare' means hearth in Italian. It is the symbol of the presence of Jesus as the fire or hearth within the family home and among the family, an image taken from the holy family at Nazareth. Her spiritual experience is elucidated in the following remarks.

2.1 (1) 'Jesus Forsaken' and 'Unity'

Jesus Castellano Cervera, professor of spiritual theology at the *Teresianum* in Rome, in his introduction to Chiara's book *Unity and Jesus Forsaken* illustrates Chiara's opinion that two important moments are intimately related to the life of Jesus: first, Jesus prayed for unity in the prayer of the high priest, "may they all be one" (*Jn* 17:21); second, the forsaken Jesus on the cross cried out: "My God, my God, why have

you forsaken me?" (*Mk* 15:34; *Mt* 27:46). [12] In highlighting the particularity of Chiara's spirituality, Piero Coda, president of Sophia University Institute in Loppiano, says something similar:

> The 'new' element of the spirituality of Chiara is indeed the existential understanding, in the light of Jesus forsaken, of the Trinitarian love between the Father and the Son in the communion of the Holy Spirit. [13]

The theme of 'Jesus Forsaken' and 'unity' can be set out as follows:

It is our opinion to emphasize and interpret 'forsaken' from both the side of God and of man: 'God is forsaken for me', or 'I am forsaken for God'. [14] First, 'God is forsaken for me'. 'Jesus forsaken' is the new term for the suffering of Jesus. Jesus, who innocent of sin, suffers for men. The suffering of Jesus, besides physical pain, is internally a kind of tearing up, being uprooted from both humanity and God. [15] Second, 'I am forsaken for God'. To share the suffering of Jesus, that is to console the 'forsaken Jesus'. If one 'forsakes oneself' to love, God will manifest Himself to us. Here both God and man enter into a kind of mutual forsakenness. Though affected from without yet there are also echoes from within such that through the love of God, God and man go into the depths of each other.

'Unity' comes from the experience of being forsaken in a mutual way, where the common ground of forsakenness gives birth to pure love. Hence people receive the gift of 'unity in love', conferred by the spirit of Christ. Although human beings are not worthy of this gift, yet since they are forsaken for God, they are able to bear the suffering of God, entering into the depth of the love within the life of the trinity. Therefore, a kind of nobleness of human nature is revealed, which comes from the equality of love, as St. Paul, referring to his sufferings, has said, "Now I rejoice in my suffering for your sake, and in my flesh I complete what is lacking in Christ's afflictions for the sake of his body, that is, the church..." (*Col* 1:24). Finally, the power of love forges 'unity' among multi-faced conflicts of human life, where Jesus Christ is the power of 'unity' and climax for the universal harmony. When mutual love is achieved in this way, the testament of Christ is said to be fulfilled. [16]

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[12] Lubich, *Unity and Jesus Forsaken* (Manila: New City Press, 1985), 7-22.

[13] Coda, 'Introduction' in Lubich, *Essential Writings*, xix.

[14] Lubich, *Essential Writings*, 88-97.

[15] Lubich, *Unity and Jesus Forsaken*, 58-9.

[16] Lubich, *Unity and Jesus Forsaken*, 28.

2.1 (2) The 'Regressive *Kenosis*' of Love

'Regressive *kenosis*' of love is an illustration of the guiding force of Chiara's kenotic love, which can be elucidated in two stages, from 'forsaken' to '*kenosis* of love', and through '*kenosis* of love' to 'unity'.

Chiara's ideas on 'forsaken' and 'unity' come from the fountain 'God is love'. According to her, the key for the 'unity' revealed by 'Jesus forsaken' is the 'nothingness of love', which is in our term: '*kenosis* of love'. To be 'nothing of love' in front of the other person, is to put ourselves in an attitude of learning. This kenotic spirit of love allows one to see the presence of God in other people.[17] Hence, 'Jesus forsaken' in the kenotic sense is equivalent to true love, which is to serve other people, to be concerned about social problems, and to love the 'forsaken Jesus' among all people, since each individual embodies a different face of Christ, to quote the words of Chiara:

> we see him in the afflicted, in the disconsolate, in the forsaken, in failures, in the betrayed, in outcasts, in the victims of unsuccess or of impossible situations, in the disorientated, in the defenceless or those drowned in fear…[18]

Chiara's idea is based on the Christian tradition taking Jesus as the norm of 'loving one another', to illustrate the biblical saying: "the same way as I have loved you" (*Jn* 15:12).

Further, true love is not so much the service of love made up merely of acts, one after another, rather it regresses to the state of being in which Christians come to find themselves.[19] In other words, it is not a matter of doing this or that (content), rather it is a 'self-emptying' or 'kenotic' attitude, to want nothing to be done except the will of God. This is the true meaning of the '*kenosis* of love'. Chiara further explains 'kenotic love':

> Forget everything in life: office, work, people, responsibilities, hunger, thirst, rest, even your own soul…in order to possess nobody else but Him! This is everything… to love the way He loved us, even to the point of feeling forsaken by His Father for our sake.[20]

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[17] Lubich, "With the World Religions," in *Essential Writings*, 337-341 at 340.

[18] Lubich, *Unity and Jesus Forsaken*, 95.

[19] Lubich, *Unity and Jesus Forsaken*, 88.

[20] Lubich, *Unity and Jesus Forsaken*, 48.

Therefore, to elucidate the '*kenosi*s of love', we discover that true love is not what is generally understood as 'choosing God','doing God's will' or 'practicing benevolence'. True love is something more, the attitude "to choose God in the way He wants to be chosen". This it is which is the meaning of 'embracing the forsaken Jesus,' the key to real unity.[21]

One step forward in the 'regress' from '*kenosi*s of love' is 'unity'. Chiara explains that 'unity' is 'to make ourselves one':

> But what is meant and what is required by these few short words, which are so important as to stand for the way to love?
>
> We cannot enter the heart of another person to comprehend them, to understand them, to share their suffering, if our spirit is rich with a worry, a judgment, a thought…with anything at all. 'Making ourselves one' demands spirits that are poor, poor in spirit. Only with people like this is unity possible.
>
> God and His will is one, and yet let everyone have one's own way of expression. In a nutshell, everyone should become what God wants us to be…, thus, when we become one with God, we at the same time, become one among us.[22]

Chiara's idea is similar to the philosophical issue of 'identity' or 'the one and the many', yet unlike the philosophical solution of the issue— focusing on the discussion of the problem of the sameness of the substance—the 'unity' of Chiara, based on 'kenotic love' includes 'transformative power', which is the love of God, by which the promised 'unity' between all persons is realized.

2.1 (3) Religious Dialogue

Following the spirit of dialogue motivated by the Second Vatican Council, Chiara estimates that the church hereafter has three main tasks of dialogue to accomplish, i.e. the dialogue among Christians (ecumenism), with members of different religions, and with atheists. She is convinced that some factors of the movement could facilitate dialogue among different religious denominations. The 'word of life' or Bible reading eases the relation with the Orthodox churches and Lutheran church. The theme of a 'kenotic God' or of the 'self-emptying' of love

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[21] Lubich, *Unity and Jesus Forsaken*, 40.
[22] Lubich, *Unity and Jesus Forsaken*, 90.

resounds among many oriental religions. A deep concern for human suffering softens the relation with atheists.

The mission of the church is primarily understood as bearing witness to faith. To cite Chiara's own words:

> …you know that my Love has called me to carry out a great mission.
>
> I must, I desire to make him loved by all the world, because it was for my sake that he was crucified and forsaken!
>
> And you…have pity on this Jesus who continues to knock at your heart to get some consolation from you!
>
> You must, you can embrace my ideal! Even if your way is a little different from mine…[23]

Finally, though it is not easy to set Chiara's 'regressive *kenosis*' of love into any framework of dialogue theory, it seems close to Hans Küng's tolerant inclusivism. While confessing 'one true religion', it allows 'others to participate' at the same time.[24]

2.1 (4) Influences

Chiara's Focolare movement has been accepted by the church and integrated into the life of the church ever since its development. Nowadays the movement counts around 700 million members all over the world. The reason for its rapid acceptance and integration, besides its emphasis on the 'Word of life', which is considered essential for reformation by the Second Vatican Council, was Chiara's good and close relationship with the popes from Pius XII to Benedict XVI.[25] Overall, Chiara's main concern is the God-man relationship, or the unity of the church community, and not church institutions in a narrow sense. Her kenotic theory, illustrated by the 'regressive *kenosis*' of love through 'Jesus forsaken' to 'unity', offers the church a further possibility to enter into fruitful dialogue with the world. This is important since God is love.

2.2 *Meister Eckhart*

Meister Eckhart (1260-1327/8), a Dominican of the Middle Ages, played the different roles of university professor, church administrator

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[23] Lubich, *Unity and Jesus Forsaken*, 84.
[24] Küng, *Theology for the Third Millennium*, 230-237.
[25] Zambonini, *Chiara Lubich: A Life for Unity*, 126-141.

and spiritual director. Faced with the decline of medieval culture, he developed the theory of 'detachment' and 'Oneness'.

2.2 (1) 'Detachment' and 'Oneness'

The meaning of 'detachment' (*Abgeschiedenheit*), besides its close relation with 'letting go' (*Gelassenheit*),[26] has the negative meaning of being 'self-empty of creatures', the opposite of 'attachment' and the positive sense of being 'full of God', which equals perfect freedom and spontaneity.[27]

According to Eckhart, 'detachment' is the very nature of God, and the condition of the God-man relationship, i.e. the common ground which allows God and man to meet one another, or to go into the depths of each other. A similar idea is found in Chiara's mutual forsakenness. There are four objects from which one must be detached: from something, from everything, from oneself, and from God.[28] We may say that the first three belong to one level and the fourth to another. What follows is an elucidation of the two levels from the perspective of the effect of detachment:

The first level of detachment allows for 'God going into man'. This level is related to the first three objects of detachment, which are all objects belonging to the created world. When one practices this kind of 'detachment', God goes into the depth of His creation. Hence, besides a transcendent God, one has also the experience of the immanent God. This experience of inwardness sounds like what Augustine described when he said: "you were more inward than the most inward place of my heart".[29] God is closer to person's soul than the person is to her own depths.

The second level of detachment allows for 'man going into God'. This is something characteristic of Eckhart. Hence the idea: man is closer than God to His depth.[30] This idea has to do with the fourth object of 'detachment', where one exercises a kind of detachment which includes detachment from God. In other words, if 'detachment' is the

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[26]Caputo, *The Mystical Elements in Heidegger's Thought*, 119: "Thus *Gelassenheit* and *Abgeschiedenheit* seem to be identical ideas in Eckhart's mystical theology for 'detachment' too has this same two-fold structure: negatively, it means to be empty of creatures, and positively, to be full of God."

[27] Wu, *The Golden Age of Zen*, 50: "All sufferings spring from attachment, true joy arises from detachment."

[28] R. Schuermann, "Heidegger and Meister Eckhart on Releasement," *Research in Phenomenology* 3 (1993), 95-119 at 101-113.

[29] Augustine, *The Confessions* Book III, ch. 6, 48-49.

[30] Winkler, *Meister Eckhart: Zur Einfuerung*, 82.

way to God, one has to be detached even from this way itself, including from the feeling of God. In his German Sermon No. 48, Eckhart says:

> It (intellect, spark) wants to penetrate to the simple ground,
> to the still desert into which distinction never peeped,
> neither Father, Son nor Holy Spirit.[31]

This kind of 'detachment' enables man to enter into the depths of God, sometimes called the Godhead, the 'God beyond God', or even a 'not-God' (*ein nichtgot*).

The noblest activity of human nature is, according to Eckhart, through 'detachment' from the 'nothingness of creation'—which marks the defect of creatures—to attain the 'nothingness of God', which is no-thing by eminence, or 'Oneness', i.e. the divine source that is free of everything so that it can become in everything. What is particular to his theory of 'Oneness' is that, by the grace of God, man can attain the realm of life before time or creation, a kind of eternal or essential existence, where there is not yet any distinction between life and death whatsoever. This is the realm of life like God, free from causal relations, where one is the cause of oneself. What one wants is what one is, and what one is is what one wants.

2.2 (2) 'Regressive *Kenosis*' of Intellect

'Regressive *kenosis* of intellect' explains a kind of 'regress' traced from 'detachment' to 'Oneness', which is realized in the kenotic spirit of the intellect. In general, Eckhart follows intellectualism, the Dominican school of philosophy of the day. Eckhart's special contribution, besides God's intellect as the ground of God's being (unlike in Aquinas), is his idea that intellect which belongs to God is no-thing in character.[32]

Intellect is no-thing or kenotic in character, i.e. being self-emptying of created images. Eckhart proposes in his book *On Detachment* the idea that the similarity between God and man is a kind of 'uni-formity' (*ein-formigkeit*, *einbilden*).[33] Hence, man ought to be empty of his own form of intellection, to see things from the intellectual

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[31] O. Davies (tr.), *Meister Eckhart, Selected Writings*, 136; 183-184: "God and the Godhead are as different as heaven and earth…God works the deity does not work…God and the Godhead are distinguished by working and not working."

[32] LW V, 40; Maurer (tr.), *Meister Eckhart: Parisian Questions and Prologues*, 45: "that God understands because he exists, but rather he exists because he understands."

[33] Largier (ed.), Meister *Eckhart Werke*, II, 443, 455.

form of God. This idea is based on his idea of God or the Word of God as primarily pure intellect, which is uncreated and has nothing in common with anything, and is certainly not limited to creaturely determinations.

What is particular in Eckhart's thought is his idea that intellect, though having a divine nature, has become, by the grace of God, something 'in' the soul and not 'of' the soul.[34] It is sometimes called an image, spark, or the little castle of the soul. As the 'capacity for God' (*capax dei*), it empowers man to see the divine Oneness. This can be explained by the theory of 'regress'. The divine intellect, which is in the soul, while not satisfied by merely attaining the accidents of God, effectuates a breakthrough into the Godhead, i.e. receives the 'same image' which is Christ Himself (*Col* 1:15) and shares in the Trinitarian life as it is lived by God Himself.

The way regresses to the divine Oneness, which is rich in expression, e.g. Godhead, 'God beyond God', a 'not-God', ground, primitive ground, groundless ground. These terms are like road signs on the mystical route leading to the brightness of the final enlightenment of the divine Oneness. Eckhart distinguishes God from Godhead, saying that the former (God) is acting' and the latter (Godhead) 'not acting'.[35] Although his idea sounds like the traditional distinction between 'God-as-he-is-in-creatures' and 'God-as-he-is-in-himself', yet Eckhart's idea is basically regressive and unitive, similar to the *Dao* described by Daoist philosophy, which does not act, yet leaves nothing undone.[36]

Finally, it is the kenotic spirit of the intellect that effectuates the way from 'detachment' to 'Oneness', which is the primitive ground where God-man are one in relation. This idea gives rise for scholars to give Eckhart's theory the title 'mysticism of the ground'.[37] To illustrate the subject, Eckhart ventures to say in his German Sermon No. 5b: "Here God's ground is my ground, and my ground God's ground, here I live out what is mine, just as God lives out of what is his".[38]

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[34] Blakney (tr.), *Meister Eckhart: A Modern Translation*, Defense, IX, 3,284: "If it should be stated and thought that any part of the soul is uncreated and uncreatable, it would be an error".

[35] Clark (ed. tr.), *Meister Eckhart*, 183-4: "God and the Godhead are as different as heaven and earth…God works, the deity does not work… God and the Godhead are distinguished by working and not working."

[36] *Daodejing*, chapter 37.

[37] Bernard McGinn, *The Mystical Thought of Meister Eckhart*, 44-5.

[38] McGinn, *The Mystical Thought of Meister Eckhart*, 45.

22.2 (3) Religious Dialogue

One could explain Eckhart's attitude towards the contemporary issue of religious dialogue by his theory of the harmony or 'consonance' (*consonantia*) of truth. Since God is the source and foundation of 'consonance' for theology and philosophy, Moses, Christ and the philosophers teach the 'same thing' (*idem*), differing only in their 'mode of knowledge' (*ad modum*): Moses by way of credibility, philosophy by way of probability, Christ Himself is the truth. Accordingly, Moses represents the way of law or the indirect way, philosophy represents the way of reason, Christ represents the way of grace, which is the direct access to truth itself.[39]

Eckhart takes the example of the beginning of St. John's Gospel—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God" (*Jn* 1:1)—to mean that the foundation of that 'consonance' is not something added latter. It exists already before creation or time as the principle of all things. Christ the Word is the foundation of that harmony or 'consonance'.

As to the difference between Eckhart and the church tradition on the problem of (the truth of) God, common opinion estimates that theology and philosophy differ in method as well as in content. Eckhart on the contrary proposes the idea that, theology and philosophy differ only in their 'mode of knowledge', which could mean 'method'. They are the 'same thing' at a deeper level, which could mean their 'contents', are characterized by the 'consonance' of tones, or harmony of truth.

If Greek philosophy equals non-Christian traditions, including different oriental religious traditions, we could find here an Eckhartian evaluation of different religions. Religions are different as to their way of understanding of God or 'modes of knowledge'. They are 'the same thing' when considered regressively, i.e. they resound with the same tone, where all truth sayings on God are set forth within a structure of 'thesis *vs* anti-thesis' or 'saying-unsaying', harmonized finally in the unitive pole of the divine Oneness.

2.2 (4) Influences

What we have found hidden in the theory of Eckhart is a kind of regressive process from 'detachment' to 'Oneness', which is kenotic in character or spirit and actualized in the intellect. Though Meister Eckhart had many adherents during his lifetime, he has also had adversaries who estimate that his 'regress' has already crossed the limit of theism. Hence twenty eight articles of his thought were put into

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[39] *In Ioh*, n. 185, LW III, 154-155.

question and denounced in the papal Bull *In Agro Dominico* of Pope John XXII in 1329.

That the Meister was silenced for almost 700 years, has become a hot topic of discussion world-wide.[40] The newly canonized Pope John Paul II (1978-2005) during one of his speeches in 1985 on spirituality quoted Eckhart's teaching on 'detachment' and 'releasement'.[41] Perhaps it is time to have a new examination and evaluation of his thought.

2.3 *Chiara Lubich vs Meister Eckhart*

2.3 (1) *Kenosis* of Love and *Kenosis* of Intellect

With 'God is love' as their common ground and source of inspiration, one cannot explain the difference between Chiara and Eckhart by a simple opposition between love (Chiara) and intellect (Eckhart). The main difference is that Chiara's theory of love is God-centered, within the monotheistic tradition, whereas Eckhart's theory of intellect is focused on the Godhead, or even the 'God beyond God'.

The most representative expressions of the kenotic theology traced in these two leaders of spirituality are: 'to lose God for God' (Chiara), and 'to pray God to quit God' (Eckhart). These descriptions of the God-man relationship, within a 'regressive' perspective, break through the limits of human language and enter into the depths of the human experience of the spiritual.

Mutual forgetfulness is found in the thought of Chiara. It can be enumerated by the following two points: God forgets himself to be God, in order to love or become man; man forgets his human nature in his response to the love of God. The first point can be illustrated by Chiara's words: "Do you realize He has given us *everything*? What more could have been given us by a God who, for love, seems to have forgotten that He *is* God?" [42] To illustrate the second point, "to lose God for God" seems to be the utmost expression of 'mutual inwardness' or 'unity'. Hence for the sake of a brother in need, one forsakes the God of prayer; for the sake of emptying oneself, to accept the suffering of brother, one forsakes what seems to be a revelation from God. In a word, 'to lose God for God' is a genuine expression of God-seeking and of alertness,

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[40] See Rudolf Otto, *Mysticism East and West* (New York: MacMillan, 1932); Suzuki Daisetsu, *Mysticism Christian and Buddhist* (London: Mandala Books, 1979).

[41] Johannes Paul II, *Der apostolische Stuhl 1985,* 1508.

[42] Lubich, *Unity and Jesus Forsaken*, 51.

helping us to avoid a God imbued with too many defects of human centrism.

As we have mentioned previously what is particular to Eckhart is that, if 'detachment' is the way to God, one must be detached even from this way. This is clear in Eckhart's words: "therefore, I pray God that He may quit me of god".[43] Eckhart seems to propose the same idea as Chiara: to ask the God of true manifestation to deliver him from the god of mere human imagination. A similar idea can also be found in Eckhart's German Sermon No. 52 'On spiritual poverty' (*Mt* 5:3), where he sets forth a threefold meaning of nothingness: to want nothing, to know nothing, to have nothing.[44] It would not be surprising to find the same idea of 'forgetfulness' conveyed in the Bible when Jesus says: "do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing".

Erich Fromm (1900-1980), a famous psychologist, elaborates in his book *To Have or To Be?* the meaning of 'to know nothing' of Eckhart. According to Fromm, there are two modes of existence: the mode of having, and the mode of being. The Bible and Eckhart favour the latter, which is emphasized also by the Buddhist tradition, i.e. the central importance of giving up craving for possessions of any kind. As Fromm says

> He (Eckhart) does not mean that one should forget what one knows, but rather one should forget that one knows. This is to say we should not look at our knowledge as a possession, in which we find security and which gives us a sense of identity… Knowledge should not assume the quality of a dogma, which enslaves us. All this belong to the mode of having. In the mode of being, knowledge is nothing but the penetrating activity of thought—without ever becoming an invitation to stand still in order to find certainty.[45]

To complete the discussion by going over to the issue of 'to want nothing', one may consult Eckhart's comment on the biblical sayings in German Sermon No. 6: "the just live forever, their recompense is with the Lord" (*Wis* 5:16). Once again, Eckhart does not follow the usual way of discussion focused on distributive justice, he regresses intellectually by way of not asking exterior reasons. Only by being 'with the Lord' will the just be satisfied. Common people, including spiritual persons,

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[43] Blakney (tr.), *Meister Eckhart: A Modern Translation*, 231.

[44] Blakney (tr.), *Meister Eckhart: A Modern Translation*, 227: "He is a poor man who wants nothing, knows nothing and has nothing."

[45] Fromm, *To Have or To Be?* 62.

seek some kind of recompense from God, the just yearn only to be 'with the Lord'. God Himself is the recompense for the just. "God Himself is the recompense" can be explained by Eckhart's axiom of love: 'to love God without reason', or "love has no why".[46] Love does not count in terms of material or spiritual gifts. Love can only be repaid by love, by not taking God as a tool or instrument to answer human needs or desires.

'Pray God to quit God' is an alternative way of saying 'God for the sake of God' and 'justice for the sake of justice'. They are descriptions of 'detachment' from a too human view of God. Thus, "Pray God to quit God" reveals the regressive character of intellection, or Eckhart's relation to kenotic theology.

2.3 (2) Community Making (*Kenosis* of Love) and Self-discovery (*Kenosis* of Intellect)

We have so far tried to bring forth the essentials that are involved in the different ways of kenotic theology of Chiara and Eckhart. These theories may seem to be opposed to one another, but these oppositions can be dissolved upon closer examination. Denys Turner, a well-known scholar of Christian mysticism, characterizes the difference between John of the Cross (1542-1591) and Meister Eckhart by 'self-making' and 'self-discovery'.[47] It is our opinion that Turner's distinction can be applied to Chiara and Eckhart with slight variations. Hence there is 'community-making' (*Kenosis* of love) for Chiara, and 'self-discovery' (*Kenosis* of intellect) for Eckhart.

Like the 'self-making' of John of the Cross, Chiara saw 'community-making' as an important feature of the movement:

> The Christian who is freed from all slavery by the Spirit living in him or her, bringing the fruits of "love, joy, peace, patient, endurance kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness" (*Gal* 5:22), becomes, precisely because of this same Spirit, the slave of someone: of his or her neighbor. The Christian lives life paying a perennial debt: that of serving other people." [48]

In other words, the spirit of the movement lies in the members' faithful response to their vocation, living in brotherhood before God or in the making of a harmonious human society. 'Community making'

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[46] Blakney (tr.), *Meister Eckhart: A Modern Translation*, 182: "That we shall love justice for its own sake and love God without any reason for loving."

[47] Turner, *The Darkness of God*, 175 (also chapter three).

[48] Lubich, *Unity and Jesus Forsaken*, 88.

recalls the spirit of the primitive church to be the fire of the world, to cite the words of Jesus: "I come to set fire on the earth" (*Lk* 12:49).

The 'self-discovery' of Eckhart goes back to the pre-existence of man, or to the God-man relationship before creation (time), which is the life within God Himself. In addition, the elements of 'self-making', e.g. the description of the senses and psychological process found in the writings of John of the Cross are rarely attested in the work of Eckhart.

2.3 (3) *Ren* (*Kenosis* of Love) and *Dao* (*Kenosis* of Intellect)

We may also compare the two ways of *Kenosis* with the Chinese philosophical tradition. Chiara's idea resembles the ideal of *Ren* 仁 or 'benevolence' of the Confucians, while Eckhart's idea comes close to the *Dao* 道 of the Daoists. '*Kenosis* of love' in 'community making' promotes the ideal of the unity of mankind, and so resembles the 'benevolence' of Confucianism. [49] '*Kenosis* of intellect' in 'self-discovery' uncovers the oneness of the individual with the universe and comes close to the philosophy of the Daoist.[50] According to John C.H. Wu, there is a Daoist as well as Confucian spirit in the heart of everyone.[51] Confucianism characterized by ontology and Daoism by meta-ontology mutually complete each other without any contradiction.

We suggest that what John Wu says is equally true of the relationship between '*Kenosis* of love' (community making) and '*Kenosis* of intellect' (self-discovery). One may even find traces of these characteristics in the basic teaching of 'compassion' and 'wisdom' in Buddhism. Finally, if true love and pure intellect mutually include one another, true love can be characterized by God losing and the mindlessness or no-thingness of the intellect. Conversely, pure intellect can come together with genuine altruism or 'to love without why', characteristic of self-empting love. All of our arguments are based upon the fundamental belief that God has shown a kenotic spirit of love and intellect in his relation with the world, which we can appreciate and to which we can respond.

3. ADAPTATION AND REFORMATION

Pope Benedict XVI (*r.* 2009-2015) in his famous book

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[49] Confucius, *Analects*, Bk XII, chap. XXII: "Fan Ch'ih asked about benevolence. The master said, 'It is to love all men'."

[50] Watson (tr.), *The Complete Works of Chuang Tzu*, 43 (Ch 2 *Discussion on making all things equal*): "Heaven and earth were born at the same time I was, and ten thousand things are one with me."

[51] Wu, *Joy in Chinese Philosophy* (Taipei: Wisdom Press, 1999), 32.

Introduction to Christianity mentions the paradoxical nature of the church, which is highly significant to our discussion of adaption and reformation.[52] When the Pope elucidates in the same book the last few articles of the Creed: 'the holy, catholic church', he does not hesitate to mention that the Second Vatican Council ventured to the point of speaking no longer merely of the holy Church but of the sinful church. Hence, we have here the idea of the paradoxical figure of the Church, or the 'unholy holiness' of the Church, which is a paradoxical combination of holiness and unholiness. Or it is holiness that radiates as the holiness of Christ, from amidst the Church's sin, as the bestowal of an unmerited gift. What the Pope calls paradoxical is the character of 'regress' theory, which we shall study immediately.

3.1 *The Teaching of the Second Vatican Council*

It is generally acknowledged that the Second Vatican Council represents the peak of openness and reformation of the Catholic Church. Our point of departure is to interpret the documents of the Church in a regressive perspective of the kenotic spirit. If the statements representative of the Council are understood in a regressive and kenotic way dialogue with the world will be made much easier.[53] The Church is described in positive terms:

> For Christ, made present to us in His Body, which is the Church, is the one Mediator and the unique Way of salvation. (*Dogmatic Constitution of the Church 'Lumen Gentium'* LG #14)

> For it is through Christ's Catholic Church alone, which is the all-embracing means of salvation, that the fullness of the means of salvation can be obtained. (*Decree on Ecumenism 'Unitatio Redintegratio'* UR #3)

> She proclaims and must ever proclaim Christ, "the way, the truth, and the life" (*Jn* 14:6), in whom men find the fullness of religious life, and in whom God has reconciled all things to Himself (2 *Cor* 5:18-19). (*Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to non-Christian Religions 'Nostra Aetate'* NA #2).

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[52] Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 338-347.
[53] See Walter M. Abbot, (ed.), *The Documents of Vatican II* (New York: Guild Press, 1966).

The Church is also described negatively (statements with reservations):

> …the church, embracing sinners in her bosom, is at the same time holy and always in need of being purified, and incessantly pursues the path of penance and renewal. (*Dogmatic Constitution of the Church 'Lumen Gentium'* LG #8)

The church…will attain her full perfection only in the glory of heaven. Then will come the time of the restoration of all things (*Acts* 3:21). (*Dogmatic Constitution of the Church 'Lumen Gentium'* LG #48).

> …those who have not yet received the gospel are related in various ways to the People of God. *(Dogmatic Constitution of the Church 'Lumen Gentium'* LG #16).

3.2 *'Regress' Theory and Understanding*

To understand the issue by 'regress' theory, the position of the Church can be understood as propositions with dual aspects or modes of thought: positive statements (thesis) and negative statements (anti-thesis). Both aspects are necessary and complementary to one another by way of interpenetration of opposites (synthesis). Neither one of the aspects can be absorbed in the other or be overlooked. Positive statements are apt to claim something 'to be'; negative statements to claim something 'to be not'. To explain the dual aspect of the teaching of the Second Vatican Council, statements of faith have two aspects: on the one hand (positive statements), "through Christ's Catholic Church alone" (UR 3) and "in whom (Christ) men find the fullness of religious life" (NA 2), on the other hand (negative statements), which are easily neglected, emphasize that the church is "always in need of being purified, and incessantly pursues the path of penance and renewal" (LG 8), and "the Church will attain her perfection only in the glory of heaven" (LG 48). The two poles, positive and negative, find their balance in the 'regress' theory to 'unity' or 'Oneness'. If 'God-losing' or 'God-quitting' are genuine expressions of kenotic love or kenotic intellect, it is the 'self-empting' power of God Himself, that is at work in its realization, even if this is sometimes an almost impossible task.

CONCLUSION

Our paper concludes with a response to face the challenges of the world today, especially the problem of disjunctions among members of

the church. Despite its many advantages, Catholicism may sometimes create difficulties of communication, as can be seen in the four disjunctions observed by Taylor. 'Regress' theory can lead the Church back to her source of holiness, as Pope Benedict XVI said: "holiness is not separation but union, not judgment but redemptive love".[54]

The new Pope Francis (*r* 2013-) urges at times that the church should be governed by love and forgiveness, and the faithful should not be afraid of change. The kenotic theology found in Chiara and Eckhart could be a salutary warning against the pitfall of a too humanistic view of God. Whether it can promote a renaissance of human spirituality, or become an impetus to the renewal of the church, is a matter of our collaboration with the Holy Spirit.

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[54] Ratzinger, *Introduction to Christianity*, 338-347.

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CHAPTER III

KENOSIS, TRANSCENDENCE AND BODY: COMPARING CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM AND CHINESE SPIRITUALITY

VINCENT SHEN

INTRODUCTION

I define mysticism as a direct experience of the ultimate reality, even to the degree of enjoying union with it. In the Christian tradition, God is the ultimate reality and therefore mysticism means a direct experience of God. For Chinese philosophy, the ultimate reality is conceived differently according to different traditions, such as *dao* for Daoism, emptiness or One Mind for Chinese Mahayana Buddhism, and *tian* (Heaven) for Confucianism. While all these traditions are concerned with an intimate relation with the ultimate reality, they involve different concepts of ultimate reality, and their definitions of mysticism are therefore also different.

Even if Christianity and Chinese philosophies/religions have different notions of mysticism in view of their concepts of ultimate reality, however, all of them have a common concern with spirituality. I define spirituality as the practices and inspiring ideas of self-cultivation and human perfection, which deal with the human desire for meaningfulness and its fulfillment through the spiritual enhancement of body/mind that nurtures, vitalizes and fulfills human life and promotes its relation with the ultimate reality. Or, in a much more succinct and eloquent way, as St. Teresa of Avila puts it, "way of perfection (Camino de Perfección)."[1] The basic concern of spirituality is therefore to lead a life of sanity, meaningfulness and perfection by means of self-cultivation and fulfillment of one's being.

Different Christian and Chinese philosophical traditions have their own theories and practices of spirituality. For Christianity, which in the main takes relation with God as crucial to religious experience, the ultimate end of spirituality is union with God. This is to say that for Christianity, spirituality aims at a mystic union with God. While there is also a mystic dimension in China's three teachings, namely Daoism, Chinese Mahayana Buddhism, and Confucianism, Chinese spirituality is

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[1] Teresa of Avila, *Way of Perfection*, in *The Complete Works of St. Theresa of Avila,* Vol. II (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1946), pp.1-186.

more concerned with the nurturing of life (*yangsheng* 養生), cultivation of mind/heart (*xiuxin* 修心) and achievement of virtues (*chengde* 成德). By this I mean that the mystic experience of these three teachings is usually integrated into their spirituality.

From a philosophical point of view, Christian mysticism and Chinese spirituality raise a lot of interesting problems. In this paper I shall focus on and discuss only three major issues: whether they are the pure experience of kenosis (emptiness) and/or silence, or whether this emptiness and/or silence nevertheless contains some kind of dialogue; the representability of the Christian mystic experience of spiritual ecstasy or transcendence and the Chinese experience of spiritual transformation; and the status of the body in Christian mystical experience and Chinese spirituality.

KENOSIS, EMPTINESS AND DIALOGUE

Etymologically speaking, the words "mysticism" or "mystery" come from the Greek verb *musteion*, which means to close one's eyes or mouth. It is therefore related to the experience of silence in darkness. Thus, when in a mystic experience, one's eyes and mouth are closed, and one is totally immersed in darkness and silence, one is alone with the ultimate reality and there will be no dialogue. It is a contemplative experience of emptiness or darkness of the soul without dialogue. However, the question is: whether in mystic experience there is only contemplation exclusive of all forms of dialogue? In both Christian and non-Christian religions, there is always a tendency to view the nature of mystic experience as beyond all forms of language, which may give us a misleading impression that it excludes dialogue.

There is a mystic tradition within Christianity that emphasizes nothingness and emptiness in the use of the term *kenosis*. This may be traced back to St. Paul's theology of *kenosis* in the sense of "emptying of self" in his *Second Letter to the Philippians*:

> *In your minds you must be the same as Jesus Christ:*
> *His state was divine,*
> *yet he did not cling*
> *to his equality with God,*
> *but emptied himself*
> *to assume the condition of a slave,*
> *and became as men are,*
> *he was humble yet,*
> *even to accepting death,*

death on a cross.[2]

I understand the meaning of this text on the level of Christian spirituality, since it is an advice to the Philippians that their minds should be Christ-like, in "becoming human, humble and even to accepting death on a cross." Jesus Christ emptied himself and assumed the condition of a slave to be all of these things. Therefore, I will not enter into the Christological debate of this passage that may suggest different ways of reading. For me, in terms of Christian spirituality, *kenosis* here means the 'self-emptying' of one's subjectivity, that is, one's own will, and becoming entirely receptive to God and the divine will, imitating Christ's humble incarnation.

This concept of "emptying oneself" had much influence on the mysticism of St. Gregory of Nyssa and Evagrius Ponticus, and was further developed by Pseudo-Dionysius, who thought that through *via negativa*, the human mind could transcend all kinds of mental representations and arrive at a state of spiritual silence (*hesychia*), in which the soul could experience a kind of spiritual darkness, in order to enter into communion with God. After Pseudo-Dionysius, Duns Scotus Erigena (810-877AD) even tended to think of God as Nothing, and that if God is Nothing, He is Everything. According to him, God is the Holy Nothing who decides to pass from nothing to being, and thereby everything that exists is the manifestation of his divinity. This line of mysticism was further developed by Meister Eckhart (1260-1327) and John Tauler (1300-1361), both emphasized the abandonment of things and the retreat to the inner core of one's soul to attain a state of spiritual nakedness. John Tauler even went so far as to say that God is void, which means that if we do not arrive at a state of spiritual nakedness, God is void for our experience and understanding.

The *kenosis*, as "emptying of self," is also emphasized by St. Teresa of Avila in the sense of abnegation of one's will for God's will, so that one can retreat to the "centre of our soul" or spirit. [3] She said, "Perhaps when St. Paul says: 'He who is joined to God becomes one spirit with Him,' he is referring to this sovereign Marriage, which presupposes the entrance of His Majesty into the soul by union. And he also says: *Nihil vivere Christus est, mori lucrum* (For to me, to live is Christ; and to die is gain.)…Undoubtedly, if we empty ourselves of all

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[2] St. Paul, *Second Letter to the Philippians*, in *Jerusalem Bible* (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc. 1966), pp. 339-340

[3] Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, in *Complete Works of St. Theresa of Avila*, Vol.II, p.338

that belongs to the creature, depriving ourselves thus for the love of God, He must fill us with Himself."[4] And, again, Teresa in her poems says,

> Since this new death-in-life I've known,
> Estrang'd from self my life has been,
> For now I live a life unseen;
> The Lord has claim'd me as His own.
> My heart I gave Him for His throne,
> Whereon He wrote indelibly:
> *I die because I do not die.*[5]

Thus, this idea of *kenosis* as self-denial for Christ must have gone through St Teresa of Avila to St. John of the Cross (1542-1591). As Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen has well said, "Teresa has strongly insisted upon the need for complete self-abnegation in order that the soul may obtain contemplation, and further (and in this she forestalls St. John of the Cross) that contemplatives must suffer much."[6]

Therefore, *Kenosis* is fundamental to St. John of the Cross' mysticism, which well articulates the mystical experience of "darkness of the soul." In his *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *The Dark Night*, he refers to a song of the soul's happiness "in having passed through the dark night of faith, in nakedness and purgation, to union with its Beloved."[7] In the second stanza of *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* he writes,

> *In darkness, and secure,*
> *By the secret ladder, disguised,*
> *—Ah, the sheer grace!—*
> *In dankness and concealment,*
> *My house being now all still.*[8]

According to the explanation of St. John of the Cross himself, this second stanza "tells in song of the sheer grace that was the soul's in divesting the spirit of all its imperfections and appetites for spiritual

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[4] Ibid. pp.335-336.

[5] Teresa of Avila, *Poems*, in *Complete Works of St. Theresa of Avila*, Vol. III. p.277.

[6] Father Gabriel of St. Mary Magdalen, *St. Teresa of Jesus* (Cork: The Mercier Press, 1949), p.35.

[7] St John of the Cross, *The Collected Works of St John of the Cross*, translated by Kicran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez (Washington, D. C. Institute of Carmelite Studies,1979), p.68

[8] Ibid., p.68

possessions."[9] Thus, it concerns the 'spiritual darkness.' However, even when there is such a spiritual state of nothingness, emptiness and darkness, nevertheless, the soul according to Christianity always keeps in touch and in dialogue with a personal God. In Christianity, God is personal. If we may say there is also a certain aspect of impersonality of God, it is in the sense of God's unfathomableness, and, more properly speaking, in the sense of God's immanence in the lawfulness of the natural world and in His irreducible justice.

In comparison, we can see that there is, in Daoism as well as Buddhism, a spiritual state of nothingness or emptiness, which is the most profound experience the sage can achieve, so much so that it even goes beyond the experience of dialoguing with a personal God. Both Daoism and Buddhism perceive nothingness as the deepest experience. They do not identify the ultimate reality with Being and are also reluctant to recognize a personal God. It seems that for Daoism and Buddhism, the personalization of God is a sign of inferiority, when compared with the rich experience of nothingness or emptiness.[10]

For Buddhism, the experience of emptiness is the essence of enlightenment and liberation. What does "emptiness" mean here? Generally speaking, the concept of "emptiness" means three things in Buddhism. On the ontological level, emptiness means interdependent causation or dependent co-arising and therefore without self-nature*: yuanqi xinkong* (緣起性空); on the spiritual level, emptiness means spiritual freedom in terms of non-attachment, even no attachment to emptiness itself. This is the meaning most cherished by Chinese Mahayana Buddhism. Finally, on the linguistic level, emptiness means that all languages are human constructs and there is no fixed correspondence between a linguistic term and the reality. Even when conceived as the ultimate reality in terms of Buddha's Body, the Dharmakaya or the True Body of Buddha is unspeakable, unfathomable, and unthinkable. Since it is unspeakable, there is nothing to say, and therefore no dialogue. In the state of emptiness, there is no personal God to dialogue with. For Buddhism, the concept of a personal God is inferior to the concept of emptiness as the ultimate reality which consists rather in interdependent causation and emptying emptiness. This explains why there is no dialogue in Buddhist mystic experience. In its development, Chinese Mahayana Buddhism has put emphasis on enlightenment as the self-realization of one's immanent Buddha nature.

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[9] Ibid., p.107.

[10] Please notice the historical fact that, in religious Daoism, there is God in Heaven (*tian di*), similar to the Christian God, although in polytheistic context; and in Indian Buddhism there is also a tendency of divinization of Buddha in the Mahasamghikas.

In such cases there is no need for postulating a personal God with whom one may dialogue.

However, we should take note of the historical fact that, since the beginning of Buddhism in India there has been a tendency to worship Buddha as God. We can trace this tendency back to the origin of the Second Council, where it caused a great schism between the Mahasamghikas (Section of the Great Mass) and Sthaviras (Section of the Elders) by reason of their different interpretations of the status of Buddhahood. For the Sthaviras, the human body of Buddha, just like every other human body, needs food, sleep, clothing and medical care when ill, whereas Buddha's Dharmakaya is perfect. But the Mahasamghikas asserted that Buddha is Omnipresent, Omnipotent and Omniscient and living endlessly and eternally. They also held that Buddha himself is in the Tusita Heaven, and never teaches in the world. He who teaches is merely a Nirmannakaya, a form of Buddha's bodily appearance. [11]

I would say that the belief in an Omnipresent, Omniscient, and Omnipotent Buddha responds to a need among Buddhist believers to dialogue. From the point of view of psychology of religion, there is always a need of dialogue with a transcendent divinity. This applies not only to Indian Buddhism, but also to Chinese Buddhism. When a believer enters into a Buddhist temple to pay homage to a Buddha statue, this may be seen as an act of enlightening one's own Buddha nature in the light of Buddha rather than an act of worshipping Buddha, yet deep in the heart of every Buddhist believer, there is still a need, albeit hidden and implicit, for a dialogue with Buddha.

Now let me discuss the experience of *wu* (non-being) in Daoism. In fact, the experience of non-being in Daoism is much more profound and original than that of being. For Laozi, *dao* is even more ancient than a God, who is the Lord of the realm of beings, resulted from the realization of some possibilities from non-being. Ontologically speaking, *dao* first manifests itself into non-being, which is the realm of possibilities and then, from among all possibilities, some are realized as beings. Anthropologically speaking, non-being represents spiritual freedom and liberation from all attachment, whereas being represents the experience of realization and saturation. In other words, being is there to manifest the traces and limits of realization, whereas non-being manifests the marvelous possibilities. For Laozi, the dialectics between non-being and being leads to the marvelous gate of *dao*, transcending all forms of realization.

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[11]Yin Shun, *A History of Indian Buddhist Thought* (Taipei: Cheng-wen Press: 1988), pp. 61-63

According to Daoism, *dao* transcends all forms of discourse; as Laozi says, "Dao Itself can be told of, but the *dao* that is told of is not the constant *dao*." In a similar spirit, Zhuangzi says, "Dao exists beyond the limit of things, therefore it could not be supported by words and silence."[12] Since *dao* surpasses all forms of discourse and language, and since *dao* is also impersonal, though self-manifesting itself, and is not a personal God, there is no possibility of dialogue with it in language or otherwise.

However, in Daoist philosophy, there are still some dialogical implications. Since a human being can be in union with *dao*, while the human being him/herself is not *dao*, there must in the moment of mystic union be a form of interactive union. Zhuangzi speaks of the spiritual state of "wondering with the Infinite," "dwelling alone calmly and soberly with the divine," and even says "playing with the creator up there and making friends with those surpassing life and death, beginning and ending down here."[13] Could we say that, in all these ways of wondering, dwelling, playing with, and making friends, there is no room for dialogue?

In comparison, Buddhist emptiness and Daoist non-being are similar to Heidegger's *Ab-grund,*[14] the always departing from all foundations. In Heidegger's view, Christian metaphysics is constituted of what he called "onto-theo-logy".[15] On the one hand it affirms being as the ontological foundation of all things, and on the other it affirms God as the theological foundation of being. However, Buddhist emptiness and Daoist non-being are much closer to a dynamic anti-foundationalism. What Buddhists call non-attachment to emptiness, or the emptying of emptiness, is without any foundation and keeps on departing from all foundations, in order to liberate the human spirit from all attachments and render it as free as possible.

However, even if emptiness and non-being are most profound in their potentialities, this still does not mean that there is no God as the perfect Fulfillment of Being. Even if human freedom is so radical that not a single human discourse, not even any philosophical, scientific or theological doctrine, could serve as foundation to the realm of beings, this still does not mean that the realm of beings is foundationless. There must be a certain foundation of beings, although The Foundation Itself is unfathomable and all our efforts to propose any founding discourse are

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[12] *Zhuangzi Jishi*, p. 396. English translation mine.

[13] *Zhuangzi Jishi*, pp.10, 472, 475. English translations mine.

[14] M. Heidegger, *Wozu Dichter*, in *Holzweg* (Frankfurt: V. Klostermann, 1938), p. 248.

[15] M. Heidegger, *Identität une Differenz* (Pfüllingen: Gunther Neske, 1957), pp. 60-63.

in vain, and all resulted discourses should always be deconstructed, so as to keep the human spirit free.

Still, I think it is more human to think of a personal God who knows and loves us and to whom we can pray and therefore converse with. Although there is also a profound meaning in saying that God is impersonal, however, any inflexible and stubborn attachment to this thesis may lead to an insensible religion, in which there is no personal interaction and no dialogue. An impersonalist interpretation of God and *dao* has the danger of giving rise to a inflexible mindset, something similar to what Jesus describes:

> What description can I find for this generation? It is like Children shouting to each other as they sit in the market place: "We played the pipes for you, and you wouldn't dance; we sang dirges, and you wouldn't be mourners." [16]

For us as human beings, to say that God is personal is to say that God does know and love us, and that we may pray and interact with Him in our hearts. However, this does not mean that He knows, loves and listens to our prayers in our *human, too human* way. It is in this sense that we may say that God is not personal but hyper-personal, which does not mean God does not know and love, but that he knows and loves in a hyper-excellent way. Especially in the Christian tradition of mysticism, God is Mystery of all mysteries. In the mystical experience of God, there is emptiness of the soul, or as St. John of the Cross says, darkness of the soul, where contemplative prayer leads to a mysterious, passive phase of experience in which one loses the Self in an overwhelming rhythm of union that is not to be characterized as impersonal at all. In any case, God transcends the distinction between "personal" and "impersonal." God is personal as well as hyper-personal. In this contrast, the human relationship with God could become ever more profound.

Christian mysticism is different from Daoism and Buddhism in that it recognizes not only the impersonal, passive experience of emptiness/non-being, but also the relation of personal love and dialogue between man and God, leading towards their union. If in the mystic experience of Pseudo-Dionysius, the human soul should go beyond all representations to the state of total silence, and until a spiritual concentration, there should be silent waiting, the question is: what is one waiting for at this particular moment? Is one not waiting for communion with God? However, even if a human being can be in union with God, he/she is not God, and thus the union is one without being one. Therefore, we can say that in the mystic experience of silent waiting,

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[16] *Matthew*, 11, 16-17, in *Jerusalem Bible, New Testament*, p.32

there is an interactive communion with God, that is, a dialogue with God.

What I am saying is that even in the mystic experience of silent emptiness/nothingness, there should still be a kind of dialogue, and then, at the moment of communion of love, there must be a dialogue in a fuller sense. The mystic experience of love is commonly affirmed in Christian mysticism, as illustrated by the mystic experiences of St. John, St. Paul, St. Augustine, Meister Echkart, St. Bonaventura, St. John of the Cross, St. Teresa of Avila, etc., all of which feature the importance of communion of love. Here is another verse that reads,

> Take, O Lord, my loving heart;
> See, I yield it to Thee whole,
> With my body, life and soul
> And my nature's every part.
> Sweetest Spouse, my Life, Thou art;
> I have given myself to Thee;
> *What wilt Thou have done with me?*[17]

As expressed in this pious prayer, a loving dialogue is the highest form of mystic experience. In everyday religious life, prayer, singing, petition etc., are also forms of dialogue. Then, in the experience of silence, emptiness and darkness of the soul, there is a waiting for dialogue. And at last, loving dialogue with God is the highest form of mystic communion.

However, mystic experience, if we are privileged to have it, is only a moment of our life. In this sense, it is rare in comparison with our everyday experience. It is always necessary for mystic masters to enter into everyday life and pray, sing, and dialogue. This is to say that mystic experience begins from human everyday experience of dialogue, and achieves its highest form in loving dialogue with the ultimate reality, and, at the end, it has to reenter into dialogue in the everyday life-world.

TRANSCENDENCE, TRANSFORMATION AND REPRESENTABILITY

By "representation" I mean images, impressions, concepts, mental and linguistic constructs, theories, and so on, which represent or express our direct experience of reality. In our ordinary cognitive experience, representations such as image, concept and theory play an important role in our acquisition and assimilation of knowledge. Nevertheless, there are

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[17] Teresa of Avila, *Poems*, in *Complete Works of St. Theresa of Avila*, Vol. III. p.280.

philosophers who argue that we have some kind of non-representational knowledge. These philosophers include Henry Bergson, who posited 'intuition' of *élan vital* and the *durée* of time; Heiddgger, who propounded a concept of truth as manifestation instead of truth as correspondence; Gabriel Marcel, who propounded presence and participation instead of discursive and conceptual knowledge; and among contemporary Chinese philosophers, Mou Zongsan, who puts forward the notion of the human capacity for intellectual intuition (*zhide zhijue* 智的直覺)...etc.

However, even if non-representational knowledge or direct experience of manifestation of the ultimate reality does sometimes occur, I should say that this happens only rarely, and only in some very privileged moments of our life. In everyday life and scientific activities, we are in need of representations. Even if the experience of direct manifestation of Reality in Itself (including the ultimate reality), or its presence and our intuition of it, does happen, these experiences could nevertheless become intelligible and expressible through representation, language or expressible through actions and deeds. That is, even if intuitive and mystic experience is non-representational by nature, it is still compatible with and not exclusive of representations or actions in its expression. In other words, the knowledge that we have in our everyday life and scientific activities is basically representational and discursive in nature and in expression. Even if we could have some forms of knowledge which are non-representational in nature, such as that which is acquired through intuition and the experience of manifestation and presence, these are at least expressible through ways compatible with representations.

Now, my question is: is mystic experience non-representational and non-discursive both in nature and in expression? Does mystic experience not only transcend all representation and discourse by its nature, but is it also unfathomable beyond all language and expression?

First of all, we should say that mystical experience is beyond all representations by its nature. This applies to both the Christian experience of transcendence and the Chinese experience of spiritual transformation. Let's speak first of the Christian experience of transcendence. In his *Confessions*, St. Augustine describes having a mystic experience together with his mother St. Monica, when leaning out of a window looking into the garden. Their souls, all of a sudden, flew over all things, all heavens, before returning to a place deep in their soul. St. Augustine writes, "While we were thus talking of His Wisdom and panting for it, with all the effort of our heart we did for one instant attain to touch it," And after this, "then, almost with a sigh, returned to the sound of our tongue, in which a word has both beginning and ending." And then they said,

> If to any man the tumult of the flesh grew silent, silent the images of earth and sea and air; and if the heavens grew silent, and the very soul grew silent to herself and by not thinking of self mounted beyond self; if all dreams and imagined visions grew silent and every tongue and every sign and whatsoever is transient...they all grew silent, and in their silence He alone spoke to us, not by them but by Himself.[18]

What St. Augustine describes to us here is the fact that, in the mystical experience he shared with his mother, their souls transcended all bodies, earth, sea, air, heavens, dreams and images...all kinds of representations, and for one instant of spiritual concentration, they attained the wisdom of God, who is beyond all representations and languages. But, as soon as human language returned to them, "almost with a sign," they could say out loud that everything was silent, and "He alone spoke to us." In this description of St. Augustine, mystic experience is not exclusive of expression through language.

The Chinese concern with spiritual transformation can be illustrated by the story that Zhuangzi tells right at the beginning of his book the *Zhuangzi*, about the transformation of a fish into a bird, which then flies high up into the sky. Nevertheless, the fish and bird still rely on water and wind. However, an authentic human person could arrive, unconditionally, at a spiritual state on playing in union with the infinite. Zhuangzi writes,

> In the Northern Ocean there is a fish, called the kun, I do not know how many thousand li in size. This kun transforms into a bird, called the peng. Its back is I do not know how many thousands li in breath. When it is moved, it flies, and its wings obscuring the like clouds...
>
>   As to the one who is charioted upon the eternal fitness of Heaven and Earth, driving before him the changing elements as his team to roam through the realm of the Infinite, upon what, then, would such a one have need to depend?[19]

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[18] St. Augustine, *Confessions*, translated by R.S. Pine-Coffin (London: Penguin Classics, 1961), pp.200-201.

[19] *Zhuangzi Jishi* 莊子集釋 (Collected Comentaries of Zhuangzi) (Taiepi: World Books, 1982), pp.1-2, 10; English translation by Lin Yutan, *Chuangtse* (Taipei: World Books, 1957), pp. 8, 10.

By this parable using the metaphors of fish and bird, Zhuangzi is saying that life is a process of transformation, not only from small to large, but also from low (water) to high (air). Thus, the fish *kun*, a being free in the water, evolves into a bird *peng*, a being free in the air. The bird, being stirred to fly, launches itself at a proper time on a great wind to a height of ninety thousand *li*...etc. The metaphor denotes that by making an effort to rise up with force and spirit, human beings can achieve utmost realization. However, the fish's freedom in water and the bird's freedom in air are both dependent on conditions (water and wind) and therefore they enjoy merely conditioned freedom. For Zhuangzi, only when one is playing in union with the Infinite, and following its rhythm of manifestation in the realm of being and becoming, does one have an unconditioned freedom. Thus Zhuangzi sees human beings as born free, with the capacity to enter into a process of spiritual transformation under favorable conditions; by striving for and accumulating favorable conditions, human beings can break through the limit of all conditions and attain an unconditional freedom in the mystic communion with *dao*, the Infinite.

How is it Zhuangzi's "playing with the infinite"? Zhuangzi doesn't say much about it. For him, it is rather an ultimate presupposition that renders our freedom unconditional. By contrast, St. Teresa of Avila has talked much about the love of God who is the Infinite Wisdom, for example, "O my God and my infinite Wisdom, without measure and without bounds, high above the understanding of both of angels and of men! O Love, who lovest me more than I can love myself or conceive of love! Why, Lord, have I the will to desire more than it is in thy will to desire me?"[20] Thus, it is not only in the privileged moment of union, but also by submitting one's will to Him and in Him. The union itself, as a privileged moment of our life, is just another form of unity with the Infinite Wisdom. The more urgent form of union with the Infinite is to give up, in a state of total passivity, our will and follow His Will all the time. She said, "Let us renounce our self-love and self-will, and our attachment to earthly things. Let is practice penance, mortification, obedience, and all the other good works that you know of…Let the silkworm die."[21] And, again, "This is the union which I have desired all my life; it is for this that I continually beseech our Lord. It is this which is the most genuine and the safest."[22]

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[20] Teresa of Avila, *Exclamations of Soul to God,*, in *The Complete Works of St. Theresa of Avila,* Vol. II (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1946), p. 418.

[21] Teresa of Avila, *Interior Castle*, in *The Complete Works of St. Theresa of Avila,* Vol. II (New York: Sheed & Ward, 1946), p.254.

[22] Ibid. p.260.

As I see them, although mystic experiences like the above transcend all representations, they can still be expressed by language or deeds. This is illustrated by what St. Augustine says, "then, almost with a sigh, returned to the sound of our tongue, in which a word has both beginning and ending," and what Zhuangzi talks about such experiences in terms of metaphor, or elsewhere what he terms as *budao zhi dao* 不道之道 (the unsayable saying). As to St. Teresa of Avila, they are expressible not only through what she describes as "death of the silkworm" and the coming out of a "little white butterfly,"[23] but most importantly in all deeds we do for the love of God as well as for the love of our neighbors.

Also, let us remind ourselves that there are religious meditations that use mental imagery, such as the Jewish method of meditating on the mental image of Seven Heavens; the Buddhist meditation on the images of Buddha and bodhisattvas; the Christian visualization of the Virgin Mary, the Sacred Heart, and so on. However, the final intention of such practices is to finally surpass all representations in order to reach the ultimate reality. Those metaphorical, or better symbolic, representations should be seen as a useful tool for coming to a mystic experience of the ultimate reality. Here, I define 'symbolic representation' as a kind of signifying or pointing through a set of present, sensible and thinkable signs on the first level, to a transcendent, invisible and unthinkable ultimate reality on the second level. However, there are still mystics who deny the instrumentalist status of symbolic representations for reaching the ultimate reality.

Can the ultimate reality be reached by using representations? The debate on this question is illustrated by the iconoclastic controversy that arose in the 8th Century AD. In that controversy, those who believed in the use of icons, for example, John of Damascus and Theodore of Studios, defended their belief by the doctrine of incarnation. For them, since God manifested Himself through incarnation and became man, the whole of the material world and the human body are endowed with divine meaning. Jesus Christ himself is the most Holy Icon par excellence. The icon is not God; it represents God in a symbolic way. Icons in the form of paintings and sculptures that decorate the church serve an important purpose in religious rites. Other images of biblical stories, the lives of saints and religious feasts, serve well in religious pedagogy.

On the other side of the debate, the iconoclasts denied the use of images. They maintained that God could never be depicted by icons painted by any artist whosoever, and that the act of adoring icons would

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[23] Ibid., p. 255.

be against the commandment, "Thou should not adore the idols." Today, the meaning of iconoclasm consists not only in the destruction of idolatrous icons, but also in the fact that a representation, though serviceable as a mimesis of reality, is not reality itself. More serious is the fact that the representation itself could become an object of fixation, in other words, one may fix on a particular simulacrum that imitates reality instead of experiencing the reality in itself.[24]

Although images serve an important purpose in religious rites and religious pedagogy, the act of going beyond representations to reach the ultimate reality itself is for the mystics the most essential core of mystic experience. This has been the case in the oriental mystic tradition since St. Gregory of Nissa (330-394 AD), according to whom God revealed Himself to Moses in three phases; first in the light of flaming thorns, second in the clouds, third in the darkness. This can be applied to the human soul that begins by searching for God in the concreteness of things, after which the intellect covers over human sensibility like the cloud, thereby preparing the soul for meditation on the hidden God, and at the very last, the soul, having abandoned everything secular, is surrounded by the divine darkness. St. Gregory called this experience of God in the darkness "theognosis."

Under the influence of St. Gregory, Evagrius Ponticus (346-399) taught that, "When you are praying, do not shape within yourself any image of the deity and do not let your mind be shaped by the impress of any form."[25] For Ponticus, all images, or all representations if you like, possess some materiality, which was unworthy of God immaterial in essence. The individual soul should aim to finally reach the state of union with God, who was the Transcendent Being appearing as pure light; while all images, all impressions, all concepts were material in essence or at least possessed some material traces. Only when the human soul transcended all representations could it be in union with the immaterial God in a spiritual way.

After Evagrius Ponticus, Pseudo-Dionysius also sustained that the soul experiences the divine reality in silence, and this occurs through three phases: first, suspend all sensible and rational representations; second, enter into the unfathomable darkness; finally, enjoy intimate

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[24] In the secular culture of representation today, films, advertising, images, computerized virtual reality etc., are stuffing the mind of younger generations, depriving them of their freedom. The culture of representation today should take the lesson of iconoclasm seriously, and critique of media today should realize this spirit of iconoclasm: to point a way of freedom out of the jungle of images.

[25] Evagrius Ponticus¸ *On Prayer*, p. 67, quoted from Karen Armstrong, *A History of God* (London: Mandarin, 1993), p. 255.

union with God. Pseudo-Dionysius saw the surpassing of representation as a necessary phase for experiencing Divine Reality.

According to these mystic thinkers, it was necessary to surpass representation in order to have mystic union with God. However, to surpass representations does not mean to exclude representations. In fact, pictorial representations, such as icons, and aural representations such as sacred music, may serve as mediation between human everyday experience and mystic experience. In the case of music, when we listen to religious music such as Gregorian chant, or masses and requiem by Mozart, Brahms, Bruckner etc., we are inspired by a passionate longing for the divine sphere, even to the degree of experiencing the Divine Reality at a certain privileged moment. Our profound experience of religious music reveals an element of contrast in our experience of representations. On the one hand, music surpasses concept and language and makes us feel that we are approaching the Reality Itself; on the other hand, music is still an aural representation, which means that the depth of experience evoked by music is not incompatible with representation.

In the same manner, an icon is a pictorial representation that can become the focus of silent meditation and evoke in us a feeling of mystery. As Nicephoras (758-829 AD) claimed, icons are "expressive of the silence of God, exhibiting in themselves the ineffability of a mystery that transcends being. Without ceasing and without speech, they praise the goodness of God in that venerable and thrice-illumined melody of theology."[26] From the cases of music and icon, we can say that symbolic representation may serve as a dynamic mediation from our ordinary experience to mystic experience.

I should add here that the essence of Chinese philosophy, with its spiritual and mystic dimension, depends on this dynamic contrast between unfathomability and representability. Laozi made this clear at the beginning of the *Daodejing* when he said that, "*Dao* could be said, however the said *dao* is not the constant *dao*. Name could be named, however the namable name could not be the constant name."[27] The same holds in Buddhism, where it is said that the experience of Emptiness (*sunyata*), or the One Mind, or the One Pure Mind, is unsayable, unthinkable. However, when Chinese Mahayana Buddhism says that ultimate reality has a transcendent character, still there is a tension created by the dynamic contrast of mystic experience and its possible representations.

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[26] Nicephoras, *Greater Apology for the Holy Images*, p. 70, quoted form Karen Armstrong, *A History of God*, pp. 257-258.

[27] *Laozi Sizhong* 老子四種, (Four Versions of Laozi) (Taipei: Da An Bookstore, 1999), Chapter 1. p. 1. English translation mine.

It is most interesting to observe that Chinese landscape painting emphasizes the philosophical idea that "landscape manifests *dao*." How does *dao* the ultimate reality manifest itself in paintings? Philosophically speaking, there seems to be two procedures: first, *dao* manifests itself into space, and then *qi* appears, giving birth to bodies, life, energy and change, so that finally there is landscape and scenery for human beings to appreciate. Second, Chinese landscape paintings are themselves pictorial representations creatively produced by artists who observe landscape and form sensible representations using their eyes and minds, which, through the transformation of human "spirit," become manifestations of *dao*. It is through *dao* that both painters and viewers of landscape paintings are able to purify their mind in order to experience the representations of *dao* in the landscape as the manifestation of *dao*. In this sense, Chinese landscape paintings somehow serve as representations manifesting the ultimate reality.

Let me wrap up: mystic experience itself should be an experience that surpasses all kinds of representation, given that it is a moment of being in union with the ultimate reality. However, this experience does not exclude representation. On the contrary, either before or after the occurrence of a mystic experience, some representations, especially symbolic ones, could serve as mediation between ordinary experience and mystic experience. The destruction of images and the denial of representations is only a response to the necessity of surpassing representations in pictorial and icon form, but does not signify thereby that mystic experience excludes any representations. Indeed, it is clear that mystic experience is compatible with representations. The human soul may even come to attain the Mysterious Mystery through the dynamic mediation of symbolic representations. The surpassing of representation and the attainment of experience of Reality may be achieved through the use of symbolic representations. Furthermore, the unfathomable richness of mystic experience may even be expressed by using symbolic representations, in a way similar to that of thought concretized in writings. This is the crucial metaphysical and epistemological condition upon which it is possible for us to study mysticism or to say anything about mysticism.

PURIFICATION AND EMBODIMENT

Many mystic Masters affirm the necessity of surpassing human sensibility, even to the extent of asceticism, in such a way that the role of the human body seems to be minimized. In this context, we have to ask: is there any positive role for the human body in the mystic experience?

As I see it, if the spiritual exercise of any religious practice requires a radical negation of body, with all manners of asceticism, even

masochism, it is a token of weakness of one's soul, not a showcase of strength of will, so as to be assured of its own strength by the negation of body, the gift from God as imago Dei. This negation presupposes, on the ontological level, a body-mind dualism; on the moral level, the negation of human desire for a life of sanity; and on the theological level, the misunderstanding of the doctrine of incarnation.

However, even without the above presuppositions, we can still take the surpassing of body and ascetic practice merely as methodological necessity. On this point, St. John of the Cross seems to hold a more balanced view. In *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *The Dark Night,* he envisions a journey through of a darkness of the senses, prior to the darkness of the soul. His first *Stanza* reads as follows,

> *One dark night,*
> *Fired with love's urgent longings,*
> *—Ah. the sheer grace!—*
> *I went out unseen,*
> *My house being now all stilled.*[28]

In *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, St. John of the Cross explains this stanza in the following way:

> In this stanza the soul desires to declare in a summary fashion that it departed on a dark night, attracted by God and enkindled with love for Him alone....All this deprivation is wrought in the purgation of the sense. That is why the poem proclaims that the soul departed when the house was stilled, for the appetites of the sensory part was stilled and asleep in the soul, and the soul was still in them. One is not freed from the suffering and anguish of the appetites until they are tempered and put to sleep.[29]

St. John of the Cross does not hold a position of body-mind dualism, as we can see clearly in these words: "the appetite of the sensory part was stilled and asleep in the soul, and the soul was still in them." Here the metaphor of 'sleeping' gives us an impression of body-soul harmony, although not without some tension between the two. The necessity for purgation of the senses and surpassing of the body constitute merely a methodological necessity, in order for the human

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[28] St. John of the Cross, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, translated by Kicran Kavanaugh O.C.D. And Otilio Rodriguez O.C.D. (Washington D.C.: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1979), p. 68

[29] Ibid., p. 74

soul to be freed from sufferings and from the anguish of unfulfilled appetite, not at all an ontological position. In this mystic experience, there is no discrimination of a detestable body from a pure soul.

On this point, Daoist spirituality is very similar. On the one hand, it emphasizes the bracketing together of all our kinesthetic and perceptual activities, intellectual reasoning and conceptualization, social norms and values; but, on the other hand, it is a spiritual practice beginning with the control of body posture and breathing, in order to diminish one's desire and to prepare for an intuition of the essence of all things. In chapter 10 of the *Daodejing*, Laozi clearly describes the procedure leading towards the intuition of essence.

Can you keep your ying(營) (spiritual soul) and po(魄) (bodily soul) united in embracing the One without letting them be separated?

Can you concentrate your qi(氣) (vital force) and reach the highest degree of suppleness like an infant?

Can you clean and purify your speculative mirror so it becomes spotless?

Can you love the people and govern the state without resorting to actions?

Can you play the role of the female in serving to the opening and closing of the Gate of Heaven?

When you understand and penetrate into the four great realms of beings, can you know them not intellectually? [16]

This text describes Daoist spiritual practice step by step. Let me analyze these steps in the following way:

1. First, one has to keep one's spiritual soul and bodily soul united in embracing the One. Here, *ying* (營) means linguistically the same as *hun* (魂) which is the spiritual soul, whereas *po* (魄) means bodily soul that, when tranquil, assures and preserves external human shape. In our daily movements, these two souls function separately, which is why according to Laozi, one has to keep them united in embracing the One, which is *dao*.

2. Second, one has to regulate one's breathing and concentrate on one's vital life-force. Through breathing most naturally, one purifies one's spirit of all disturbing mental representations and false consciousness, and, more positively, one returns to the original state of

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[16] *Laozi Sizhong*., Ch.10, p. 7. English translation mine.

one's vital life-force and becomes as supple as an infant, which is a metaphor for the original state of human existence.

3. Third, one should cleanse and purify one's own consciousness, using a method similar to that of phenomenological reduction, so as to render the human spirit as clear and spotless as a mystic mirror. Through this mystic mirror one can have intuition into the nature of all things by letting them be themselves. Intuition of essence is therefore the ultimate outcome of this act of "cleansing and purifying." However, for Laozi, to have intuition of the essence of all things is not for the purpose of determining them in science. Instead, it is to see them returning to their origin and becoming thereby authentically themselves. Thus the concept is different from Husserl's *Wessenschau*.[30]

4. After having accomplished the three steps of self-cultivation above, one may proceed to the matters of loving the people and governing the state. The principle for these is given here as the principle of no-action, which means no particular actions disturbing people but nevertheless leaving nothing undone.

5. Then we reach the higher level of serving Heaven. Here Laozi proposes the principle of femininity, passivity and weakness. In Chapter 40 of the *Daodejing,* Laozi says, "Reversion is the action of *dao.* Weakness is the function of *dao.*" This means that one should passively follow the way of *dao* and act in total accordance with its demand,

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[30] For me, even if Laozi uses a method similar to Husserl's phenomenological reduction, and also obtains the result of *Wesenschau*, the *Wesenschau* of Laozi is still quite different from that of Husserl. The *Wesenschau* of Husserl consists of a fulfilling gaze on the *eidos* of things by an impartial pure ego. On the other hand, Laozi has already transcended the self-limit of human subjectivity and therefore transcended the presupposition of a pure ego and gone beyond the limits of any philosophy of subjectivity. Also, it is not a fulfilling gaze on the essence of things. His *Wesenschau* is resulted from an attitude of letting things be the way they are. It lets things manifest themselves in their own ways. What Laozi proposes here is to let *dao* itself manifest itself in the way itself manifests itself. For Laozi, this is the real function of the "mystic mirror." The "mystic mirror" achieves its highest function only when it renders manifest Dao or the Being of things in themselves. Laozi's Wesenschau is therefore resulted from *Seinslassen*, letting Being be Itself, and not as in Husserl's case, according to which Wesenschau is resulted from a dominating regard of the essence of things by our subjectivity. This reminds us of what Laozi says: "To let the being of body manifest itself, that is the way we intuit the essence of body. To let the being of family manifest itself, that is the way we intuit the essence of family. To let the community manifest its own being, that is the way we intuit the essence of community. To let the being of country manifest itself, that is the way we intuit the essence of country. Let the being of all-under-heaven manifest themselves, that is the way we intuit the essence of all-under-heaven."

without any strong will of one's own, and without any desire of domination. Let *dao* be Itself. Here we encounter the most profound mystic experience of Daoism: to follow *dao* with the highest degree of passivity, to let the rhythm of *dao* pour into and fill up one's own mind, and to let one's mind be brought away by it. That is to say, to abandon one's tiny self in the rhythmic, spontaneous movement of the Great *dao*.

Zhuangzi speaks about something similar when he says that the Daoist life praxis begins from a spontaneous way of deep breathing, to the point of minimizing desire and its unconscious expressions through dreams, care or gluttony. Zhuangzi said,

> The true men of old slept without dreaming, and woke up without worries...For true men draw breathes from their heels; the vulgar only from their throats. Out og the crooked, words are retched like vomit. When man's attachments are deep, their divine endowments are shallow.[31]

We can interpret this text by reference to Freudian psychoanalysis. For Freud, dreaming was a veiled expression of one's unconscious desires. For Zhuangzi, indulgence of one's desires would render shallow one's sensitivity to the workings of Heaven. However, by a profound and natural way of breathing, as deep as breathing with one's heels—this is a metaphorical way of saying the *daoist* method of *dazhoutian* (Great Heavenly Circle) breathing—one may minimize one's desire to the point of sleeping without dreaming, waking without daily care and eating without indulging.

As seen from the above, the surpassing of bodily and sensorial functions has only a methodological status, without any necessity to refer to an ontological dualism. If the surpassing of bodily sensations and movement could be used as a method, the return to an affirmation of bodily movement could also be seen as a method. This may also be seen in Christianity in the tradition of body spirituality that began with Evagrius Ponticus. In the 5th Century, Diodocius taught a sort of Christian Yoga, using the method of concentration through the control of breathing: as they inhaled, the hasychasts would pray, "Jesus Christ, Son of God." Then, when they exhaled, they would say the words, "Have mercy upon us."

This kind of Christian Yoga is also a spirituality that unifies body and mind, causing the mystics to feel a sense of integral human and divine union. In regard to this, Maximum the Confessor said, "The

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[31] *Zhuangzi Jishi*, p. 103. English translation by Lin Yutang, *Zhuangtzu,* p. 34

whole man should become God, deified by God-become-man, becoming whole man, soul and body, by nature and becoming whole God, soul and body, by grace."[32] This is indeed a body-mind spirituality bringing out the divinity in the human. It signifies that there is a certain divine nature within human beings, by which they may become "as perfect as their Father in Heaven." This was affirmed by Jesus when he said, "Is it not written in your Law: 'I said, you are gods?' So the Law uses the word 'gods' of those to whom the word of God was addressed, and scripture cannot be rejected."[33] The divinity within human beings is therefore related ontologically to God. It may be seen as the inner light, the locus of enlightenment, of human existence; just as in the case of Buddhism, the Buddha nature of each human and sentient being is the source of his/her enlightenment. The final end of this spirituality is the sanctification or deification, not the negation, of the human body. Its paradigm is Jesus' transfiguration on the Mount of Tabor.

Thus, we can say that the negation of body only serves as a method, and that the positive use of body movement can also serve as a method for obtaining mystic experience. This possibility brings to light the ontological meaning of body-mind unity.

CONCLUSION

From the above philosophical reflections on comparing Christian mysticism and Chinese spirituality, we can clearly see that both traditions show a common concern with experience of the ultimate reality. They share the idea that mystic experience, in its emptiness and darkness, is not a totally silent experience without any possibility of dialogue. On the contrary, mystic experience begins with dialogue, climaxes in loving dialogue and should return finally to dialogue. Moreover, mystic experience can be achieved by surpassing all representations, but they do not exclude representations, which may make ultimate reality accessible to human understanding. For both traditions, symbolic representations not only prepare for the advent of mystic experience, but they also express this experience and thereby

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[32] Maximum the Confessor, *Ambiguorum Liber,* in *Patrlogia cursus completus, series graeca*, Vol. 91 (Paris: Migne, 1863), p. 1088.

[33]*John*, 10, 34-35 in *Jerusalem Bible*, *New Testament*, p.170, In *Psalms*, 82:6, it reads, "I once said, 'You too are gods, son of the Most High, all of you.'" *Jerusalem Bible*, *Old Testament*, p.867. Here the term "gods" in the context of *Psalms* may have other connotations. Thus we should be more careful about its interpretation, and notice the fact that the term "gods" meant by *Psalms* 82:6 could be interpreted as other Canaanite pagan gods. Nevertheless, in *John*, 10, 34-35, Jesus' words "You are all gods" meant human beings are also gods, because of the fact that they are children of God.

leave some traces behind that other people to come may follow. Also, mystic experience needs not deny the body and presupposes a dualistic body/mind opposition. The negation of the body has only the status of a method, just as the positive use of the body is a method when it performs meditation and rites.

My analysis attempts to make mysticism and spirituality compatible with reason in a broad sense: they become reasonable human practices and experiences that are not in the least irrational. Therefore, both Christian mysticism and Chinese spirituality are deeply related to our ordinary human life. They fulfill reason rather than deny reason. Both traditions work to promote the human spirit from within ordinary human life, and at the end they should return to the world of everyday life. Under the inspiration of both traditions, that is, Christian and Chinese, mystic experience and spiritual practices should open up new horizons, create new forms of human self-understanding in the life world and take the deepening and sanctification of humanity as their final end.

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CHAPTER IV

LOGOS AND TAO: THE JOHANNINE JESUS
AND A TAOIST SAGE

JOSEPH H. WONG, OSB Cam

The similarity between the Tao of Lao Tzu and the Logos of the Prologue of John's Gospel has long attracted the attention of some scholars. For example, Dr. John C.H. Wu, rendered the term "Logos" as "Tao" in his translation of John's Gospel into Chinese. The opening sentence of his translation of the Prologue reads, "In the beginning was Tao."

The meaning of Tao, a central concept in Chinese philosophy, has developed over time. While in Confucianism Tao was employed to signify the ways of heaven or humans, with Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu, Tao acquired a metaphysical meaning. Tao came to be seen as *the ultimate reality* as well as *the first principle underlying form, substance, being, and change.*[1] Lao Tzu's Tao bears two complementary functions—cosmological and anthropological. The cosmological function refers to Tao's role in the coming to be and movement of the universe, while its anthropological function means that Tao is the norm for the behavior of humans, in guiding them toward sagehood. The two functions are closely related and equally discussed in the *Lao-tzu* or *Tao-te ching.*

The term *logos*, with its twofold meaning of "reason" and "speech", is similarly a seminal concept in Greek philosophy. Moreover, in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, *logos* is employed to render the Hebrew term *dābār*.[2] Thus the Logos of John's Prologue continues the biblical tradition of the term, but some influence from Greek philosophy is probably present as well. Like Lao Tzu's Tao, John's Logos plays the same twofold roles: cosmological and

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[1] For a concise introduction to Taoism, philosophical as well as religious, see Liu Xiaogan, "Taoism," in Arvind Sharma (ed.), *Our Religions* (San Francisco: Harper, 1993), 229-289.

[2] The Hebrew word *dābār* means more than "spoken word"; it also means "event" and "action." Thus the "word of God" means the dynamic fullness of divine revelation. Cf. Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John* (=Anchor Bible 29) (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), 520-521.

anthropological (or soteriological).[3] In the Prologue, however, the cosmological role of the Logos is stated only briefly (Jn 1:3,10). The Prologue focuses, rather, on the saving role of the Logos, and the Gospel itself tells the story of Jesus, the Logos incarnate, by focusing almost entirely on his soteriological function of revealing God to humans and leading them to God. Although the term "Logos" itself, as used in the Prologue, disappears in the Gospel proper, the idea of Jesus as the Logos incarnate provides the key for understanding John's Gospel.

Even though Lao Tzu discusses the metaphysical meaning of Tao, his real concern is with its anthropological function in guiding humans to become sages. The special scope of my paper is to present the Johannine Jesus from the perspective of a Taoist sage in order to reveal some of the Taoist features on the face of Jesus. As will be seen, the essential characteristics of a Taoist sage—such as being one with Tao, returning to the root, *wu-wei* or non-action, reversal and weakness—are all reflected in the person of the Johannine Jesus. However, since Jesus is the Logos incarnate and the Taoist sage is the embodiment of Tao, before comparing Jesus and the sage it will be necessary to reflect on the meaning of the Logos and Tao, and compare the two concepts. Thus my paper will present a study comparing the concepts of Logos and Tao; a portrait of a Taoist sage; and an image of the Johannine Jesus with reference to a Taoist sage.

In order to introduce the Christian message to the people living in Asia, it is important to portray the Asian faces of Jesus. One effective way of doing so is to present the doctrine on Jesus Christ in the context of Asian cultures.[4] Much has been written in the dialogue between Christianity and various traditions of Hinduism and Buddhism. There are also a considerable number of works comparing Confucianism with Christian doctrine. A serious dialogue between Taoism and Christianity is still at its early stages. It is the conviction of the present writer that this dialogue will provide a fertile terrain for inculturation.[5]

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[3] The cosmological function of the Logos refers to its role in the creation. By anthropological or soteriological function is meant the Logos' role in leading humans to God.

[4] Cf. R.S. Sugirtharajah (ed.), *Asian Faces of Jesus* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis, 1993).

[5] Cf. Roman Malek, "Faces and Images of Jesus Christ in Chinese Context. Introduction," in Idem (ed.), *The Chinese Face of Jesus Christ* (=Monumenta Serica MS 50) vol. 1 (Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 2002), 32.

1. JOHN'S LOGOS AND LAO TZU'S TAO

1.1 Logos of the Johannine Prologue: Background and Meaning

The Johannine Prologue is well attested to have connections with various religious currents of the ancient world, both Jewish and Greek. And it is commonly held that the Logos Hymn was originally an early Christian Hymn, integrated and reinterpreted by John so as to form a Prologue to his Gospel. This Logos Hymn is clearly rooted in the Jewish wisdom tradition, as there are many conceptual and verbal parallels between the Hymn and texts from that tradition.[6] Yet one also finds significant elements in the Hymn that cannot be explained only by reference to Jewish wisdom literature. The first of these elements is the Hymn's central concept: the Logos. In Jewish wisdom literature the figure of "wisdom" (*sophia*) was sometimes identified with the "word" (*logos*), but was never displaced by it. In addition, the functions of the Logos in the Prologue, as will be pointed out, go beyond what is found in the Jewish wisdom tradition. The most likely thought-world for the Hymn of the Prologue, according to Thomas Tobin, is that of Hellenistic Judaism, especially that which is represented by Philo of Alexandria (ca. 20 BC-AD 50),[7] even if Jewish wisdom literature should be seen as the common source for both Philo and the Logos Hymn.[8]

Like Philo, the author of the Hymn is clearly commenting on the story of creation in Genesis. In fact, the Hymn begins with the same words as Gn 1:1: "*En arche*." Both Philo and John describe the Logos as being present with God from the beginning. For Philo, the Logos is the intermediate reality between God and the universe, which fits into the pattern of the intermediate figures found in most Middle Platonic systems.[9] Philo's Logos is called the "instrument" (*organon*) "with which" (*di'hou*) God created the universe.[10] The constant usage of "*di'hou*" in Philo is of great significance, as it goes beyond the Jewish

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[6] Cf. C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1953), 274-275; Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 520-523; Thomas H. Tobin, "Logos," in David Freedman (ed.), *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 4 (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 353-354.

[7] Thomas H. Tobin, "The Prologue of John and Hellenistic Jewish Speculation," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 52 (1990) 255-256. Cf. Dodd, *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 276-278.

[8] Cf. Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 520.

[9] Cf. John Dillon, *The Middle Platonists: A Study of Platonism 80 B.C. to A.D. 220* (London: Duckworth, 1977), 45-49.

[10] *De Cherubim* 35,127. The references to Philo in this paper can be found in *Philo*, vol. I-X, tr. F.G. Colson and G.H. Whitaker (Cambridge MA: Harvard University, 1929-1962).

wisdom tradition. Although the word of the Lord in wisdom literature is associated with God's act of creation and his maintenance of cosmic order (cf. Ps 33:6; Sir 39:17, 31; Wis 9:1-2), the term refers to God's word of command and is not referring to some cosmic principle of order as such. Moreover, the term "word" in these biblical texts always appears in the instrumental dative (*to logo*); one does not find the expression "through the word" (*dia tou logou*).[11] It is at this point that Philo's Hellenistic Jewish interpretation sheds light on the Hymn of the Prologue. Like Philo, the author of the Hymn uses the phrase "through him" (*di'autou*) to describe the Logos' role in the creation of the world (Jn 1:3, 10). Thus both Philo and the Hymn present the Logos as the intermediate reality through which the world was made.[12]

Along with the epithet "instrument," Philo also refers to the Logos as God's "image" (*eikon*), which serves as the "pattern" (*paradeigma*) for the creation of the universe.[13] The role of the Logos as the *instrument of creation* consists especially in being the pattern, or exemplary cause, of the world. Philo, who is familiar with the Stoic distinction of "*logos endiathetos*" (unuttered thought) and "*logos prophorikos*" (uttered thought), preserves the twofold meaning of the term "*logos*" as "thought" and "speech." For Philo, the Logos is in effect "the thought of God coming to expression, first in the world of ideas and then in the world of sense perception."[14]

The Logos Hymn, on the other hand, simply states that the world was made through him (the Logos), without clarifying the specific role of the Logos in creation. C.H. Dodd believes that, due to its affinity to Jewish wisdom literature and to Hellenistic Judaism, the role of the Johannine Logos in creation consists in being both "the power through which" and "the pattern by which" the world was created.[15] First of all, the Logos carries the meaning of the word of the Lord in the Old Testament, through whose power all things came to be. But the Logos of the Prologue has also a meaning similar to that in Stoicism as modified by Philo. It is "the rational principle in the universe, its meaning, plan or

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[11] Cf. Tobin, "Prologue of John," 254.

[12] The expression, "*through whom*" God created the world, is also found in some other NT texts, such as 1Cor 8:6; Heb 1:2. It means that God created the world through some intermediate figure, that is, Christ.

[13] *De Opificio Mundi* 6, 24-25; *Legum Allegoriae* III 31, 95-96; *Quis Rerum Divinarum Heres* 48, 230-231.

[14] Cf. James D.G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation*, 2nd ed. (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 223-224.

[15] Dodd, *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 285.

purpose," conceived in the mind of God and becoming immanent in the world.[16]

Moreover, both Philo and John view the Logos as an agent of revelation. For Philo, God in himself is unknowable; the Logos is what is knowable of God. Whereas Philo is concerned with the revelatory role of the Logos in creation and through the Law of Moses, John's Prologue stresses the revelatory role of the Logos incarnate:

> And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we
> have seen his glory, the glory as of the Father's only Son.
> (Jn 1:14)

The term "glory" (*doxa*) refers to God's presence and manifestation. What is peculiar to John is that God's glory is manifested not in a human-like form, but in a historical person.[17] To emphasize his role of revelation the Prologue assigns a new name to the Word incarnate: the Father's only begotten Son (*monogenes*). The incarnate Word has the specific function of revealing his filial relationship with the Father so that humans can participate in this relationship.[18] The idea of revelation is clearly brought forth in the concluding verse of the Prologue: "No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's bosom, who has made him known" (Jn 1:18). John reaffirms the long-standing Jewish biblical conviction, which can be traced back to Moses (Ex 33:23), that no one on earth can see God.[19] Nonetheless, the Logos incarnate, the only Son of the Father made human, has revealed the Father to the world and is able to make humans children of God: "But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God" (Jn 1:12).[20] In a similar way

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[16] *Ibid.*, 280. However, as M.E. Boismard points out, the role of the word of God as creator in the Old Testament is complex and may well imply the above twofold aspect; cf. *St. John's Prologue* (Westminster MD: Newman, 1957), 103-104.

[17] Cf. Jey J. Kanagaraj, *'Mysticism' in the Gospel of John: An Inquiry into its Background* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 221. The idea of *doxa* will be further discussed below.

[18] Cf. J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010, 80-81; also D. Moody Smith, *The Theology of the Gospel of John* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 2007), 101.

[19] This conviction is repeated several times in the Gospel proper (cf. 5:37; 6:46).

[20] In John's Gospel believers are not called "sons of God" (*huioi tou theou*), but "children of God" (*tekna tou theou*). Only Jesus is "the Son of God." Cf. Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (=Sacra Pagina 4) (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1998), 44.

Philo gives the title "Son" to the Logos and emphasizes his role of mediating his filial relationship with God to others. He calls the Logos God's "first-born" (*protogonos*) or the "eldest son" of the Father. Humans should try to become children of the Logos in order to be called children of God.[21]

The ontological status of the Logos, however, is revealed differently in Philo's writings and in John's Prologue. The "wisdom" in Jewish wisdom literature was on the way to personification, that is, in the process of acquiring a hypostatic or personal existence, but remained a divine attribute as the mind of God. Philo, with his theory of the "double creation of man," further advanced the process of personification of wisdom/word, which nevertheless continued to be an idea in the mind of God.[22] The process found its completion in John's Prologue, where the Logos has fully acquired a hypostatic status from eternity. This status became manifest in the Incarnation when the Logos was made flesh and became a concrete historical person—Jesus Christ.[23] In the light of the Incarnation, the opening statement of the Prologue becomes a clear witness to the pre-existence of the Logos: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This statement is matched by the concluding verse of the Prologue: "It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's bosom, who has made him known". These two verses bear witness to the divine and personal status of the Logos, both from eternity and subsequent to the Incarnation.[24] In the entire New Testament one finds in the Johannine Prologue the most explicit witness to the doctrine of the pre-existence and the Incarnation of the Logos.[25]

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[21] *De Confusione Linguarum* 28, 146-147.

[22] According to Philo, the man created after the image of God in Gn 1:27 is a heavenly man who is incorporeal and is the pattern for the creation of the earthly man in Gn 2:7. Philo identifies the Logos with the heavenly man. Cf. Thomas H. Tobin, *The Creation of Man: Philo and the History of Interpretation* (Washington, DC: CBAA, 1983), 58.

[23] While admitting some similarities between Philo's Logos doctrine and John' s Prologue, J. Kanagaraj observes that John's statement, "the Word became flesh," lacks any true parallel in pre-Christian thought. In Philo, the Logos never descends from the "intelligible world" into the "sensible world," but humans must move into the "intelligible world" to encounter the Logos. Cf. Kanagaraj, *'Mysticism' in the Gospel of John*, 296-297.

[24] Cf. Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 50; 91-92.

[25] Cf. Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 213-250, esp. 239. However, I do not agree with the author's reluctance in admitting any explicit testimony on Christ's pre-existence by Paul or the rest of the New Testament.

1.2 Tao of Lao Tzu: Wu (Non-Being) and Yu (Being), Tao and Te

Tao is the central concept in the *Tao-te ching*,—which means literally the *Book of Tao and Its Power*. The exact meaning of Lao Tzu's Tao is elusive and scholars' opinions are divided on the subject. However, there is a certain consensus about the main aspects of its meaning, which can be summed up as follows: Tao is the ultimate reality behind the universe; it is, the law governing the movements of the world; it is, the norm guiding the behavior of humans.[26] While the last aspect refers to the anthropological function of Tao, the first two meanings are related to Tao's cosmological role, which will be discussed in this section. The cosmological function of Tao is based on the important assumption that for the universe to have come into being there must exist an all-embracing first principle, which is called Tao. Just as Philo and John present the Logos as the intermediate figure between the transcendent God and the visible world, Lao Tzu likewise is concerned with the problem of mediation between the hidden Tao and its manifestation in the universe.

In a chapter which is of great importance for its cosmological statement, the *Lao-tzu* states:

> There is something undifferentiated and yet complete, which existed before heaven and earth. Soundless and formless, it stands alone and does not change. It is all pervading and unfailing. It may be considered the mother of heaven and earth. I do not know its name; I call it Tao. If forced to give it a name, I shall call it Great.[27]

The Taoist cosmology is outlined here, simply but clearly. The opening verse affirms the existence of something undifferentiated, or integratedly formed (*hun ch'eng*). Standing alone, it remains unchanging,

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[26] Cf. Ch'en Ku-ying, *Lao-tzu hsin-chu hsin-yi* (A Contemporary Commentary and Translation of Lao-Tzu) (Taipei: Shang-wu, 1997), 2; For a critical survey of the different meanings of Tao in the interpretations of contemporary Chinese scholars see Liu Xiaogan, *Lao Tzu* (Taipei: Tung-ta, 1997), 184-198.

[27] *Tao-te ching*, 25. The translations of the *Tao-te ching* in this paper are mine, after consulting several recent translations including: Wing-tsit Chan, *The Way of Lao Tzu (Tao-te ching)* (New York: Macmillan, 1963); John C.H. Wu, *Lao Tzu: Tao Teh Ching* (Boston: Shambhala, 1989); Ellen M. Chen, *The Tao Te Ching: A New Translation with Commentary* (New York: Paragon House, 1989); Robert G. Henricks, *Lao-Tzu Te-Tao Ching: A New Translation Based on the Recently Discovered Ma-Wang-Tui Texts* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1989).

while operating everywhere. Not only does it exist before heaven and earth, it is also their cause. For this reason it can be considered "the mother of heaven and earth (*tien ti mu*)."[28] Lao Tzu confesses that he does not know its name. As Wang Pi (AD 226-249) explains, the reason why Lao Tzu styles it "Tao," is because all things come from it and follow after it. Among all things describable, it is the greatest.[29] The chapter ends with the following statement: "Humans follow the ways of the earth. The earth follows the ways of heaven; heaven follows the ways of Tao. Tao follows its own ways." Therefore, Tao is not only the origin of heaven and earth; it is also the model of all things.

The twofold aspect of Tao, hidden and manifest, is expressed by Lao Tzu with two different terms: *wu* (non-being) and *yu* (being).[30] The idea of Tao as unspeakable, at once *wu* and *yu*, is underscored in the opening chapter of the *Tao-te ching*, commonly recognized as its most important chapter presenting an outline of the whole book.[31] The chapter begins:

> The Tao that can be told of is not the constant Tao; the name that can be named is not the constant name. Non-being (*wu*) is the name for the origin of heaven and earth; being (*yu*) is the name for the mother of ten thousand things.

In its textual history, one finds two different interpretations of the last sentence, depending on two different ways of punctuation. Following the more ancient reading, as proposed by Wang Pi, the sentence would read, "The nameless (*wu-ming*) is the origin of heaven and earth; the named (*yu-ming*) is the mother of ten thousand things." Wang An-shih (AD 1021-1086) was the first to put a comma after *wu* and *yu*, separating them from the character *ming* (name), which then becomes a verb. My translation follows the reading of Wang An-shih, which has been largely adopted by contemporary scholars: "Non-being (*wu*) names the origin of heaven and earth; being (*yu*) names the mother

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[28] Based on the recently discovered Ma-wang-tui texts, it should be "*tien ti mu*" instead of "*tien hsia mu*"; cf. Henricks, *Lao-Tzu Te-Tao Ching*, p. 237.

[29] Cr. Paul J. Lin, *A Translation of Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching and Wang Pi's Commentary* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1977), 46.

[30] The centrality of this pair of concepts in the *Lao-tzu* has been pointed out by Chuang Tzu, who describes Lao Tzu as "building his system upon the principle of eternal non-being (*wu*) and eternal being (*yu*), centering it upon the idea of the great One" (*Chuang-tzu*, ch. 33); cf. Fung Yu-lan, *A History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. I (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1952), 173.

[31] Chapter one has a similar role in the *Lao-tzu* which can be compared to that of the Prologue to John's Gospel.

of ten thousand things."[32] The two different interpretations, however, are not so far apart as they might seem to be. For in his commentary, Wang Pi explains the "nameless" and the "named" precisely in terms of "non-being" and "being".[33]

Wu and *yu* are the two aspects of one and the same Tao. While *wu* represents the hidden, inner nature of Tao, *yu* points to its outer aspect or manifestation. Inasmuch as it is undifferentiated, formless and nameless, Tao is designated as "non-being" (*wu*).[34] Inasmuch as it is mother to all things, it is full of vital force and creativity and should be called "being" (*yu*). As Fung Yu-lan observes, *wu* refers to the essence of Tao; *yu* to its function or manifestation.[35]

The order of Tao manifesting itself in the universe is described in the succinct cosmogony in chapter 40 of the *Lao-tzu*: "All things under heaven are born of being (*yu*); being (*yu*) is born of non-being (*wu*)." Wang Pi remarks, "The things of this world have life by virtue of being; the origin of being is rooted in non-being. If fullness of being is to be attained, one must return to non-being."[36]

While *wu* and *yu* represent the hidden and manifest aspects of Tao, the terms of Tao and *te* are employed to indicate another twofold character of Tao. Tao is at once transcendent and immanent. The transcendent character of Tao can be seen in the description given in chapter 25 of the *Lao-tzu* quoted above. But the transcendent Tao is also inherent in all things, at once manifesting and concealing itself in them. To express the immanent aspect of Tao, Lao Tzu employs the term *te,* which can be translated as "virtue" or "power," and is discussed in the second half of the *Tao-te ching*. *Te* is the manifestation of Tao through its presence and operation in particular things. For this reason, *te* is

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[32] Cf. Kao Heng, *Lao-tzu cheng-ku* (Critical Edition and Commentary of the *Lao-tzu*) (Taipei: Hsin-wen-feng, 1981), 2. For the arguments in favor of this interpretation see Ch'en Ku-ying, *op. cit.*, 49.

[33] Wang Pi comments: "All being originates from non-being. Therefore, while formless and unnamed, it is the beginning of all things. While formed and named, it grows, cultivates, protects, and disciplines, becoming the mother" (Lin, *Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching and Wang Pi's Commentary*, 3).

[34] The Chinese character for *wu* originally meant "abundance" or "fullness": later it came to mean "nothing." Lao Tzu combined its twofold sense to mean the formless, undifferentiated fullness, which is the source of all things.

[35] Cf. Fung Yu-lan, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. I, 178.

[36] Cf. Alan K.L. Chan, *Two Visions of the Way: A Study of the Wang Pi and the Ho-shang Kung Commentaries on the Lao-Tzu* (New York: SUNY, 1991), 48. As Chan points out, the dominant interpretation holds that Wang Pi's understanding of *wu* as applied to Tao is not only a negative one, but implies the existence of a fundamental " substance," which is prior to "being" (*ibid.*, 46-47).

described as the dwelling of Tao: "*Te* is the dwelling place of Tao. Things obtain it (from Tao) so as to be produced....Therefore *te* is an obtaining."[37] By using a cognate word, meaning "to obtain," *te* can be defined as what an individual object "obtains" from Tao and thus becomes what it is.

Chapter 51 of the *Lao-tzu* reflects on the relationship between Tao-*te* and the myriad things in the world:

> Therefore the ten thousand things venerate Tao and honor *te*. Tao is venerated and *te* is honored without anyone's order. It always comes spontaneously. It is Tao that gives them life. It is *te* that nurses them, grows them, fosters them, shelters them, comforts them, nourishes them, and covers them under her wings. Tao produces them but does not take possession of them. It acts, but does not set any store by it. It leads them but does not master over them. This is called profound virtue.

In this text *te* is depicted as a mother nurturing all things: "It is Tao that gives them life. It is *te* that nurses them...and covers them under her wings." Thus *te* is inherent in, as well as embracing, all things, manifesting the feminine, maternal character of Tao.

The passage above contains Lao Tzu's fundamental insight into the relationship between Tao and the world: that the ten thousand things venerate Tao and honor *te* spontaneously, without having been commanded to do so. Their response to Tao is commensurate with Tao's way of acting: "Tao produces them but does not take possession of them. It acts, but does not set any store by it. It leads them but does not master over them. This is called profound virtue." Lao Tzu underscores the idea that Tao's giving birth to the world is different from an intentional or purposeful act of creation. Rather, it is entirely a spontaneous, natural process. As a consequence, Tao in its relation to the universe is free from the attributes of possessing, claiming, or controlling. Lao Tzu describes the absence of these attitudes as "*wu-wei*" (non-action) and considers it the most distinctive characteristic of Tao.

1.3 Logos and Tao Compared

One of the difficulties in comparing the cosmological roles of Lao Tzu's Tao and John's Logos derives from the fact that while Lao Tzu has made ample reflections on the cosmological function of Tao, John's

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[37] *Kuan-tzu*, ch. 36; cf. Fung Yu-lan, *History of Chinese Philosophy*, vol. I, 180.

Prologue deals with this aspect of the Logos only sparingly (cf. Jn 1:3,10). For this reason, in conducting the comparison it is necessary to extend our discussion to include the main sources of the Johannine Logos: that is, Jewish wisdom literature and Hellenistic Judaism, especially as evidenced by Philo of Alexandria.

In Jewish wisdom literature, "the word of the Lord" in creation means God's word of command or the power by which he called all things into existence. Sometimes, however, the word of God stands for the wisdom that was present with God during creation. This wisdom is seen as a skillful architect bestowing order on the universe. This latter meaning comes close to the meaning of Logos in Hellenistic Judaism. For Philo, the Logos is a principle of cosmic order. It is God's "image" that serves as the "pattern" for the world's creation. John's Logos embraces both traditions and thus means "the power through which" as well as "the pattern by which" the world was created.

It is this twofold aspect of the Johannine Logos as both *power* and *pattern in creation* that shows a striking parallel to the Tao of Lao Tzu. Tao is the *creative power* that gives rise to the myriad things in the world. It is also the *cosmic principle* that bestows order on the universe. As the Logos, for both Philo and John, is an intermediate figure mediating between the hidden God and his manifestation in the world, Lao Tzu is likewise concerned with the theme of mediation between the transcendent Tao and its manifestation through the myriad things of the universe. An important distinction, however, is that Lao Tzu's Tao includes both aspects—hidden (*wu*, non-being) and manifest (*yu*, being)—in itself. For this reason Tao is a broader concept than is the Johannine Logos. Tao as *wu*, or the hidden source of all things, can be compared to John's hidden God, the Father,[38] whereas Tao as *yu*, or the manifestation of Tao in the universe, can be likened to the Logos.

There are other basic differences between Lao Tzu and John, especially regarding the notion of creation and the concept of God. For John, creation is an *intentional* act of God, which, according to Philo in particular, is carefully planned in order to produce an orderly and harmonious world. One finds an opposite view in the *Lao-tzu*. The production of the universe by Tao is not a purposeful act. Rather than considered to be *creation*, it is better understood as comparable to the Neoplatonic notion of *emanation*.[39] It is the outcome of Tao's essential

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[38] Cf. Joseph H. Wong, "Ts'ung Tao-chia ti *wu* t'an sheng-fu" (A Reflection on God the Father from the Perspective of Taoist *wu*), *Shen-ssu*, 39 (Nov. 1998) 47-59.

[39] The following is a concise description of "emanation" according to Plotinus: "This process of emanation is a process of 'overflowing,' the potent simplicity of the One 'overflows into Intelligence, and Intelligence overflows

quality of spontaneity or non-action (*wu-wei*). Nevertheless, it does not follow that the universe is without order. The ideas of image and pattern, so central to the mediatory role of Philo's Logos, are also implied in the *Lao-tzu* when it indicates the ways of heaven and earth as reflecting the ways of Tao. The Taoist philosophy holds that the reason why humans should follow the ways of heaven and earth—and ultimately the ways of Tao—is that humans, as well as heaven and earth, are modeled after the pattern of Tao.[40]

In Christian thought, any view of creation is ultimately related to the concept of God. John's God is clearly a personal being. So is also the Logos, the only begotten Son of the Father, who became incarnate in Jesus Christ. Yet most scholars would maintain that the Tao of the *Lao-tzu* is not a personal being. Nevertheless, the question remains a debatable one. An important commentary of the *Lao-tzu* in antiquity assigns a personal trait to Tao. Commenting on a text in chapter 33 of the *Lao-tzu*, "He who acts with vigor has will," Ho-shang Kung, a legendary figure of the second century BC, stated, "The person who acts with vigor in doing good is one who sets his mind on Tao. Likewise, Tao also sets its mind on such a person." [41] Ho-shang Kung's *Commentary of the Tao-te ching* provided seminal inspiration for the subsequent development of religious Taoism, which venerates Tao as the supreme personal deity.

Perhaps the main reason for viewing Tao as impersonal is based on the way in which it relates to the universe. Tao's basic attitude toward the world is marked by *wu-wei*: "Tao produces them but does not take possession of them....This is called profound virtue." Lao Tzu considers *wu-wei* the fundamental trait of Tao and points to it as the essential quality that a sage should learn from Tao. There appears a latent fear that if Tao were a personal being, this quality of *wu-wei* might be threatened. If, however, the quality of *wu-wei* could be compatible with personhood, then Lao Tzu would probably not be interested in discussing whether Tao is a personal being or not. The fact that Lao Tzu enjoins the sage to imitate this basic quality of Tao demonstrates that he believes in the compatibility between *wu-wei* and personhood.

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into Soul....Emanation is the One's unfolding its simplicity"; see Andrew Louth, *The Origins of the Christian Mystical Tradition: From Plato to Denys* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1981), 38.

[40] Cf. the ending of chapter 25 of the *Lao-tzu*, quoted above: "Humans follow the ways of the earth. The earth follows the ways of heaven; heaven follows the ways of Tao. Tao follows its own ways."

[41] Eduard Erkes (tr.), *Ho-shang Kung's Commentary on Lao-tse* (Ascona: Artibus Asiae, 1958), 67; cf. Wang Ch'ing-hsiang, *"Lao-tzu Ho-shang Kung chu" chih yen-chiu*, (A Study on "Ho-shang Kung's Commentary on the *Lao-tzu*") (Taipei: Hsin-wen-feng, 1994), 36.

In view of its mysterious character, Tao goes beyond the categories of personal or impersonal; it can be described as *trans*-personal. By "*trans*-personal" the present writer means to say that Tao possesses the basic character of a personal being, that is, endowed with mind or consciousness. If humans are endowed with mind, it is impossible that the ultimate source of mind is itself deprived of a mind. At the same time, however, we should admit that Tao transcends the limits of an individual particular being. It is universal, all-pervading, all-embracing.

2. THE TAOIST SAGE—THE EMBODIMENT OF TAO

As has been pointed out, both the Logos and Tao bear a twofold function: *cosmological* and *anthropological*. In John's Prologue, while the Logos' cosmological function is only briefly mentioned, the emphasis is placed on the Logos' anthropological or soteriological function. On the other hand, while Lao Tzu does explore the metaphysical, cosmological meaning of Tao to a great extend, his chief concern remains with humans and their way of life, both as individuals and in society. This concern is related to Tao's anthropological meaning, which is more aptly expressed by the term *te*. As has been shown, *te* can be described as the "dwelling of Tao" in particular things. It is what a particular object "obtains," to use a cognate word in Chinese, from Tao in order to become what it is. By obtaining and embracing Tao, humans become one with Tao and thus become sages. Hence, a Taoist sage can be viewed as the embodiment of Tao.

Just as there are parallels between Tao and the Logos, one can also find similarities between a Taoist sage, the embodiment of Tao, and the Johannine Jesus, the Incarnation of the Logos. In this section I shall delineate the main features of a Taoist sage, which consist in being at one with Tao and following its constant ways, especially the ways of returning to the root, of *wu-wei* or non-action, of reversal and weakness. Then in the next section I shall describe the Jesus of John's Gospel from the perspective of a Taoist sage. The reader will discover that the essential traits of a Taoist sage also appear on the face of the Johannine Jesus.

2.1 Becoming One with Tao

Lao Tzu designates an ideal person as a "sage," literally a holy person. He likewise uses expressions such as "true person" or "utmost person" for the same purpose. While Lao Tzu usually connects the sage with the ideal ruler of a state, he also teaches that every person can and should become a sage. A true sage is one who is able to observe the

movement of Tao as manifested in the universe and follow it. This idea is most clearly expressed in the second half of chapter 25 of the *Tao-te ching*, discussed above:

> Therefore Tao is great. Heaven is great. Earth is great. And humans are also great....Humans follow the ways of the earth. The earth follows the ways of heaven; heaven follows the ways of Tao. Tao follows its own ways.

The passage teaches that, as Tao's ways are reflected in the order and movements of heaven and earth, by observing and following this order, humans are effectively following the ways of Tao.

For Lao Tzu, following the ways of Tao was not limited to the external or ethical level; for him, responding to Tao also implies an ontological and quasi-mystical meaning. This deeper meaning is expressed by the ideas of "obtaining" and "guarding" Tao. In chapter 22 we read: "Therefore the sage guards the One and becomes the model of the world." Since the "One" is an epithet of Tao, "guarding the One" means guarding Tao.[42] In chapter 39, Lao Tzu speaks about "obtaining the One," and provides a list of those things that have "obtained the One":

> Of old those that obtained the One: Heaven obtained the One and became clear. Earth obtained the One and became tranquil. The spiritual beings obtained the One and became divine. The valley obtained the One and became full. The myriad things obtained the One and lived and grew. Kings and barons obtained the One and became the model of the state. What made them so is the One.

Just as various entities (Heaven, Earth; the "valley" and "myriad things") attain their proper nature by "obtaining the One," a king becomes the model of the people, that is, a sage ruler, precisely by

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[42] For the expression "guarding Tao," see *Tao-te ching*, 14. "Guarding the One" has great importance as a meditation technique. Among the several meanings of the "One" in this expression, L. Kohn observes, the following stands out clearly: "The One is the highest unity, the formless omnipresent primordial principle of the cosmos. As such it is identical to and yet subtly different from the Tao itself"; cf. Livia Kohn, "Guarding the One: Concentrative Meditation in Taoism," in Idem (ed.), *Taoist Meditation and Longevity Techniques* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1989), 125-158; at 128.

obtaining the One, or Tao.[43] In other words, obtaining and guarding Tao are the constitutive elements of a sage ruler. For Lao Tzu, therefore, following the ways of Tao implies union with and conformity to Tao. In fact, Lao Tzu teaches that the cultivation of Tao transforms a person, making him one with Tao: "Therefore he who cultivates Tao is 'one with Tao' (*t'ung-yü-Tao*); he who practices virtue is one with virtue."[44] According to the *Lao-tzu*, therefore, by "obtaining" and "guarding" Tao, and therefore becoming "one with Tao," the sage becomes the actual embodiment of Tao.

2.2 Following the Constant Ways of Tao

For the purpose of cultivating and guarding Tao, it is necessary to observe the "constant ways" of Tao as reflected in the movements of the universe. The following are the major expressions of the ways of Tao: return to the root; *wu-wei* or non-action; reversal and weakness.

Return to the Root

In chapter 16 of the *Tao-te ching* Lao Tzu presents a kind of manual for a Taoist sage. It teaches the method of observing the movements of the universe in order to know the constant way of Tao, which is manifested above all in the return of all things to their root:

> Attain utmost emptiness; maintain complete tranquility. The ten thousand things rise together. And I watch their return. All things flourish, each returning to its root. To return to the root is called tranquility. This is what is meant by returning to destiny. Returning to destiny is called the constant. To know the constant is called enlightenment. Not to know the constant is to act blindly and result in disaster.

The main theme of the chapter is knowing the constant way of Tao. Lao Tzu teaches the necessity of cultivating "utmost emptiness" and "complete tranquility" so that the resultant clarity of mind enables one to watch the movements of Tao as reflected by the myriad things of

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[43] "Obtaining the One" is a fitting explanation for *te*, which means Tao as obtained by and inherent in individual beings.

[44] *Tao-te ching*, 23. John Wu renders "*t'ung-yü-Tao*" as "one with Tao"; cf. Wu, *Lao Tzu: Tao Teh Ching*, 47. Wang Pi comments, "Cultivating means acting and abiding by Tao....As they form one body with Tao (*yü-Tao-t'ung-ti*), they are one with Tao"; cf. Lin, *Lao Tzu's Tao Te Ching and Wang Pi's Commentary*, 42. The translation given here is different from his.

the world. And the "constant way" of Tao is revealed above all by the return of all things to their root, which is Tao. In chapter six Lao Tzu explicitly calls Tao "the root of heaven and earth," that is, the hidden source of all things in the universe. Thus, coming forth from Tao as from their source, the myriad things grow and flourish, carrying an inner drive to return to their root. In returning to their root all things achieve tranquility and attain their destiny. To know this constant way of Tao is called enlightenment or wisdom, which renders a person a true sage and prevents him from acting blindly and falling into danger.

Wu-Wei *or Non-Action*

If returning to the root is the basic direction of the movement of all things, *wu-wei* characterizes the manner of their return. Just as the ultimate name for Tao is *wu* (non-being), its most fundamental quality is *wu-wei*, or non-action: "Tao invariably takes no action, and yet there is nothing left undone."[45] Non-action means that Tao does not actively intervene, but allows everything to follow its natural courses. Spontaneity is the hallmark of Tao. The oft-quoted chapter 25 of the *Lao-tzu* ends by saying: "Humans follow the ways of the earth....Tao follows 'its own ways' (*tzu-jan*)." When the *Lao-tzu* says that "Tao follows *tzu-jan*," it does not mean that "*tzu-jan*" is something above Tao. The Chinese term *tzu-jan* literally means *what is naturally so.*[46] It suggests spontaneity and naturalness.

Since the sage must model himself after Tao, non-action, as the emblem of Tao, should become the sage's most distinctive trait. The way of non-action is ultimately a matter of following what is naturally so. Thus *wu-wei* and *tzu-jan* mean the same thing. *Wu-wei* (non-action) presupposes, on the part of the sage, the qualities of *wu-ssu* (no self) and *wu-yü* (no desire).[47] If one is concerned with personal interests and driven by desire, one lacks the inner tranquility necessary for observing the movement of Tao, and is inclined to act selfishly in achieving one's personal aims. Thus *wu-ssu* (no self) means not being concerned with one's own personal interest. *Wu-yü* (no desire), on the other hand, does not mean suppressing all desire; rather, it means restraining it through simplicity and not being fettered by it.

Lao Tzu's teaching on *wu-wei* is especially directed against a ruler's *yu-wei*, which would result in overtaxing the people with

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[45] *Tao-te ching*, 37; for an insightful study on Lao Tzu's concept of *we-wei* see Liu Xiaogan, *Lao Tzu*, 105-145.

[46] For the view of *tzu-jan* as the central value in Lao Tzu's thought see Liu Xiaogan, *Lao Tzu*, 67-103.

[47] Cf. *Tao-te ching*, 7, 57.

excessive regulations and interferences. On the contrary, Lao Tzu commends that the sage ruler governs through the example of non-action, which is characterized by tranquility, non-interference, and no desire.[48]

In chapter 51, cited above, Lao Tzu describes the fundamental attitude of non-action of Tao and praises its "profound virtue". What strikes the reader is that the same description of non-action is literally repeated in chapter 10 as a program for the sage ruler: "To produce things, but not to take possession; to act, but not to set any store by it; to lead them, but not to master over them—this is called profound virtue."[49] It is clear that for Lao Tzu the sage is an ideal ruler who embodies and manifests Tao, by living out its ways of *tzu-jan* and *wu-wei*.

Reversal and Weakness

Closely related to the ideas of *tzu-jan* and *wu-wei* is another pair of basic attributes of Tao: *reversal* and *weakness*. As stated in chapter 40: "Reversal is the movement of Tao. Weakness is the function of Tao." As the movement of Tao, reversal is also described in another chapter: "Great (Tao) means on-going; on-going means far-reaching; far-reaching means reversing (*fan*)." [50] The movement of Tao is not linear, but circular. There are things which, apparently opposite, are in reality relative and complementary to one another.[51] Paradoxically, great things often resemble their phenomena of the world.[52] Tao's law of reversal tends to balance uneven situations:

> Is not the way of heaven like the stretching of a bow? What is high is brought down, and what is low is raised up. So, too, from those who have too much, Tao takes away, and those who are deficient it augments.[53]

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[48] *Tao-te ching*, 57: "Therefore the sage says: 'I take no action and the people of themselves are transformed. I love tranquility and the people of themselves become correct. I engage in no activity and the people of themselves become prosperous. I have no desires and the people of themselves become simple.'"

[49] Some scholars suspect the same passage found in chapter 10 to be a repetition by misplacing the bamboo tablets of the manuscript. However, similar wording is also found in chapter 10 (text B) of the Ma-wang-tui silken texts; see Henricks, *Lao-Tzu Te-Tao Ching*, 207. A similar program of non-action for the sage is found in chapter 2 of the *Lao-tzu*.

[50] *Tao-te ching*, 25.

[51] Cf. *Tao-te ching*, 2.

[52] Cf. *Tao-te ching*, 58.

[53] *Tao-te ching*, 77.

Since phenomenal changes in the world are governed by the law of reversal, the sage, enlightened by this law, must act in a manner opposite to what he wishes to achieve. This does not mean that the *Lao-tzu* exalts secret plotting. He simply describes what happens:

> He [the sage] does not show himself; therefore he is luminous. He does not justify himself; therefore he becomes prominent. He does not boast himself; therefore he is given credit. He does not brag; therefore he can endure for long. It is precisely because he does not compete that the world cannot compete with him.[54]

Likewise, "Therefore the sage never strives for the great, and yet the great is achieved."[55] The Taoist sage is thus characterized by modesty and taciturnity, reaping achievements precisely by not aiming at them. Thus the simplicity of a small child is presented as model for the sage.[56]

If the characteristic "movement" of Tao is *reversal*, the typical expression of its "function" is *weakness*. The opposite of weakness is strength. As most people in the world want to be strong, few understand that strength and power are perilous. Thus, the *Lao-tzu* gives the following warning:

> Hardness and rigidity are associated with death. Softness and weakness are associated with life. Powerful weapons will not win; massive trees will be cut down.[57]

However, the weakness recommended by the *Lao-tzu* is a weakness that naturally overcomes strength: "The soft and the weak win over the hard and the strong."[58] Lao Tzu evokes the image of water to illustrate his point: "Nothing under heaven is softer or more yielding than water; but when it attacks things hard and resistant, there is nothing superior to it."[59] Real strength means inner strength, achieved through practicing the weakness recommended by the *Lao-tzu*: "one who overcomes himself is strong"; or "to keep to the soft is called strength."[60]

54　*Tao-te ching*, 22.
55　*Tao-te ching*, 63.
56　*Tao-teching*, 10; 49.
57　*Tao-te ching*, 76.
58　*Tao-te ching*, 36.
59　*Tao-te ching*, 78.
60　*Tao-te ching*, 33, 52.

3. THE JOHANNINE JESUS AND A TAOIST SAGE

In the Prologue John is most concerned with the Logos' soteriological role, which is carried out by the Logos incarnate. As the only Son of the Father, the incarnate Word reveals the Father to the world (Jn 1:14,18). He also enables those who receive him, that is, those who believe in his name, to become children of God (Jn 1:12). In the Gospel proper, John continues to tell the story of Jesus Christ, the Logos incarnate, expounding his role of revealing the Father and bestowing salvation on humankind.

Can one find a similar doctrine of Incarnation in the *Tao-te ching*? For Lao Tzu, the sage is a person who has obtained Tao, guards it, and becomes one with it. This view of the sage as the embodiment and manifestation of Tao bears some resemblance to the Christian idea of the Incarnation.[61] Thus it is not surprising that later religious Taoism began to perceive Lao Tzu himself as the perfect embodiment or incarnation of Tao, and ultimately to venerate him as deity.[62]

3.1 Return to the Father and Wu-wei (Non-action)

The return of all things to their root manifests the constant way of Tao while *wu-wei*, or non-action, is the manner that characterizes this return movement. A sage is one who, rooted in the attitude of *wu-wei*, constantly returns to Tao. *Wu-wei* means not following one's own way, but being totally open to the ways of Tao with utmost attention and responsiveness. In Jesus Christ one finds a perfect example of non-action; he came to this world not to do his own will, but to accomplish the will of the Father. Jesus is also one who constantly returns to the Father as to his source and root.

The opening verse of the Prologue states: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God (*pros ton theon*)..." According to Ignace de la Potterie, the expression "*pros ton theon*" indicates a movement and should be translated as "turned toward God."[63] John then concludes his Prologue with the following statement: "It is God the only

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[61] Cf. Yuen Pu-chia, *Lao-Tzu yü Chi-Tu* (Lao Tzu and Christ) (Beijing: Chung-kuo she-k'e, 1997), 27-29.

[62] Cf. Livia Kohn, "Embodiment and Transcendence in Medieval Taoism," in R. Malek (ed.), *The Chinese Face of Jesus Christ*, vol. 1, 77-83.

[63] Ignace de la Potterie, *La verité dans Saint Jean*, vol. I (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1977), 228. Cf. F.J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John*, 42. The author remarks: "It is often denied that in the *koine* Greek of the New Testament the preposition *pros* followed by the accusative retained this idea of 'motion toward.' The intimacy of the overall context must determine what is possible, however much the Greek of the time may have lost some of these nuances."

Son, who is close to the Father's bosom (*eis ton kolpon tou patros*), who has made him known." In a similar way de la Potterie points out that the Greek phrase "*eis ton kolpon tou patros*" has a dynamic meaning and should be rendered as "turned toward the bosom of the Father." Thus the final verse of the Prologue echoes the opening verse, for just as the Word was turned toward God the Father in a loving dialogue from eternity, the historical Jesus revealed this loving relationship by constantly turning toward the bosom of the Father, in total dedication and surrender.[64]

The final verse, therefore, not only forms the conclusion to the Prologue, it also introduces the central theme of the entire Gospel, which is a narrative about the only Son of God revealing the Father by turning toward the bosom of the Father and returning to him during his earthly life. This theme is explicitly announced at the start of chapter 13 of John, which marks the beginning of the account of the Last Supper:

> Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father...knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God...(Jn 13:1-3)[65]

At the center of Jesus' being is the consciousness of coming from and returning to the Father. It is probably true to say that some of the assertions of the Johannine Jesus about his intimate relationship with God have been colored by the Evangelist's own theological reflection in the light of the resurrection. However, following the teaching of Thomas Aquinas, Karl Rahner defends the philosophical thesis of the unity of being and knowing based on the inner luminosity of being itself. According to this view, Jesus' self-consciousness is but the cognitive aspect of the ontological reality of the Incarnation itself.[66] Hence, the earthly Jesus already possessed the basic consciousness of his own identity, even though this consciousness was capable of growth and

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[64] Cf. de la Potterie, *La verité dans Saint Jean*, vol. I, 228-239; Moloney, *Gospel of John*, 46-47.

[65] This idea is also expressed by Jesus himself during his final discourse: "I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and am going to the Father" (Jn 16:28).

[66] Cf. Karl Rahner, " Dogmatic Reflections on the Knowledge and Self-Consciousness of Christ," in Idem, *Theological Investigations*, vol. V (New York: Seabury, 1966), 205-208.

development, passing from an implicit to the more explicit levels of consciousness, just as in other human beings.[67]

Jesus views his earthly life as a mission from the Father. He describes the Father as the one who sent him, and understands himself as one sent by the Father to accomplish a particular task.[68] The high point of the mission, called his "hour" (*hora*),[69] is his "Passover" from this world to the Father through his passion, death and resurrection. Jesus declared himself to have come for this very "hour" (Jn 12:27), and interpreted the fulfillment of the mission entrusted by the Father as an expression of loving obedience (Jn 14:31), to be consummated by his dying on the cross (Jn 19:30). Jesus' vivid sense of coming from and returning to God is in harmony with the Taoist contemplative vision, according to which the sage is able to see himself, along with all things, deriving from and returning to Tao as his ultimate source and root.

Jesus' sense of origin and destiny is coupled with a profound sense of total dependence on God the Father, which can be compared to the *wu-wei* of a Taoist sage in his total response to Tao. Jesus does nothing on his own, but constantly observes everything the Father does, and acts accordingly:

> Very truly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing on his own, but only what he sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, the Son does likewise. (Jn 5:19)

Jesus also declares that his teaching does not come from himself, but from the one who sent him (Jn 7:16); he teaches what he has heard from God (Jn 8:26-28). The program of Jesus' life can be summed up in his statement: "I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me" (Jn 6:38).

There is, however, a crucial difference between Jesus and a Taoist sage. Whereas the sage responds to the ways of Tao as manifested in the order of the universe, Jesus responds to the Father's loving design for humankind as it is manifested in salvation history. As this difference will be further discussed, it suffices here to clarify briefly the idea of

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[67] *Ibid.*, 210-215; cf. Joseph Wong, "Karl Rahner on the Consciousness of Jesus: Implications and Assessments," *Salesianum* 48 (1986) 255-279.

[68] These themes run through the Gospel: Jesus is the "sent one" (*pempō, apostellō*) of the Father, accomplishing, or "bringing to perfection" (*teleioō, teleō*) the "work" (*to ergon*) which the Father gave him to do. For references see Francis J. Moloney, "Johannine Theology," in Raymond E. Brown et al. (eds.), *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (London: G. Chapman, 1990), 1420.

[69] For a discussion of the term "hour" (*hora*) as used by John see Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 517-518.

God's saving design. While it may appear as contrary to the idea of non-action, in reality the Father's purpose is to lead humanity and the entire creation back to himself, the source and root of all things. Just as Lao Tzu considers "returning to the root" the destiny of all things, the Father's saving design aims at nothing other than the homecoming of humans and all things to himself as their final goal and destiny. For this reason God's saving design is in harmony with the deepest aspiration of human beings and the nature of all things.

3.2 Reversal and Weakness

In connection with non-action, "reversal" and "weakness" are two other characteristics of Tao that the sage is instructed to imitate. These two distinctive traits can be found combined in a peculiar term of John's Gospel: the term "glory" (*doxa*). The Greek word *doxa* translates the Hebrew term *kābôd*. Applied to God, *kābôd* means the visible manifestation of God's presence, especially in acts of power. In John the theme of Jesus' glorification is closely related to that of his "hour" (Jn 12:23,28; 13:32; 17:1). As Raymond Brown observes, John conceives of Jesus' passion, death and resurrection as one "hour," and, therefore, sees the theme of glory throughout the entire hour.[70] The idea of Christ's glory is also connected to the idea of his being "lifted up" (Jn 8:28; 12:32). To describe Jesus' glorification on the cross John uses the Greek word by using several key terms, opposite elements—such as humiliation and exaltation, ignominy and glory, death and resurrection—are paradoxically joined in one, under the idea of the "hour" of Jesus' "glorification."[71]

In passing from passion and death to resurrection, the process of reversal, which is characteristic of the movement of Tao, completes a full cycle. Through Jesus' total self-giving to the point of death, the cross becomes the supreme moment of the self-manifestation (*doxa*) of God as self-giving love that brings salvation to the world (Jn 3:16). The crucifixion of Jesus marked the end of traditional messianic expectations for the restoration of Israel's kingship. The Gospels present Jesus as the crucified Messiah. [72] The cross is a self-manifestation through self-effacement. It is at once manifestation and concealment: it both reveals and veils the glory of God. Manifestation through concealment is precisely the characteristic way of Tao. As *wu* (non-being), Tao can best manifest itself through self-concealment.

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[70] Cf. *ibid.*, 504.
[71] Cf. Smith, *The Theology of the Gospel of John*, 119-122.
[72] *Ibid.*, 85-87.

A striking parable of reversal is found in Jesus' discourse addressed to the Greeks who wanted to see him: "Unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit" (Jn 12:24). Jesus here introduces the contrast between dying and the consequence of dying, which is bearing "much fruit". In this same discourse Jesus introduces another element of contrast regarding his own death: "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (Jn 12:32). Instead of falling into the earth, Jesus declares that he will die by being "lifted up from the earth". This kind of death will, therefore, bear the "fruit" of drawing "all people to myself".[73]

In addition to "reversal," John's concept of "glory" (*doxa*) also implies the idea of "weakness," a special sign of the function of Tao. The act of lifting up Jesus on the cross is an exaltation through utmost humiliation—the mocked enthronement of one proclaimed "King of the Jews." The image of Jesus on the cross appears to be a symbol of utter powerlessness. But as with a Taoist sage, Jesus' weakness is coupled with an inner strength that overcomes the strongest adversary. Jesus himself solemnly declared that he possesses the power to lay down his life and to take it up again: "No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again" (Jn 10:18). Jesus also advised his disciples that the ruler of this world was coming, but would have no power over him. He surrendered himself to the evildoers out of obedience to the Father's command (Jn 14:30-31).[74] Later on he declared that the ruler of this world had been condemned (Jn 16:11). Thus the apparent victory of Satan at the moment of Jesus' death was in fact the precursor to his final defeat through Jesus' resurrection. The apparitions of the risen Christ are considered as "signs" manifesting his "glory".[75] Thus Christ's Paschal mystery perfectly embodies the Taoist ideal in which the weakness of a sage overcomes the power of evil.

3.3 One with the Father

Closely joined to his sense of origin and destiny is Jesus' sense of profound union with the Father, which can be described as a unitive experience. In chapter 10 of John's Gospel, Christ makes a great declaration: "The Father and I are one" (Jn 10:30). Several verses later,

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[73] Cf. Michaels, *The Gospel of John*, 688-689; 697-701.

[74] Similarly he told Pilate: "You would have no power over me unless it had been given you from above" (Jn 19:11).

[75] Cf. Giancarlo Biguzzi, *Il vangelo dei segni* (Brescia: Paideia, 2014), 70-71.

Jesus defines this unity as mutual immanence, manifested by a unity of activity (Jn 10:37-38). The same ideas of mutual immanence and unity of activity are also found in the discourse during the Last Supper. In reply to Philip's request to show them the Father, Jesus proclaimed:

> Whoever has seen me has seen the Father....Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his work. (Jn 14:9-10)

Two points become clear from these passages. First, the unity between Jesus and the Father is based on a *reciprocal immanence* so complete that to see Jesus is tantamount to seeing the Father. In his reflection on the theology of symbolic realities, Karl Rahner writes that all of Christology can be presented as an exegesis of the one Johannine saying: "Whoever has seen me has seen the Father." For Rahner, Jesus Christ is the "real symbol" (*Realsymbol*) of the Father that renders him truly present and manifest.[76] Second, the unity is conceived as a *dynamic*, rather than static, relation. It consists in an activity originating with the Father and manifested in the Son, who is the proximate agent. It may be described as obedience to the Father's word, or imitation of his works. But fundamentally, as C.H. Dodd remarks, it is nothing so external as mere obedience or imitation.[77] Ultimately, the unity of activity is based on their sharing one life: "For just as the Father has life in himself, so he has granted the Son also to have life in himself" (Jn 5:26). As Jesus testifies in the discourse on the bread of life, it is one and the same life that they have in common: "Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father..." (Jn 6:57). The expression to live "because of the Father" (*dia ton patera*) has a deep meaning, which acknowledges the Father as the source and principle of Jesus' life.[78]

Jesus' sense of living the very life of the Father is echoed by the unitive experience of a Taoist sage who, having obtained Tao, has a profound sense of Tao dwelling in him as the principle of his life. But Jesus' role goes beyond that of a Taoist sage. While the sage offers a

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[76] Cf. Karl Rahner, "The Theology of the Symbol," in Idem, *Theological Investigations*, vol. 4 (New York: Seabury, 1974), 237-240. Rahner's "real symbol" has the meaning of a real *embodiment* that renders something truly present and manifest.

For an exposition of Rahner's ontology of the symbol see Joseph H. Wong, *Logos-Symbol in the Christology of Karl Rahner* (Rome: LAS, 1984), 75-82.

[77] C.H. Dodd, *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 194.

[78] Cf. Brown, *Gospel according to John*, 283; Here, according to Brown, *dia* with the accusative does not mean "for the sake of," but "by means of." It means that the Father is the source of Jesus' life.

model for other people's relation with Tao, according to Lao Tzu it is not necessary to enter into a close relationship with the sage in order to attain union with Tao. On the contrary, Jesus presents himself as the way to the Father: "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn 14:6). The relationship between Jesus and the Father is explicitly treated as the archetype and source of Jesus' relation with his disciples, as well as theirs with the Father.[79] Those who love Jesus and keep his word will be loved by the Father and Jesus; they will come to dwell in them (Jn 14:21-23).

Just as Jesus' unity with the Father is manifested by doing the Father's work, so the union of Jesus' disciples with him will manifest itself in their doing his works (Jn 14:12). This unity of activity is again based on a vital union, explained by the imagery of the vine: "I am the vine, you are the branches" (Jn 15:5). This imagery finds an apt explanation in the discourse on the bread of life: "Just as the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father, so whoever eats me will live because of me" (Jn 6:57). The expression "because of me (*di'eme*)" parallels the phrase "because of the Father (*dia ton patera*)", discussed above.[80] It means that the disciples share the same life of Jesus, which ultimately comes from the Father.

Yet there is a third element in the relationship between Jesus and his disciples. Raymond Brown observes that John presents the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit, as the personal presence of the risen Jesus in the Christian.[81] The Holy Spirit as agent of divine immanence can be compared to Lao Tzu's *te*, the indwelling of Tao in particular beings. The maternal, feminine character of *te* also resonates with the Holy Spirit as representing the feminine aspect of God.[82]

Thus, Jesus' union with the Father not only serves as a model for the disciples' union with God, but Jesus himself communicates his intimate relationship with the Father to his disciples. This soteriological role of Christ is announced in the Prologue of John's Gospel: "But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God" (Jn 1:12).[83] The case of a Taoist sage is different. By obtaining and guarding Tao, the sage becomes a model for all. However,

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[79] Cf. Dodd, *Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, 195.

[80] See note 78 above.

[81] Brown, *The Gospel according to John*, 1139.

[82] Cf. Donald Gelpi, *The Divine Mother: A Trinitarian Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1984).

[83] Some commentators consider this verse as standing at the center of the Prologue; cf. Bruno Barnhart, *The Good Wine: Reading John from the Center* (New York: Paulist Press, 1993), 47.

according to the *Lao-tzu*, a relationship with the sage is not a prerequisite for obtaining Tao.[84]

There is another fundamental difference between Jesus and a Taoist sage. Jesus responded to the saving design of the Father as manifested in the history of salvation, especially in his dealings with the chosen people. On the other hand, as was mentioned above, most commentators believe that the Tao of the *Lao-tzu* is not personal and has no intentional design for the universe or humanity.[85] The sage perceives the ways of Tao by observing the ways of heaven and earth. The relationship between the sage and Tao is quite different from that loving union between Jesus and the Father. One cannot speak of an interpersonal relationship or loving dialogue between the sage and Tao. Nevertheless, Lao Tzu describes an ideal sage as one who has obtained Tao, guards Tao, and becomes perfectly one with Tao through an attentive response to its ways. Thus a Taoist sage enjoys a profound unitive experience with Tao that should be characterized as belonging to the domain of the mystical.[86]

The personal model and the unitive model, which is based on the experience of nonduality, are two complementary models for describing our relationship with God or the Absolute. Even in the case of Jesus and the disciples one finds the two models working together. For the Johannine Jesus, the I-Thou relationship is the predominant model for his union with God, who is his Father and the one who sent him. The personal model is also the obvious one for the disciples' relationship with Jesus and with the Father. In addition to personal appellations, however, such as *Father*, *Lord*, *Savior*, *Master*, *Shepherd*, etc., John also employs non-personal imagery for God and Jesus and the Spirit, such as *life*, *light*, *breath*, *water*, *bread*, and *vine*. These images involve a participatory relationship of the disciples with Jesus and with God, which resembles a unitive or nondual relationship.[87] Hence, both in

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[84] Subsequent religious Taoism considers Lao Tzu himself as *the* embodiment or incarnation of Tao and, for this reason, teaches that a personal relationship with Lao Tzu is necessary for attaining union with Tao.

[85] I would prefer to say that Tao is *trans*-personal; see above.

[86] I find Harvey Egan's concise description of mysticism to the point: mysticism is "the universal thrust of the human spirit for experiential union with the Absolute and the theory of that union"; cf. Harvey Egan, *What Are They Saying about Mysticism?* (New York: Paulist Press, 1982), 3. For a discussion on the mysticism of Lao Tzu and Chuang Tzu see Livia Kohn, *Early Chinese Mysticism: Philosophy and Soteriology in the Taoist Tradition* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University, 1992), 4-9.

[87] The disciples' nondual relationship is modeled on that of Jesus with the Father, which is one of "unity in distinction": "The Father and I are one...the

Jesus' relationship with God, and in that of the disciples with Jesus and with God, we find a unitive model working side by side with the personal model. Far from being mutually exclusive, the two models are complementary to each other.[88] Co-existing with the personal model, the unitive model often points towards, in the Christian context, a silent contemplation of God as the incomprehensible *mystery*, or, in the Taoist perspective, a profound mystical experience of the ineffable Tao as *wu*.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In order to reflect on the Johannine Jesus, the Logos incarnate, from the perspective of a Taoist sage as the embodiment of Tao, it has been necessary to study and compare the ideas of the Logos and Tao. Although they derive from very different religious and philosophical backgrounds, the two concepts bear striking similarities. Both the Logos and Tao have a twofold role: cosmological and anthropological. Their cosmological role consists in being the "power" as well as the "pattern" of the coming to be and movement of the world. With regard to the anthropological or soteriological role, the Logos of John's Prologue is the principle of self-revelation of the hidden God especially through the Incarnation. Likewise, Lao Tzu is concerned with the idea of the manifestation of the hidden Tao to humans. The Tao of Lao Tzu, however, contains in itself the twofold aspect of *wu* and *yu*, hiddenness and manifestation. Whereas Tao as *wu* can be likened to the hidden God the Father, Tao as *yu* resembles the Logos. Hence, the concept of Tao is broader than that of the Logos. Another major difference between the Logos and Tao derives from the discussion about their personhood. While the Logos is clearly a personal being, opinions of scholars are divided regarding the personhood of Tao. The present writer proposes to describe Tao as *trans*-personal.[89]

Just as there are similarities between Tao as *yu* and the Logos, one also finds some of the characteristics of a Taoist sage manifested in the face of Jesus, the Logos incarnate. At the heart of the Johannine Jesus is the profound sense of his own origin and destiny, that is, he has come from and will return to the Father. This resembles the return movement of all things to Tao as their source and root. Further, through his total dependence on the Father, Jesus offers a perfect example of non-action,

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Father is in me and I am in the Father" (10:30,38). However, Jesus never said, "I am the Father."

[88] For the complementary character of personal model and unitive model in theology and spirituality see Chang Ch'un-shen, *Chung-kuo ling-hsiu ch'u-yi* (An Outline of Chinese Spirituality) (Taichung: Kuang-ch'i, 1978), 142-161.

[89] See section 1.3 of this paper.

the hallmark of a Taoist sage. Likewise, Jesus' glorification by being lifted up on the cross is a most eloquent illustration of a sage's weakness that yet overcomes the powerful. Moreover, the sage's unitive experience of being at one with Tao resonates with Jesus' experience of being one with the Father and indeed living the very life of the Father.

Conversely, Jesus differs from a Taoist sage in two essential ways. The first is the nature of the person of Jesus Christ. Even though Lao Tzu's description of the sage reveals some personal traits of the author himself, he presents the sage as an ideal character who transcends time and space. While a Taoist sage does serve as model for others, according to Lao Tzu it is not necessary to establish a relationship with the sage in order to attain union with Tao. Jesus Christ, on the other hand, is a concrete historical figure. In the Johannine Gospel he is "the way" leading to the Father. Jesus' union with the Father is treated not only as a model, but as the *source* for the disciples' union with God.

The second way in which Jesus differs from a Taoist sage is his relationship with God. Jesus perceived and responded to God's salvific design for the world by observing God's saving deeds in history, especially in his dealings with the people of Israel. Jesus constantly maintained a loving, personal relationship with the Father. The sage, however, responds to Tao by observing the movements of heaven and earth. Thus, in place of an interpersonal dialogue, the sage's relationship with Tao follows a unitive model. Nevertheless, employed as a complement to the personal model, the unitive model favors an apophatic approach to the ineffable mystery of God or Tao through silent contemplation. The *Tao-te ching* actually opens with the lapidary statement: "The Tao that can be told of is not the constant Tao."

Nearly two thousand years ago, the early Greek Fathers succeeded in blending the Christian message with Greek culture, and thereby enabled the good news of Jesus Christ to disseminate throughout their known world. With its strength and weaknesses, the Hellenization of the Christian message was a necessary process of inculturation. The Greek Fathers' effort has well served Christianity for the first two millennia of its history, making a profound impact on Western cultures as a whole. With the arrival of the third millennium, one may wonder if this is not an opportune time to deepen the understanding of the dynamic Christian message through contact with the wisdom of various ancient traditions of the East. Inculturating Jesus into the Asian context will be essential to ensuring that the Christian message become deeply rooted in a particular region. It is, therefore, indispensable to portray the Asian faces of Jesus if we wish him to be warmly received by Asian peoples. In this paper I have attempted to depict some Taoist features on the face of the Johannine Jesus. Beneath these common traits one can perceive the great

resonance of a common center: the unitive experience of human participation in the divine mystery of God, or Tao.

CHAPTER V

HUMILITY AND HUMILIATION: KENOTIC EXPERIENCE IN MODERN CHINESE PAINTING, AND IN THE HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE OF CHINESE CHRISTIANS

BENOIT VERMANDER, SJ

INTRODUCTION

"Kenosis" refers to a way of entering the mystery of Christ that is anchored into a contemplation of the descending movement leading from God's glory to Jesus' coming into the world, then from Incarnation to the death on a cross, and from the Cross to the depths of the underworld. The text of reference is of course a passage of the letter to the Philippians that has become central to all Christological exegeses (Phil 2: 7-11). Commentators of the Pauline writings have often noted that this text does not stand as a mere theological proclamation but comes after an exhortation to show to each other "the feelings that were in Christ Jesus": "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men."(Phil. 2:4-7) In other words, Kenosis, before being constructed as a concept, is first a *lived experience* the one of feeling and sharing the humility of Christ. Some artistic masterworks express in a special way such lived spiritual experience. The "Mass in B moll" of J.S. Bach comes to mind, with the melodic and rhythmic continuity which links into one and the same piece the "Et incarnatus" and the "Crucifxus." The "last breath" on which the "Crucifixus" finishes is followed—in one of the most startling contrasts offered by music—by the vital dynamics of the "Et resurrexit." This part of the "Credo" of Bach's Mass can certainly be read as a musical meditation on the Kenosis Hymn.

It may be this anchorage into lived experience that has made 'Kenosis" a particularly productive and inspiring concept when it comes to interreligious dialogue and comparative theology. A case in point is found in the dialogue having been developed between Christian theology

and Japanese philosophers of the Kyoto School[1]—see notably the debate between the Buddhist philosopher Masao Abe and the Catholic theologian David Tracy.[2] Such enterprise is always to be led with much methodological caution: The various texts and cultural-linguistic expressions that need to be compared are to be taken and analyzed according to their hermeneutical status. A closer look at the ambivalence of Chinese Classics enriches biblical exegesis; individual narrations of the spiritual experiences undergone in East Asian contexts challenge Western categories of the spiritual or mystic path; Buddhist and Taoist scriptures obey hermeneutic models which challenge the usual categorization of theological discourse. Such openings and challenges are indeed particularly promising, provided that the terms in which they are expressed obey a rigorous process of formulation and reformulation.[3]

The focus of this contribution will be a different one. I am interested in the way a "kenotic experience", more or less directly expressed through Biblical references, can be found within two different loci: the first one has to do with 20th century Chinese art; the second is to be found within the historical experience of the Chinese Church during the last century as well as in the way this experience is now recalled and storied. I do not intend to construct a "Chinese theology" from such material. I just intend to point out that, should such theology be formulated and systematized, it will necessarily be anchored into such experiences and will also need to take into account the (narrative or artistic) forms in which they are accounted for and reflected upon.

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[1] Fritz Buri, *The Buddha-Christ as the Lord of the True Self: The Religious Philosophy of the Kyoto School and Christianity,* trans. Harold H. Oliver (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1997).

[2] Hans Waldenfels, *Absolute Nothingness: Foundations for a Buddhist-Christian Dialogue,* trans. J.W. Heisig (New York and Ramsey, NJ: Paulist Press, 1980); *The Emptying God: A Buddhist-Jewish-Christian Conversation,* ed. John B. Cobb, Jr., and Christopher Ives (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1990).

[3] Such methodological caution has not always been respected, and not only on the Western side of the dialogic attempts. For the criticisms addressed at the Kyoto School and their possible impact on the terms of the dialogue see James W. Heisig and John C. Maraldo, *Rude Awakenings: Zen, the Kyoto School, and the Question of Nationalism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994). See also *Pruning the Bodhi Tree: The Storm over Critical Buddhism,* ed. Jamie Hubbard and Paul L. Swanson (Honolulu: University of Hawai'I Press, 1997).

1. KENOSIS AND CHINESE PAINTING

Let me first introduce a sample of works that will show in which way the theme of 'kenosis" might have resonated into Chinese art during the last fifty years or so. My sample of works is extremely subjective and I do not intend to draw any definitive conclusion from it. I just wish to suggest venues for further reflection and research.

1.A. How much can Chinese painting convey and express?

But what is "Chinese painting" (*guohua*, 國畫) anyway?[4] One must first note that *guohua* can also be translated as "national painting" if one does not simply consider it as an abbreviation of *zhongguohua* (中國畫), i.e., "Chinese painting" *stricto sensu*. The distinction is important for the intent it conveys, if not for the reality to which it refers. "*Guohua* and *zhongguohua* commonly refer to works painted with traditional Chinese pigments on a ground of traditional paper or silk. The terms thus describe the medium and ground of the painting rather than the style."[5] Some critics plead for a much broader definition of "national painting." After all, free-hand techniques associated with ink and rice-paper came into being only during the last few centuries. Painting styles in China also include folk painting, various fresco styles, silk paintings, stone intaglios, from which much is to be learned. The ink and wash painting, which takes the Chan (禪) school as its spiritual kernel insists on a conception of the Void, in the work as in the mind of the artist, that may sound as preparatory to the resonance that Chinese painting may create when meeting with a Kenosis-centered theology. However, the society from which the tradition emerged is being rapidly swept into the past. Modern society has good reason to demand of Chinese painting a totally new look.[6]

Like other art historians, Lin Mu 林木 argues that Chinese tradition is much more diverse and heterogeneous than often acknowledged, and that different schools, materials, techniques and religious faiths generated various styles of painting. It is only in

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[4] This sub-section is partly based on my article: "The Future of Chinese Painting", China News Analysis, Taipei, no.1601 (January 1998), pp.1-10.

[5] See Julia F. Andrews, *Painters and Politics in the People's Republic of China, 1949-1979* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), p. 50.

[6] See Lin Mu, "Conflicts and reactions: 20th century Chinese Painting confronting Western Painting" in "The Heart of Heaven and the Heart of Man", 天心与人心， edited by Wei Mingde 魏明德， Shen Tsing-song 沈清松，Shao Dazhen 邵大箴 (Beijing: Commercial Press, 2002), pp.192-210 (in Chinese).

contradistinction to Western art that the literati school came to bear the label of "Chinese painting" and was set into a canon. The limitations in technique and materials proper to this school have long been recognized, by such prominent Chinese artists as Pan Tianshou (潘天壽, 1897-1971) and Zhang Daqian (張大千, 1899-1983). To do "Chinese painting" today is to retrieve the diversity of China's artistic traditions, with special attention to religious art and the traditions of ethnic minorities. Lin Mu and other scholars celebrates the "vagueness" (模糊性) and "sense of randomness"(偶然性) of contemporary Chinese painting—a vagueness and reliance upon hazard that many will find to be far preferable to the insistence upon any one standard or dominant tradition.

The views summarized above are not mere repetitions of the criticisms Chinese painting has endured over the last 40-some years, but may prove even more challenging. The history of Chinese painting since 1949 is a tormented one. Traditional painting was first omitted from the curricula of Art academies. Subsequently, Chinese painting was mobilized for a short period in order to celebrate the successes of the new regime. From 1963 on, artists like Shi Lu, Li Keran, Lin Fengmian or Pan Tianshou fell victim (the last posthumously) to violent criticisms aimed at the "wild, weird, chaotic and black" nature of their works, which could not but betray an essentially counter-revolutionary spirit. The re-emergence of the *guohua* tradition following the Cultural Revolution has been long and difficult. Although the return to national tradition has helped its rehabilitation, in the past three decades, other media have been deemed to better express the spirit of adventure and protest that art can convey. The underlying question is whether "national art" brings with it a predetermined meaning or might conversely be able to express the diversity, contradictions and various pursuits of the whole nation at a given moment in its history.

The debate about Chinese painting is thus a debate about the essence of Chinese identity. The idea defended by most traditionalists is that Chinese painting, is a "(spiritual) universe" (境界) defined by the "density" or "quality of soul" that one can find in a painting. In its essence, then, Chinese painting manifests the spiritual energy gathered by the man who relates to the universe, and, as such, is the pure emanation of ancient Chinese philosophy.[7] The aspiration to cosmic unity embodied in this original Chinese culture cannot be found in Western tradition, many traditionalists also assert. So, for "new

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[7] On this position and its progressive erosion, see for instance Pi Daojina, "The History of Black of White: 50 Years of Evolution in Ink and Wash." In John Clark, ed., *Chinese Art at the End of the Millennium, Chinese-art.com, 1998-1999* (Hong Kong: New Art Media, 2000),pp. 92sq.

conservatism" in art history, ink and brushwork have become symbols of ethnic identity. Although such a position is quite widespread, it is generally not accepted without reservation. A good number of artists and critics hold a middle-of-the-road position, regarding ink and brush as the best medium through which to connect with their own tradition, while experimentation with other techniques they see as a means of engaging with contemporary art worldwide. This has been the case for instance with abstract or semi-abstract ink painting.

The debate on identity just summarized has been intensified by the internationalization of Chinese painting. "Internationalization" here refers to two concurrent phenomena: (1) Chinese painting is no longer about China. A growing number of Chinese painters have had opportunities to go abroad. As such, nowadays, the ranges of mountains that spill from their brushes sometimes do not evoke the image of Huashan (華山), Huangshan (黃山) or Emeishan (峨眉山), but rather remind one of landscapes encountered in the Northwest of the US, Western Canada, France's Brittany or Australia's South Wales. (2) Even the most traditional style of Chinese painting has been deeply influenced by 20th-century Western art. Huang Binhong, who knew Chinese tradition better than anyone else, also learned a great deal from Matisse and Van Gogh. But the trend has taken on new dimensions, as many artists, while remaining faithful to the literati technique, apply it to a whole new range of subjects, or, like Lin Fengmian, make extensive use of Western colors while maintaining the characteristic calligrapher's line.

Chinese painting is not only faced with the realities and opportunities of a market economy, but must also define itself in a global cultural environment. Values fostered by this environment can either render painting even more irrelevant to today's Chinese society or can help it further to change and modernize its artistic language, giving it new impetus and appeal. There has been an extensive literature on the aesthetic tendencies at work from 1990s on. Materialism is the first such trend to be noticed. This stands in sharp contrast against the "humanist" view of culture and society advanced in the 80s. The primacy given to "feelings" is directly linked to the dominant materialism. "I feel, therefore I am" could be the motto of present-day China, and such a trend heavily influences the aesthetic criteria of the general public. In what is often called the "post-romantic" worldview, feelings are consciously produced and manipulated. Finally, "ethnicism" 民族性 has been fuelled by political tensions with the US and the rise of China as a world power.[8] A look at the tendencies at work during the first

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[8] See John Clark, ed., *Chinese Art at the End of the Millennium, Chinese-art.com, 1998-1999* (Hong Kong: New Art Media, 2000).

decade of the 21ˢᵗ century does not fundamentally challenge the description of these trends. One just have to notice that non-Chinese forms of art have taken even more importance, due to the globalization of the market where Chinese artists exhibit and sell their work. However, a stroll throughout the galleries gathered in the famous Moganshan road in Shanghai 墨感山路 reveals the continuing and happy coexistence of Chinese painting with oil painting, video installations and other artistic media.

These developments seem to lead us far away from our topic, i.e. the way Chinese art might or might be influenced by Biblical themes and thus convey an experience of "kenosis.' However, they were aiming at describing the landscape in which such an encounter was made possible. The meeting between the Bible and Chinese art is shaped by an array of aesthetic, cultural and political conditions, the complexity of which has barely been sketched here.

1.B. Shi Lu and Lu Xun

Shi Lu (石鲁, 1919-1982) was one of the foremost Chinese artists of the last century. He died at the age of 61, in a state of semi-folly, his mind enfeebled by the sufferings he endured during the Cultural Revolution. The torments he had to endure had certainly a sad, special quality of irony for the genuinely revolutionary artists he had been. His painter's name, Shi Lu, is a special tribute to the two greater influences on his art and life, the painter Shitao (石濤 1642-1707) and the writer-intellectual Lu Xun (鲁迅, 1991-1936), whose life and thought he somehow duplicated. Like Lu Xun, his earlier works are filled with the burden of the Chinese people, and he is certainly the one who excelled best in making Chinese painting express a whole new range of feelings and social trends. Like Lu Xun also his rebellious and sometime aristocratic spirit was the source of a direct confrontation with the ones with whom he first allied, and he paid a hard price for his independence of mind.

One would hardly find any religious depiction in Shi Lu's paintings, but I argue that his whole work is a kind of commentary of what could be called the "Christ-like" dimension of Lu Xun's opus, granted that this Christ-like dimension is filled with ambiguity. As a matter of fact, the beginning of the twentieth century witnessed a shift in the way Jesus-Christ has been perceived by Chinese intellectuals, and this happened at the same time as these intellectuals were struggling with their cultural and religious tradition. The founder of the influential

review *New Youth*, Chen Duxiu (陳獨秀 1880-1942)[9], provides us with an example of this trend.[10] The portrait he draws of Jesus stresses features relevant for the building-up of a new Chinese civilization: the spirit of sacrifice; the spirit of forgiveness; equality and universality in love. Jesus, he concludes, is, first and foremost, the friend of the poor.[11] Another revealing testimony shows us the changes that the representation of Jesus underwent in the first half of the twentieth century. In a short and famous text called "Revenge (II)", Lu Xun (1881-1936) describes Jesus' crucifixion: "Because he thinks himself the Son of God, the king of the Jews, he is to be crucified. (…) All around is hate, pitiable, execrable. (…) He has not drunk the wine mixed with myrrh. He wants to remain sober to savour the Israelites' treatment of their Son of God, and to have longer to pity their future but hate their present. (…) God has forsaken him, and so he is the son of man after all. But the Israelites are crucifying even the son of man. Those who reek most of blood and filth are not those who crucify the Son of God, but those who crucify the son of man."[12] This well-known text has received several conflicting interpretations. One of the difficulties is that Lu Xun, under the guise of seemingly simple vocabulary and sentence structure, reveals treasures of erudition, with strong influence coming from the *Zhuangzi*. Does Lu Xun really "depict the death of Jesus as the ultimate expression of futility" as Robinson wants it?[13] Or does he see "Christ as a sadistic and whimsical deity who enjoys suffering on the cross, because he knows that his own anguish will cause the Israelites much greater anguish in the future" as the interpretation offered by Alber goes?[14] My own reading is different. I confess that the text is an ambiguous one, and that the image of Jesus it projects can even look "pitiable" and "execrable" for making use of the words of Lu Xun himself. However, the crux of the text might lie in the passage from 'Son of God' to 'son of man." What is hammered by the strokes of the prose of Lu Xun is an abstract representation of Christ as "Son of God" independently from Jesus' humanity. By centering on his death, one

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[9] Chen Duxiu was the founder of the Chinese Communist Party and was expelled from it in 1929.

[10] "Christianity and the Chinese People", *Xinqingnian* (New Youth) (February 1920), p.19.

11 Ibid., p.22.

[12] Translation by Gladys Yang in *Silent China, Selected writings of Lu Xun* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), pp.120-121.

[13] L.S. Robinson, *Double-Edged Sword, Christianity and 20th Century Chinese Fiction* (Hong-Kong: Tao Fong Shan, 1986), p.78.

[14] C.J. Alber, "Wild Grass; Symmetry and Parallelism in Lu Hsün's Prose Poems", in *Critical Essays on Chinese Literature*, W.H. Nienhauser, Jr. (Hong-Kong: The Chinese University of Hong-Kong, 1976), p.10.

recaptures the identity of Jesus as 'son of man." The text of Lu Xun epitomizes the way Chinese writers have discovered the humanity of Jesus throughout the course of the century, in the same time as they were recapturing their own history of blood, tears and hunger and denouncing religious as well as social hypocrisy.[15] I would argue that similar developments can be sensed in the history of Chinese painting.

Something in Shi Lu's physical appearance, developed in true fidelity to his work, evokes the way Lu Xun depicts Christ. Through various means, the "heroic" dimension of the artist's mission and personality asserts itself in the China of those times, and the Christ-like style of representation is a pervasive feature of this trend. Even. Shi Lu's famous picture of Mao Zedong during the Long March reminds the viewer of this particular style, a style utterly different from the ones that had marked previous artistic epochs. With Shi Lu, heroism with Messianic undertones penetrates into the realm of Chinese painting. Hesitant and ambiguous during the first years of the new regime, this "Messianic' quality of Shi Lu's painting takes its real dimension during his final years, when he draws and redraws on paintings he had achieved year before, rejecting and sublimating them though the use of calligraphic, tortured ink strokes.

1.C. Lin Fengmian and the Passion of Christ

The seemingly kindler, gentler painter Lin Fengmian (林風眠, 1900-1991) helps us to go one step further. This remarkable artist, whose formative period had been spent in France, from which he came back with a new understanding of colors that he integrated within traditional Chinese painting, is best known for his delicate depictions of fair ladies, rivers and flowers. He also spent one year in Berlin, and the influence of German expressionism on a few of his early paintings as, more decisively maybe, on the works of his latter period, testifies to the way Christian themes—as both conveyed and deconstructed by twentieth century European art—penetrated his artistic consciousness and technique. He suffered a very severe treatment during the Cultural Revolution and had to preventively destroy around two thousand of his works… Obviously the healing process took some time, and it is in his latter works that a new universe of darkness and suffering suddenly appears, as a coming to light of traumas and revolts—traumas and

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[15] Some background information can be found in Robinson, op. cit.; I. Eber, S-K. Wan and K. Walf, eds., *Bible in Modern China, the Literary and Intellectual Impact*, Sankt Augustin, Monumenta Serica Monograph Series XLIII, Steyler Verl., 1999; B.S. McDougall and K. Louie, *The Literature of China in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998).

revolts that he could finally confront and make part of his artistic vision. The figure of Christ on the cross appears on numerous paintings—exactly how many we still do not know, but we might suspect that it became a recurrent feature of his latter work. During the year 2000, an exhibit at the Sun Yat Sen Memorial in Taipei offered to the public a series of striking crucifixion scenes.

The thick black ink of Lin's crucifixions reminds one of the features that made Chinese traditional painters accused to constitute a "black" counter-revolutionary school during the time of the Cultural Revolution. At the same time, the use of bright colors is very typical of Lin Fengmian's style, as are the calligraphic lines that structure the picture. On the whole, the crucifixion scenes he painted are genuine works of contemporary Chinese painting while integrating meaning and substance coming from the Western tradition studied and propagated by Lin Fengmian. A similar atmosphere can be found in other works of Lin Fengmian, such as the one called "Suffering."[16] The figure of Christ appears over a background of human tragedy and despair and takes a theological meaning that reminds one of the questions that arose in the "Cultural Christians" movement at around the same time.

1.D. Gao Ertai's Ecce Homo

Let me mention here another work, which has no explicit Christian meaning but is in my view very reminiscent of Lin Fengmian's painting. It is simply called "Chinaman" (中國人) and was exhibited in 1987. His creator, Gao Ertai (高爾泰), had written in 1957, at the age of 21, an article defending the role of subjectivity in artistic creation.[17] In the wood sculpture called "Chinaman", something of the Lu Xun spirit is also present. This "Chinaman" is ambiguous by essence. It is only a 'head of wood' with ears taken from the handles of a trash can—a truly hopeless man. At the same time, the nails on that wood head make it a figure of suffering and Passion. Here we have what I would dare to call an inter-religious *Ecce Homo*. Though there is no explicit reference to any Biblical narrative the very conception of this icon comes from the life process of Gao Ertai and integrates what he had read in Chinese and foreign writers, including Dostoyevsky. As a matter of fact, the

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[16] The destruction of many of his works during the war first and the Cultural Revolution later on makes it difficult to draw an exact chronology, but the title "Suffering" seems to appear several times during his early and late painting periods.

[17] Republished in *The Struggle for Beauty, Selected Writings of Gao Ertai, Vol. I*, 美的抗爭, 高爾泰文選之一, edited by Luo Qing 羅青 (Taipei: T'ung-ta Publishing House, 1995).

pseudonym Gao Ertai is an homage to two literary figures, the ones of Gorki (高) and Tagore (泰). In other words, in this work as in many others we have to deal not with direct references but with a web of mediations, which makes the final artistic result even more interesting.

1. E. Li Jinyuan: From Kenosis to the Cosmic Christ

With the Sichuanese painter Li Jinyuan (李金遠， 1945-) we enter a somewhat different atmosphere: the darkness of many of his ink paintings refers indeed to a meditation on the destiny of the Chinese people. But his explicit discovery of the Gospel and his love for the figure of Matteo Ricci make his Biblical references much more diverse than the ones used by the artists we just discussed. This diversity in the way to refer to the Bible and the figure of Christ is confirmed by the artistic evolution of Li Jinyuan. His taking the practice of oil painting along the one of Chinese painting (with the subsequent adding of gold acrylic on Chinese paper) has opened up new horizons. The twin topic of "sky" and "roots" animates the corpus of works he has painted since 2003, inscribing deliberately his work between a "Genesis" and a "Revelation", thus making his journey a spiritual as well as an historical one In 2006, he went to Germany. The large oil painting that he painted them translates four Beatitudes taken from Matt.5 into Chinese aesthetic and spiritual categories. A cosmic Christ, reminiscent of Teilhard's eschatological vision (Li Jinyuan has indeed read and meditated the several of Teilhard's works[18]) stands in the middle, while four illustrations taken from southwest China's scenes and landscapes fill the four corners of the painting. In the background, a lake, and a mountain and the crowd that is sitting on the slopes give to the whole composition a sense of Taoist harmony. Christ himself stands above a big Chinese seal inscribed with Laozi's sentence: "The highest excellence is like (that of) water" (上善若水), Laozi ch.8, a sentence applied here to Christ himself. Actually, the water metaphor, reinforced by the depiction of the lake at the bottom of the picture, seems to be "absorbed" or transcended by the fire metaphor: the painting is made entirely of yellow, orange, red and white, and Christ is painted in the shape of a gigantic flame.[19] The polysemic quality of the painting makes it closer to modern Biblical exegesis than would be the case with a literal rendering.

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[18] See Li Jinyuan 李金遠 *Water and Fire*, 水与火 (Shanghai: Red Sun Gallery, 2010).

[19] See Misereor, *Seilig Seid Ihr: Arbeitsheft zum Hungertuch*, Aachen, 2007. I have sketched a theological interpretation of this painting, "Der See, der Berg un der Baum", ibid., pp. 32-34.

Additionally, let us note that, in Daoist philosophy, the water metaphor is loaded with a quasi-kenotic meaning: what makes the highest good "like water' is the fact that water goes to the lowest place, "to the places where nobody wants to go". And, disappearing in mud, it never loses its purity. Let us read again the chapter 8 of the Laozi: "The highest excellence is like (that of) water. The excellence of water appears in its benefiting all things, and in its occupying, without striving (to the contrary), the low place which all men dislike. Hence (its way) is near to (that of) the Dao." The first line could also be translated as: "what is good springs from above, as water does." Water descends from High and goes to the most hidden, humble places. In the endless moves and changes of water, something is hinted of the mystery of kenosis from the time of incarnation—the mystery of a God who strives for the place of the Servant, the place that nobody else wants to occupy. At the same time, the dynamic of Li Jinyuan's painting is clearly ascending. Jesus seems to be rooted into the Mount itself, in a way that reminds the viewer of the techniques through which Chinese painters evoke the wood, the rocks and the clouds. This is not traditional portrait. The cosmic aspect of Christ appears in the nature-like quality of his figure and body. What Jesus preaches is meant to transform the world, to animate it, to make Matter and Spirit become One in the fulfilled person of Christ.

As already noted, Li Jinyuan has read Teilhard de Chardin, and he is very sensitive to the way Matter, Life and Consciousness evolve within a cosmic history that is ultimately the history of redemption (see Ephesians 1,10: "to re-establish all things in Christ, that are in heaven and on earth.") Li Jinyuan perceives a deep continuity between Teilhard's way of understanding the Christian mystery and the Taoist worldview that finds the Dao (the Way) at work in all natural and spiritual phenomena. The power of the Way lies in its humility, in its self-effacing conduct of the universe. Likewise, those who follow the Way do so by acting as if they were not acting. Their passivity is their very action. Their weakness, as they accept it, is ultimately their weapon for changing the world. "The softest thing in the world dashes against and overcomes the hardest." (Laozi, chapter 43) Taoist mystique is a door through which to enter the Sermon on the Mount and the divine love manifested on the cross.

"The movement of the Dao
By contraries proceeds;
And weakness marks the course
Of Dao's mighty deeds" (Laozi, chapter 40)

The ascending Christ at the center of the painting and the rays of light that divide the four scenes represented at each corner draw the sign of a cosmic cross, a cross that redefines the boundaries of the universe, a cross that enlightens the sufferings and darkness that still inhabit the world and that directs everything towards its fulfillment. In each of the scenes, the struggle between light and darkness is manifested in a special way. In a desolate universe, signs of hope and harmony suddenly appear through the coming of volunteer teachers to a remote school, the Franciscan complicity between men and animals, the visit to the sick and prisoners. The Christ of the Sermon on the Mount is also the one who says: "I was sick, I was a prisoner, and you came to visit me." (Mt, 25), and this is why his figure receives such a cosmic dimension within the painting: the Poor, the one who suffers humiliation ultimately becomes the Universal Christ.

2. KENOSIS AND THE CHINESE CHURCH'S HISTORICAL EXPERIENCE

2.A. Dying again, Starting Anew—Starting Anew, Dying again

> For if I go to China I believe you will find me in one of two places: I shall either be a prisoner in the jail in Canton, or in Peking, where the king is said to be in permanent residence. *Francis Xavier to Diogo Pereira, Sancian, November 12, 1552.*[20]

As he prepares to embark to China from the Indian shores on which he has returned after more than two years spent in Japan, there resurfaces in the spirit of Francis Xavier (1506-1552) the dream of Jerusalem, a dream that was so endearing to the first Jesuit companions. The mention of Jerusalem establishes the Chinese capital as an eschatological node of the evangelical mission. In Japan, Francis Xavier had met with an unexpected difficulty: what could be the value—had it been objected to him—of a message that the Chinese Sages had never heard about? So, China needed to be converted first—and Beijing becomes the Jerusalem of Asia. At the same time, asserting that a road links one capital to the other sketches a new map of the spiritual routes that divide and unite the world.

Francis Xavier died on the islet of Sancian (*pinyin:* Shangchuan) on December 3, 1552, without having been able to land on the Chinese continent. But he was leaving a double dream to his companions—the

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[20] J. Costelloe, (ed.), *The Letters and Instructions of Francis Xavier* (St Louis: The Institute of Jesuit Sourcess, 1992), p. 453.

dream of martyrdom, and/or the one of conquering China on a "Constantinian " model, by converting the Emperor. The dream outlined by Xavier was going to continue—expanded, transformed and betrayed—through the contacts and endeavors that would follow. Triumphal conquest or kenotic death: these were the original terms through which Francis Xavier was framing a model for the Chinese Church before it was even born.

We could have started our narrative at an earlier point in time: The Church founded by Syrian monks and merchants around the sixth century disappears in the persecution against Buddhism three centuries later; and contacts initiated by Franciscan Missionaries during the Mongol Empire stop with the change of dynasty and epidemics in Europe. These episodes seemingly speak of a soil in which the seed that falls does not bear fruit. And the story appears to head towards a similar ending towards the end of the eighteenth century: Largely as a consequence of the Rites Controversy, imperial prohibitions against Christianity and the progressive suppression of the Society of Jesus seem to coalesce their effects—imperial edict of 1724, application in Macao of the decree of the Portuguese King ordering the confiscation of all Jesuit properties and the arrest of all members of the Society (1762), application in China of the Brief *Dominus ac Redemptor* by Clement XIV (773), which abolished the Society of Jesus. Utter confusion prevailed in the process, till, in 1813, the last ex-Jesuit died in Beijing. Still, there was actually a new twist in the story: Chinese Christian communities were surviving the persecution of the end of the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries, counting for the first time on their own strength and resources. If these local communities were going to experience accrued growth with the arrival of the missionaries after 1843, such growth would come with a new form of kenosis: the return of the missionaries was linked to a process of national humiliation triggered by the Unequal Treaties, and (partly as a consequence of the former) the type of guidance provided by the missionaries was very much colonial in style. As a case in point, having operated in autarky from the imperial edicts of persecution until 1842, the Christian communities of Shanghai and its surroundings were governed through local Catholic clans in charge of the management of churches, with the help of informal groups of consecrated virgins who were leading liturgical assemblies. Returning foreign missionaries were soon asserting their control both on temporal goods and on women's initiatives, which, they hoped, would be contained by the arrival of French feminine congregations.

Another element furthered the "kenotic dimension" inherent to the very development of the Chinese Church after 1843: the context of the time made both missionaries and converts particularly vulnerable to

political and social upheavals. The 120 Chinese martyrs canonized in October 2000, include mainly lay people as well as four French Jesuits who all worked in the Xian County of Hebei Province. The Boxer uprising's preferential target was Christian local congregations, and it ravaged their territory. In 1900, the passage of Boxer troops in Xian county (assisted on this occasion by Qing troops passing through) will result in the death of 3,500 faithful, most of them massacred in Zhujiahe, an "Old Catholic " village located on the road leading from Beijing to Nanjing. The Boxer rebellion was driven in part by anti- foreign sentiment, by the clash of rival factions at the Court, and by the revival of millenarian cults—but it can also be explained by the succession of natural disasters, which encouraged plunder. Boxers and Qing troops required from all prisoners a solemn act of apostasy, and systematically put to death all those who refused to do so.[21]

2.B. Humiliation as Kenosis

The Chinese Jesuit Alyosius Jin Luxian (金魯賢 1916-2013), who was to be official bishop of Shanghai from 1985 onwards, mentions several times in his Memoirs the cultural insensitivity of some of the French Jesuits he had to deal with during his formative years.[22] The book comes back several times on the difficulties he met with a number of foreign missionaries, and the dire consequences of the semi-colonial state of the Church after 1949. And it is a very special kind of "kenosis" that he speaks of when accounting of his return to the Shanghai diocese around 1982: "During my 27 years in jail everyday I sang to myself the song 'The Society of Jesus is my mother', believing that all the Jesuits in the world were praying for me, from which thought I derived both peace of mind and inner strength. What I could not have imagined was that when my adopted German mother came to see me and then rushed to Rome to see the Jesuits leaders to tell them the happy news that I was still among the living, the deputy superior general who met with her would sternly tell her that I was a traitor and was no longer recognized as a Jesuit. When I had received my adopted mother's letter I really felt as if a sword had pierced my heart. That was the most painful moment of all my 27 years of lost liberty."[23] The insistence on *humiliation* that can be felt in Jin Luxian's Memoirs—humiliation that comes under many

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[21] Cf. Anthony E. Clark, *China Saints. Catholic martyrdom during the Qing (1644-1911)* (Bethleem, Lehigh University Press, 2011).

[22] Jin Luxian, *The Memoirs of Jin Luxian. Volume One: Learning and relearning, 1916-1982*, trans. by William Hanbury-Tenison (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2012).

[23] Ibid., p. 288.

forms—is a notable feature of the kenotic experience as lived and retold by Chinese Christians.

The account of Jin Luxian can be put into context, by taking the trials of the Jesuit order as an example speaking of the overall kenotic experience of the Chinese Church after 1949. The Jesuits were playing a leading role in the Church of China. In 1948, the combined territory of their missions covers 186,000 km2 with a total population of 43 million people, including nearly 500,000 Catholic (there were probably three and a half million Chinese Catholics at that time). In June 15 1953, a police raid at the Faculty of Theology of Zikawei closed the last Jesuit institution in China. Around that time, 500 Jesuits had left or been expelled from China, and sixty Jesuits were already imprisoned, most of them Chinese. Two hundred Jesuits were still free, while seeing their apostolic activity severely limited. The last foreign missionaries would be expelled in 1957. From 1955 onwards, the remaining group of 157 Chinese Jesuits was going to endure physical and moral pressure, and in most cases prison and labor camps. All had to choose between the "patriotic" and the "underground" Churches. The decisive blow will be dealt in September 8, 1955: Bishop Gong Pinmei, fourteen Chinese Jesuits, priests, seminarians, religious and three hundred influential lay people were arrested that night. Before the end of the month, around 1,200 Shanghainese Catholics were imprisoned. Their handwritten or tape recorded confessions were part of the "evidences" used in 1960 during the final trial of the Bishop of Shanghai and fourteen other defendants including seven Jesuits. During the period that goes from 1950 till the concluding trial, foreign Jesuits, it seems, offered lower resistance to brainwashing techniques than Chinese Jesuits. The only foreign Jesuit imprisoned who did not sign any document is the American John Clifford. He later wrote the first testimony on brainwashing techniques.[24] The regime was thus able to divide the Church, and the Jesuits did not escape this fate. But, shortly after, the Cultural Revolution engulfs all the actors of this drama into a single torrent.

Henrietta Harrison provides us with another account of the lived experience of Chinese Christianity as a one of kenosis and humiliation through the stories she collected from a Shanxi Catholic village running over three hundred years of history.[25] This includes the story of "The Priest Who Ran Away to Rome" for complaining about the humiliating

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[24] See Paul Mariani (*Church Militant. Bishop Kung and Catholic Resistance in Communist Shanghai* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2011).

[25] Henrietta Harrison, *The Missionary's Curse, and Other Tales from a Chinese Catholic Village* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013).

treatment that local clergy was receiving from foreign missionaries. It mentions missionaries beating or cursing villagers.[26] But there are also stories of Catholics confessing their faith and dying for it during the Boxer rebellion. And, during Cultural Revolution, there is the figure of the religious sister whose "head was shaved, then at a struggle meeting her clothes were torn off and she was pushed and shoved from one person to another, desperately trying to cover herself."[27] The villagers also remember Zheng Fentao: this Catholic woman was executed in the spring of 1970, "though, as a poor village woman, she was shot in prison rather than receiving the full panoply of public execution. She had been given a twelve-year prison sentence for her participation in the 'Catholic counterrevolutionary disorder' but under the new campaign she was sentenced to death on the charge 'ongoing counterrevolution.' … Her terrified daughter-in-law could not even find out which grave was hers and never managed to retrieve her body."[28] Today, the devotion of the parishioners to Our Lady of the Seven Sorrows, whose shrine stands over their village, is vivified by such multilayered stories. "Both stories and religious practices belong in the villagers' present-day lives, but in them the long history of their community is revealed."[29]

CONCLUSION

Simone Weil's thinking on affliction (*malheur*) cannot be separated from her stress on humiliation. Particularly noteworthy is her often-repeated assertion that the experience of humiliation is associated with the enactment of truth—only those people who are being forcibly deprived of human dignity are capable of telling the truth, for only they understand both the roots of human condition and the mechanisms on which social reality relies for its existence. Weil is certainly one of the thinkers who has renewed the understanding of the lived experience of kenosis, and this is certainly through endeavors similar to hers that we can integrate the lived experience of individuals and communities into the Christology found in the Philippians, giving it new meaning for our time.

The works of Chinese artists as well as the stories told by Chinese Christians are all part of such Christological deepening. By essence, these works and stories cannot be fully articulated, narrated and analyzed: they keep open within themselves the wound, the Void that the experience of affliction and humiliation digs into the one subjected

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[26] See notably ibid., pp. 124sq.
[27] Ibid., p. 168.
[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid., p. 209.

to it. Works and words are windows on something that remains somehow unspeakable. The fragments of testimonies emerging from such kenotic experiences are made much more precious when one realizes the depths from which, against all odds, they have been eventually uttered.

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CHAPTER VI

CHRIST'S KENOSIS IN CHRISTIANITY FROM A PERSPECTIVE OF SUNYATA IN CHAN BUDDHISM: EXPLANATION AND ADDITION TO MASAO ABE

GUO SHENG-PING

The interreligious dialogue between God's Kenosis in Christianity and Sunyata in Buddhism has been becoming a primary communicating ground since 1960s under awareness of the socio-historical context in a secularized world.[1] The convergence of these two ideas consists of a picture to seek a common term for facing the challenges from scientism, nihilism, Marxism, and Freudianism denying the necessity of any religion in the modern and postmodern era.[2] The strong declaration of Nietzsche that "God is dead" extremely threats and destroys the "innermost core" of the traditional religions.[3] From a perspective of the speedy social-cultural transformation under the influence of war, trade, immigration, and cooperation, today appropriation from other religions and openness to other beliefs are significant for enriching the understanding of the Christian faith to God.

Based on the two formulations Masao Abe proposed in his essay "Kenotic God and Dynamic Sunyata" that "The Son of God is not the Son of God" and "The Self is not self,"[4] and the statement of Qingyuan Weixin, the Chinese Chan Master in the Tang dynasty, that "mountains are not mountains and waters are not waters," this essay attempts to connect Abe's formulations and Christology from a perspective of dynamic sunyata in Chan Buddhism by explaining and adding Abe's

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[1] Keiji Nishitani, Masao Abe, John B. Cobb Jr., Christopher Ives, Hans Kung, and Hans Waldenfels are the pioneers of this worldwide dialogue. The topic in the field of comparative religion is critical and crucial to the major religions within a global context. See their works listed on the bibliography of this paper. Among them, Cobb's book, *Beyond Dialogue: Toward a Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism*, seriously explores the mutual transformation of Buddhism and Christianity.

[2] To the author's view in scientism and nihilism to religion, see Abe 1990, 4-9. To his view in Marxism and Freudian Psychoanalysis to religion, see Abe 1985, 231-48, in the paper "Religion Challenged by Modern Thought."

[3] See "Kenotic God and Dynamic Sunyata," Abe 1990, 6-9.

[4] Abe 1990, 1-73, in Cobb and Ives, eds. The formulations appeared on the pages 12 and 16.

viewpoints. As a result, to understand God's kenosis in Christianity from a perspective of sunyata (emptiness, nothingness, in Chinese *kong*) in Chan Buddhism, this paper first describes the constructing process of Abe's formulations in which Christ Jesus' "emptying himself" (Philippians 2:7) was connected with the Chan Buddhism's famous negation of Qinyuan to mountains and waters, then provides my own addition of the third stage that "the Son of God is really the Son of God" and "the Self is really self" upon Abe's formulations of the second stage that "the Son of God is not the Son of God" and "the Self is not the Self." Discovering the Ultimate Reality (*zuigao shizai*) by overcoming dualism of the ego-self and no-self, this paper further interprets why the understanding of the third stage from Chan Buddhism's perspective is more reasonable than Abe's formulations which just stopped on the second stage. Finally this paper concludes that the comprehension of Jesus Christ — the Son of God's kenotic nature from the Chan Buddhism's perspective of sunyata has its philosophical basis from Nagarjuna, considering the empting emptiness (*kongkong*) as the Ultimate Reality of the True Self (*zhen wo*).

1. THE EMPTYING SON OF GOD AND THE STATEMENT OF THE CHAN BUDDHISM

According to Abe, "one of the most impressive and touching passages in the Bible"[5] to him comes from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Philippians in Chapter 2:

> Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient *even* unto death, yea, the death of the cross.[6]

Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.[7]

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[5] Abe 1990, 9. The following two citations of *Holy Bible* here also come from Abe 1990, 9 for the convenience of discussion.

[6] Philippians 2:5-8.

[7] Ibid., 2:9-11.

Abe's feeling is based on two reasons.[8] First, even though Christ existed as the same divine nature as God, he abdicated his divine rank and assumed the form of a servant, thus Christ emptied himself by his complete abnegation as the Son of God. Second, through the abnegation of the Son of God by his incarnation (kenosis), death, and resurrection, God self-reveals his unconditional love beyond discriminatory justice. The unfathomable deep love of God is realized when we come to know and believe that the Christ as the Son of God emptied himself and obeyed to the death on the cross. According to Abe, Christ's kenosis signifies a transformation in both appearance and substance and implies a radical and total self-negation of the Son of God. His abnegation must be understood not as partial but complete and thoroughgoing. In James Fredericks's words Abe's perception is that God revealed himself by Christ is a God whom the Christ does not cling.[9]

The traditional understanding of incarnation mainly came from John who explained that the Son of God as the pre-existing Logos "became flesh, and dwelt among us."[10] To this explanation of the Gospel of John, Abe asked three questions. The key issue is that "who can properly and legitimately talk about the logos and its pre-existence without its revelation to the person."[11] Consequently, with a typical Chan Buddhist sense Abe reformulated two inseparable doctrines of the Christ's kenosis as follows, the first in relation to the Son of God, and the second in relation to individual human self:

> The Son of God is not the Son of God (for he is essentially and fundamentally self-emptying); precisely because he *is not* the Son of God he *is* truly the Son of God (for he originally and always works as Christ, the Messiah, in his salvational function of self-emptying).[12]

> Self is not self (for the old self must be crucified with Christ); precisely because it is not, self is truly self (for the new self resurrects with Christ).[13]

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[8] Abe 1990, 9-10.

[9] Fredericks, "Buddhist Emptiness and the Incomprehensible God," in Fredericks 2004, 93.

[10] John 1:14. This and all other citations of the *Holy Bible*, except noted, in this paper are from the *Holy bible*, 1973.

[11] Abe 1990, 10.

[12] Ibid., 11.

[13] Ibid., 12.

Abe's two formulations do not stand separately but applies the paradoxical logic of sunyata in the Prajna-paramita (not being, and not non-being) literature, the immediate predecessor of Nagarjuna's Madhyamika (the Middle Way School) thought, for reading the hymn of Philippians, because Christ reveals the paradoxical logic of God's transcendence and immanence.[14]

Obviously Abe's doctrines of the Christ's kenosis adopted the Chan Buddhism wisdom from the Master Qingyuan Weixin. There are evidential similarities between Abe's theological doctrines and Qingyuan's Chan statement, realizing the negation of "no differentiation":

"The Son of God is not the Son of God" and "The Self is not self." (Abe)[15]

"Mountains are not mountains, waters are not waters." (Qingyuan)[16]

Specifically, Abe approaches the Chan philosophy to understand the Son of God by first overcoming the ego-self and awakening to our true self to free from the fundamental anxiety and self-estrangements inherent in human existence. When we ask the question, "Who is the person who differentiates mountains from waters?" the answer should be "It is I. I differentiate the mountains from waters, and I affirm the mountains as mountains, and the waters as waters." Hence, the "I" is the basis of discrimination to place itself as the center observing everything. This is the ego-self who objectifies everything including itself. To obtain this "I," certainly we raise the following question, "Who am I?" To this question, the ego-self may answer "I am myself," or ask, "Who is asking, 'who am I'?" as a response. When the first answer comes, you do not get the answer, but when the second answer comes, you still missed the "I," the ego-self, because there are two ego-selves: the Objectified Self who answers the question, and the Subjective Self who is now actively asking the question as the true Self. This is the first stage to know self. Still we want to know the true Self, but it always stands "behind." When humans unlimitedly asked the true Self, they got the answer that there is no difference between the Objectified Self and the Subjective Self, just the

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[14] See Fredericks 2004, 93.

[15] Abe 1990, 12, with a minor revision by additional word "The" before the word "Self" by me.

[16] *Wu deng hui yuan*, vol 17, http://www.tianyabook.com/zongjiao/wuden ghuiyuan/17.html. Web, November 11, 2013. All citations of Qinyuan Weixin of this paper come from this source.

difference between the self and no self, because the answer and the question are repeated by themselves. This is the second stage in which knowing the true Self actually cannot be reached means that the true Self is empty and nonexistent. However, it still hides a form of differentiation between ego-self and no-self, and between "differentiation" and "no differentiation." Finally, the realization that the true Self is unattainable and that the unattainable itself is the true Self means the completely free from *somethingness* (*shiti xing*), thus the true Self was discovered or enlightened (*wu*) as the emptiness (sunyata) of empting itself to becoming non-emptiness, that is the true Fullness from a Buddhist perspective.[17]

The following story of Qingyuan Weixin, the Chinese Chan master in the Tang dynasty, may provide an example by which we can approach the three stages of enlightenment in the Chan philosophy. In the first stage, the master states that, "Thirty years ago, before I began the study of Chan, I said, 'Mountains are mountains, waters are waters.'" He differentiates mountains from waters and waters from mountains, and affirms mountains as mountains and waters as waters. Here the ego-self puts itself the centre of myriad things and names them. However, in the second stage, the master studied and practised the meditation of the Chan Buddhism, so he testifies that, "After I got an insight into the truth of Chan through the instruction of a good master, I said, 'Mountains are not mountains, waters are not waters.'" There is neither differentiation nor affirmation, but only negation which means everything is empty. "We realize that there is no differentiation, no objectification, no affirmation, no duality of subject and object,"[18] and that the true Self as emptiness is unapproachable and unattainable. This negative stage is important and necessary in order to reach the Ultimate Reality. Finally in the third stage, the master passes the nihilistic second stage and realizes that, "But now, having attained the abode of final rest [that is, Awakening], I say, 'Mountains are really mountains, waters are really waters.'" He has differentiation again and an affirmation in the absolute sense. There is an entirely new form of "differentiation" which is realized through the negation of "no differentiation." The negation of negation discloses mountains and waters themselves in their Reality as Suchness, but no longer as objects from our subjective point applying the "objectification approach." Emptiness empties itself to become non-emptiness, that is, true Fullness. The moment of overcoming the dualistic view of no-self and ego-self means the true Self awakening to

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[17] The concept of "somethingness" and some ideas of this paragraph come from "Zen Is not a Philosophy, but …" in Abe 1985, 13 and 5-12.

[18] Abe 1985, 8.

itself and realizing that the true Self is unattainable and the unattainable itself is the true Self.

2. ADDITION: "THE SON OF GOD IS REALLY THE SON OF GOD"

Based on his self-emptying as the form (*se*) of a man, what God named as Christ Jesus self-goes out himself demonstrated his pure self-sacrificial love, his absolute grace, and his full salvation to the suffering human beings by his glorious "strangification" with his own flesh and teaching in an absolute sense.[19] The Reality of Christ's kenosis should be understood as that "Christ as the Son of God is *essentially* and *fundamentally* self-emptying or self-negating"[20] but not as that Christ was originally the Son of God and then *became* a person through the process of his self-emptying. This awareness means that "the Son of God is really the Son of God." In my view, the standpoint of "becoming flesh" objectified and conceptualized the Naturalness (*ziran*) of Christ's real characteristics. In Buddhist's term, to understand the Suchness (*rulai*) or the Ultimate Reality of Christ that "Jesus Christ, the Son of God is really the Son of God" in a way of the third stage of the Chan Buddhism in which "the mountains are really mountains and the waters are really waters," the interpretation of the second stage that "the Son of God is not the Son of God" is necessary and crucial from the realization of that "the Self is not Self" in the same stage.

The comprehension in the third stage, that "the mountains are really mountains and waters are really waters" or "the Son of God is really the Son of God," seems to be a sheer objective realization about mountains and waters or the Son of God, but it is not that the Self is objectively talking about the mountains and waters or the Son of God. Also, this does not mean that the True Self is talking about the mountains and waters or the Son of God as symbols of its Self, but rather that the True Self is talking about mountains and waters or the Son of God as its Own Reality. In the statement that "the mountains are really mountains and waters are really waters" or "the Son of God is really the Son of God," the True Self is simultaneously talking about itself and about mountains and waters or the Son of God realizing as its

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[19] The concept of "strangification" here comes from Vincent Shen who copied it in his paper, "Appropriating the Other and Transforming Consciousness into Wisdom: Some Philosophical Reflections on Chinese Buddhism," 43-46. Shen classified "strangification," the strategy of Buddhist spreading Buddhism in China, on the linguistic, pragmatic, and ontological levels.

[20] Abe 1990, 10.

Own Reality. "This is because in the third stage, the duality of the subject-object is completely overcome and the subject as it is, is object, and the object as it is, is subject."[21] The significance of the third stage comes from its combination of the first and second stages by overcoming the subject-object duality which becomes possible only through the consciousness in the second stage that "Mountains are not mountains and waters are not waters" or "the Son of God is not the Son of God." This kind of realization is inseparably rooted on that "the Self is not Self," a clear recognition of the negation of subject and object.[22]

The third stage includes the first and the second stages, but cannot be understood on the basis of the first and the second ones. That means a complete discontinuity and disjunction from stage to stage. To reach the higher stages a great leap is necessary. The second stage is reached by negating or emptying the first one. This is why based on the first stage that "Christ Jesus, the Son of God is the Son of God," Abe proposed his formulas of the second stage that "the Son of God is not the Son of God" and "the Self is not self." But in my point of view, overcoming discontinuity by negation or emptying must be in a total or double way. This is why I added the third stage that "the Son of God is really the Son of God." This stage is reached by negating or emptying the second stage, realizing the total negation of the total negation through a great leap empting from the first stage or double emptying of the first and second stages. The great leap empting is simply a great affirmation. According to Abe, "the third stage is not a *static end* to be reached progressively from the lower stages, but the *dynamic whole* which includes both great negation and great affirmation, a dynamic whole in which you and I are embraced and which excludes nothing."[23] Abe's conclusion and my explanation above mean that between the lowest stage and higher ones there are not just logical negations, but in a sense of the Ultimate Existent, "an 'abnegation,' 'self-denial,' or 'renunciation.'"[24] The following graph demonstrates the relations between the three stages and the issues in the discourse of the Son of God's kenosis: the status of self, the negating or emptying process, and the statement relating to the Son of God and to the Self. The Kenosis of the Son of God in a Chan Buddhist's way of Sunyata.

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[21] Abe 1985, 16-17.
[22] Many concepts of this paragraph come from Abe 1986, 16-17.
[23] Abe 1985, 15.
[24] Ibid., 16.

Three Stages Issues in discourse	First stage	Second stage	Third stage
Status of Self	Ego-self (*ziwo*) Self as object	No-self (*wuwo*)	True Self (*zhenwo*) (including ego-self and no-self)
Negating or Emptying process		To the first stage	To the second stage
Statement relating to the Son of God	The Son of God is the Son of God	The Son of God is not the Son of God	The Son of God is really the Son of God
Statement relating to the Self	The Self is self.	The Self is not self.	The Self is really self.

The importance of the second stage which Abe emphasized mainly lays on its connection with the first and the third stages with a Chan Buddhist sense. The second stage's total existential self-negation to the first stage emptied and collapsed the ego-self to no-self as a non external and non outward negation of something by ego-self or even a renunciation of the ego-self as object, because of the Enlightenment (*wu*) of the ego-self's endless retreat and the True Self's inapproachability. The critical element here is "the death of the ego-self."[25] The negation to the second stage caused the third stage by the "Great Death" of self including the death of both ego-self and no-self, which means the absolute non-attachment even to the no-self — the emptying the emptied self (the emptying the emptiness), or to the Ultimate Reality. The Son of God, Christ Jesus, "existing in the form of God" but "emptying himself" as a man, must be understood from the third stage as a total Ultimate Existent self-negation of the no-self. This "Great Negation" or "Double Negation" must be comprehended from a most radical and existential sense as the total self-negation of the no-self throughout the complete self-negation of the ego-self, an absolute awakening return towards the most fundamental ground of the self which Abe called the "True Self," "a ground more original than the 'original' state of the ego-self."[26] The "Great Negation" as the negation of negation thus becomes a "Great Affirmation," which finally confirms the self with the Buddhist sense — the Middle Way (*zhongdao*) in Nirvana (*niepang*) or Enlightenment (*wu*), breaking through of both the ego-self and no-self, both the life and death. Throughout this "Great Death" of oneself, the resurrection of the "Great Life" takes place on everyone self when our self finally realized the Ultimate Reality of self from a perspective of the unity of oneself and the Son of God's "Great Death." After the "Great Death" of self in a

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[25] The concept of "the death of the self" and the following term of the "Great Death" about self (including both ego-self and no-self) are adopted from Abe 1985, 16.

[26] Abe 1985, 16.

Chan Buddhist's sense, the statements of that "the Son of God is really the Son of God" and that "the Self is really self," appears their true nature of reality, which means that the Son of God and the Self have arrived at the states of Tathata (*zhenru*), Dharmata, Thusness, or Suchness by awareness of one's "Great Died" self. Thus, the nature of the Son of God's omnipresence (exist ontologically), omniscience, and omnipotence as wisdom thought, mind, knowledge, word, Logos, road, Dao, truth, and life in a divinity sense that the Holy Bible asserted, arrived at the nature of nirvana, superior enlightenment, or the middle path, if I use these Buddhism language in a philosophical sense, overcoming the Small Dualism of the ego-self and no-self, the Son of God and the Godhead, and overcoming the Great Dualism of the self and world, mind (*xin*) and form (*se*), and good (*shan*) and evil (*e*), to answer "why do we think we are lost in the first place." Finally, the traditional understanding, that God is Dao and "the Dao becomes the flesh of Jesus Christ," should be comprehended as that God, "the Dao, is flesh of Jesus Christ," the Son of God, when we really understand the Dharma of the inner fulfillment overcoming the duality of subject and object by one's self. The non-substantiality of the flesh of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, thus freed from the so-called "become" from the "Dao" (of God) to "is."

The third stage that "the Son of God is really the Son of God" and "the Self is really self" which I added on Abe embraces the first and the second stages, but the term "stage" in analyzing the discourses of Weixin and Abe or the nature of the Son of God in the Chan Buddhism sense is unsuitable. The third stage, as I already discussed above, is the dynamic whole which includes the lower stages in aspects of both affirmation and negation. It is not a static end from the development of the first, second, or the first and second stages being reached to. In other words, the "third stage" in some degree misleads the understanding of enlightenment in the Ultimate Reality of the Chan Buddhism. Its meaning is not really the third or final stage, but the standpoint for the notion of the "Negating or Emptying process," overcoming the time sequence and the space limitation even the concept "stage" self. As I explained, Weixin's Chan Awakening statement that "the mountains are really mountains and the waters are really waters" is realized in a non-conceptional "*absolute present*"[27] way which includes but also transcends the time of past, present, and future and the spaces of mountains and waters. It is at this absolute present that the dynamic whole which embraces all three stages and all spaces is exactly awakened. Based on this, the term "stage" and its analyzing method to reach the Ultimate Reality are necessary just for theoretical approach. The link between the term "stage" and time or space is really illusionary.

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[27] The concept of "*absolute present*" comes from Abe 1985, 17.

In Chan the whole reality of mountains and waters or everything else and every being in the cosmos is realized by the double negation which seems hide the idea "stage" of temporal sequence and space differentiation but actually just the direct "great jump" of mind from ignorance (*mi*) to enlightenment. The absolute present is completely revealed itself throughout the double negation.

Similarly, the realization of my addition to Abe that "the Son of God is really the Son of God" and that "the Self is really self" being really as it is, the realization which totally discloses as it is in the absolute present, is not just the final stage or the end of objective approach in time and space, but a basic and original ground to establish the objective approach in which the temporal sequence and space destination can begin, fully beyond all concepts of time and space. The absolute present is also the ground on which everything and every being are in their own states as they are, without losing their individuality and without impeding or opposing each other. In the case of God's incarnation, the real kenotic nature of the Son of God is realized by one's awareness of the True Self's sunyata. In the perspective of the Chan Buddhism awakening, on the one hand, the mountains are really mountains in themselves, the waters are really waters in themselves, and the Son of God is really the Son of God in Himself — that is, everything or every object in the cosmos is really in itself when the Self is realized in itself with a no-dualistic way; on the other hand, everything and every being coexists and operates without hindrance between one and the others equally and interchangeably. Thus, we say that "the mountains are really mountains, the waters are really waters" and "the Son of God is really the Son of God" with the realization of bottomless nothingness, emptiness, or Thusness as Buddha-nature (*foxing*).

3. PHILOSOPHICAL THINKING AND CONCLUSION

To understand the kenosis of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, from a sunyata viewpoint of the Chan Buddhism, a brief review of the concept of the Eastern and Western philosophical thought in the Ultimate Reality is helpful. Going back to the Buddha time, Nagarjuna's view of "Emptiness" (Sunyata, in Chinese *wu*) which transcends both being (*you*) and non-being (*wu*) constituted the highest point of the India Mahayana Buddhism which differentiates the Western traditional principal of "Being" (*cunzai*) in Aristotle and "Ought" (*yindang*) in Kant. Early in the second century Nagarjuna already clearly realized the concept of "Nothingness" in the absolute present sense and established it as a basic philosophical principal. However, Nagarjuna's principal of "Sunyata" was not only a philosophical accomplishment, but also a profound religious experience in which the tradition of self-realization had been

established by Buddha self. For instance, the theory of the dependent origination (*yuanqi*) Buddha taught advocated that everything we are experiencing exists through dependence on something else. Obviously this theory included a denial of the concept of substantiality in which everything has a true substantial nature making its existence independently. Buddha's philosophy has been expressed well in one of the following Buddhism basic teaching: "the phenomenal beings have no true selfhood," in Chinese *zhufa wuwo*, which means that there is nothing that has a permanent true nature. Later the Mahayana Buddhist thinkers developed Abhidharma Buddhism's "analytic view of emptiness" (*xi kong guan*) which clarified the emptiness of phenomena by analyzing them into elements, to the "view of substantial emptiness" (*ti kong guan*) which asserted all phenomena were themselves empty in principle, and emphasized on the nature of the emptiness of existence itself. The prajna wisdom clarified "no-being, and not no-being," thereby disclosed Sunyata by double negation of both being and no-being, both affirmation and negation. Nagarjuna called this position of the Mahayana Emptiness as the "Middle Way" insisting that the True or Ultimate Reality appears with no-form or non-determinate entity. To Nagarjuna, Sunyata means emptying the emptiness or absolute Nothingness, making all phenomena and all exists as the "Wondrous Being" (*miao you*) which transcends the opposition between being and non-being by "Great Emptiness," thus the dualistic views are united in one. According to Abe, as one of the three fundamental categories for human thought and existence realized either in Western thought or Buddhism, Nagarjuna's "Sunyata" is different with the Aristotelian "Being" and the Kantian "Ought."[28] Because *Sunyata* (*wu*) is absolutized in principle, it is not just a negative form of *Being* (*you*) or an affirmative form of "Non-being" (*wu*), so it can transcend and embraces within itself both *you* and *wu* in their relative sense. It is in this absolute sense, the Buddhist idea of Sunyata takes double negation of Emptiness to overcome the duality between *you* and *wu*. By contrast, the concept Emptiness or Nothingness "was not taken as a basic metaphysical principle in Western philosophical thought."[29] It was always just understood "as a secondary, negative principle."[30] In Christian thought, we can find in passages that such as "Emptiness of emptiness, all is emptiness" (Ecclesiastes 1.2), "the earth was formless and void" (Genesis 1:2), and Christ "emptied himself" (Philippians 2:7), but it is clear that the Nothingness is never realized as a basic principle. "Being" in Aristotle's metaphysics and "Ought" in Kant's critical

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[28] See "Zen and Western thought" in Abe 1985, 87.
[29] Abe 1985, 99.
[30] Ibid.

philosophy in their own way have each arrived at some kind of the absolute realization and each taken to be basic principles in the purest and most fundamental sense.[31] The Christian philosophies absorbed these kinds of tradition and developed various theological theories, but they never really transcended a dualistic standpoint to understand God's absolute nature like Nagarjuna did in his Buddhism philosophy which overcame the duality of Being and Non-being, and Self and No-self. Martin Luther once emphasized the two propositions in The Freedom of a Christian: "A Christian is perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant of all, subject to all."[32] To understand the philosophical and religious senses of Luther in Christianity and the kenosis of the Son of God, adopting the viewpoint of Buddhism's Sunyata is necessary to deepen our understanding of the God's Ultimate Reality.

In conclusion, Abe adopted Qingyuan's model of Sunyata in the second stage that ""the mountains are not mountains, the waters are not waters" with a Chan Buddhism sense to describe Christ's kenosis that "The Son of God is not the Son of God," because the overcoming of the subject-object duality becomes possible only through the turning point of this stage in which "The Self is not self" to realize the Ultimate Reality. This paper added the third stage that "the Son of god is really the Son of God" and explained why this double negational stage is necessary to grasp the kenotic nature of the Son of God with a Chan way. The paper also emphasized the significance of the "Great Death" which is breaking through the ego-self and no-self or life and death, of the True Self which is actually talking its own Ultimate Reality when talking mountains, waters, and the Son of God, and of the illusionary nature of the term "stage" in which our discussion begins and the kenosis of the Son of God's emptying himself as a man discloses Himself in the third stage. The realization of negation of subject and object, time (past, present, and future) and space, you and I ("you are not you, and I am not I"), makes the absolute present a dynamic whole to reveal everything and every being itself, including the kenosis of the Son of God in a Chan Buddhism way.

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[31] Ibid., 87, 99.
[32] Dillenberger 1961, 53.

GLOSSARY

ben jue 本觉
Chan 禅
cunzai 存在
e 恶
foxing 佛性
kong 空
kongkong 空空
mi 迷
miao you 妙有
niepang 涅槃
Qingyuan Weixin 青原惟信
rulai 如来
se 色
shan 善
shi jue 始觉
shiti xing 实体性
ti kong guan 体空观
wu 无
wu 悟
Wu deng hui yuan 五灯会元
xi kong gua 析空观
xin 心
yingdang 应当
you 有
yuanman 圆满
yuanqi 缘起
zhenru 真如
zhenwo 真我
zhongdao 中道
zhufa wuwo 诸法无我
ziran 自然
ziwo 自我
zuigao shizai 最高实在

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CHAPTER VII

THEORY AND PRACTICE OF ETHICS OF GENEROSITY IN CHINESE MAHAYANA BUDDHISM

VINCENT SHEN

INTRODUCTION

Buddhism is an excellent example of a religion that has spread from its place of origin to have a global influence, starting first in South Asia, then reaching Tibet, China, Korea, Japan, Europe, and North America, and from there extending to the rest of the world. As such, Buddhism exhibits the act and process of going out of oneself to many others, from one's familiar spheres to those of strangers, which I refer to as an act and process of *waitui* 外推 (strangification). This act of going outside of oneself to reach strangers, foreigners, outsiders, indicates an original generosity in Buddhism. Thus we can say that Buddhism is a religion of strangification *par excellence*. Through developments that have taken place over the course of several centuries in China, Buddhism from India has become an essential part of Chinese philosophy and Chinese culture itself.[1]

In this chapter I will explore both the theoretical and the practical aspects of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism's ethics of generosity from a philosophical point of view. First of all, on the theoretical side, I will explore the ontological foundation of the ethics of generosity in *The Awakening of Faith* (Hakeda 1967), produced in the 6th century, which, for me, is one of the founding works in the history of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism. I will argue that *The Awakening of Faith* offered an ontological foundation to Buddhist generosity in the affirmation of One

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[1] The term *waitui* 外推 (strangification) is a neologism used here to refer to the act of going from outside of one's familiarity to reach strangers. The term "strangification" was first used by F. Wallner to serve as an epistemological strategy of interdisciplinary studies (Wallner 1992), after which it was modified by myself as *waitui* 外推 (strangification) and extended to cultural interaction and religious dialogue (Shen 1994). I discern three levels of *waitui* 外推 (strangification), linguistic, pragmatic and ontological. Concerning the developments of Buddhism in China in regard to its linguistic, pragmatic and ontological strangifications, see Shen 2003, pp. 43-62.

Mind or the Mind of All Sentient Beings as the Ultimate Reality, while at the same time setting it certain limits by denying difference/otherness, and seeing difference/otherness as merely a delusion. Second, on the practical side, I'll discuss the three types of gift, namely the gift of material goods, the gift of no fear and the gift of teaching Dharma, and more interestingly, the practice of *huixiang* 迴向 (turning one's merit to many others) as discussed by Huiyuan (慧遠 334-416) in the entry "*huixiang*" of his *Dasheng Yizhang* 大乘義章 (*The Meaning of Mahayana Buddhism*) (TSD Vol.44: 636-637) and other related literature of philosophical significance.

Before I enter into a more detailed discussion of the Buddhist ethics of generosity and its ontological foundation in *The Awakening of Faith*, let me discuss briefly the precise nature of the Chinese approach to the Reality Itself that has impact on the ontological foundation of its ethics. In the three major traditions of Chinese philosophy, namely Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism, there is always a relation to the Reality Itself by which human relations with many others are to be founded, justified and clarified.

Here I use the term "many others" to replace the concept of "the Other" propounded by philosophers such as Jacques Lacan, Emmanuel Levinas, Giles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida. For me, "the Other" is merely an abstract concept that doesn't exist in reality. In everyday life and in reality, there always exist many others. We are born into a life that contains many others, and we live and grow up and build up a meaningful life among many others. This concept of "many others" is also suggested by the Confucian ethical idea of *wulun* 五倫 (five relations), the Daoist cosmological idea of *wanwu* 萬物 (myriad of things) and the Buddhist idea of *zhongsheng* 眾生 (all sentient beings), all of which contain the notion of multiple others or many others rather than merely "the Other."

Generally speaking, Chinese philosophers, when grasping Reality Itself, or more importantly Ultimate Reality in their religious and philosophical experiences, in an enlightening insight by human speculative reason, tend to form a kind of Original Image-Idea, something between a pure Idea and an iconic/sonic image, keeping thereby the holistic characteristic of the manifestation or the intuitive reception of the Ultimate Reality. This Idea-Image is seen as expressive and evocative of, though never exhaustive of, the richness of Reality Itself or Ultimate Reality, and therefore only enjoys the status of a metaphor. Chinese philosophers, by their function of speculative reason, grasp intuitively the Ultimate Reality and call it *tian* 天 (Heaven), *taiji* 太極 (the Great Ultimate), *dao* 道 (the Way), *ren* 仁 (humaneness), *xin* 心 (mind/heart), *cheng* 誠 (sincerity/true reality), *kong* 空 (emptiness),

or *yixin* 一心 (One Mind) etc. All of these should be seen as metaphorical interpretations of the Ultimate Reality thus grasped. The metaphorical nature of Chinese metaphysical discourse, or "metaphorical metaphysics," as I term it, allows them a device by which to mediate practicality so as to connect with its moral and ethical action, artistic creativity and vision of historical account.

In moral and ethical actions, the practical function of reason brings the Original Idea-Image into the judgment of events and the intervention of one's own action into the course of events and thereby takes responsibility for them. Moral and ethical action becomes thereby the practical instance of manifesting this Idea-Image of Ultimate Reality.

In Chinese artistic creativity, by the imaginative function of reason and its poetic transformation, artists render this Original Idea-Image into a sort of concrete iconic/sonic image and thereby materialize it. Works of art thereby become an aesthetic vehicle of the Idea-Image of Ultimate Reality.

In its function of historical reason, the Ultimate Reality is made manifest through human actions that constitute events and events that constitute stories by way of the use of plot. Stories bring us hope because somehow or other, the meaningfulness of existence may be revealed or manifested through the telling of stories, although always in a metaphorical way. Through stories of our own and those of many others, we might get closer to the Ultimate Reality.

In comparison, in Western philosophy, as I see it, pre-Socratic philosophers such as Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, Heraclitus, among others, still kept a very intimate relation with the original Idea-Images, in relating, for example, the idea of *arché* and *physis* to water, to the unlimited, to air, to fire, etc. However, the mainstream of Western philosophy from Parmenides and Plato onward consists in pushing the Idea-Image into pure ideas, and then, with intellectual definitions, conceptualizing it and relating one concept with other concepts in a logical way. Concepts are deliberately detached from images, things and events, and are defined and related to one another logically in descriptive sentences and discourses and by argumentation. By this detachment, concept and argumentation could help the human mind to develop the critical function of reason, by limiting it to the particularity of images, things and events, by paying attention to the abstract universalizability of concepts and the rigor of their logical relation. Although the validity of concepts and argumentation might be absolutized in such a way as to claim for universality and rational structure per se, in fact, they only allow us to see Reality and its structure in an abstract way. On the other hand, metaphors, mostly related to one another by poetic phrases and stories, are different from abstract concepts and well-structured argumentation yet still keep an

intimate relation with images and events. Thus, in contrast to the Western philosophy, all philosophical and religious texts in the Buddhist tradition constantly use metaphors and tell stories to illustrate their wisdom of life, visions of reality and practices towards achieving the most meaningful life and relation with the Ultimate Reality. This allows them a mediating space of practicality to connect the theoretical with the practical.

PART I. EXAMINATION OF SOURCES

Ethics of Generosity in Indian Buddhism

At this juncture, it may be helpful to briefly discuss the nature of Buddhist ethics of generosity in its Indian origin in order to get a good sense of comparison in the process of dealing with the same issue in the Chinese version. In its Indian tradition, Mahayana Buddhism advocates a life of compassion, an altruistic way of life, therefore a life of generosity. Given the limited scope of this paper, I will confine myself to the discussion of just two examples; the example of Asanga and that of Santideva.

In Asanga's *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, one of the major works of Indian Yogācāra Buddhism, it is said that once one arrives at supra-mundane wisdom, one achieves equality of oneself with many others. There is five-fold equality: equally no-self, equally suffering, equally working, equally lack of payment in return, and equally like other Bodhisattva. In his compassion for all creatures, Bodhisattva does his utmost for the welfare of many others; he employs himself for the *artha* (meaning) of their life; and he is tireless in his work for others, which gives him no anxiety and for which he expects no return from others. This is an unconditional kind of generosity, which shows that the bodhisattva's generosity toward many others is a generosity beyond the golden rule of reciprocity. In Chapter 14 of *Mahāyānasūtrālamkāra*, we read the following two verses:

> ***Verse 38*:**
>   Those who, without the view of self, have here the view of self,
>   Those who, without suffering, are extremely afflicted **for others,**
>   Those who develop the work of all without waiting for returns
>   **from others**,
>   As one develops for self, the welfare of one's proper person.
>   (Asanga 1992: 274; my emphasis in bold)

In another verse, not far from this one, we find the affirmation of unconditional generosity as a kind of affection and love that applies to

all creatures in a tireless way. Somehow, such generosity and affection is based on the ontological identification of one's self with many others. This is illustrated by *Verse 41* that reads,

> ***Verse 41*:**
> The sons of victor have affections for the creatures;
> They have love, they have employment, and they are tireless,
> He (Bodhisattva) is the supreme marvel in the worlds; or rather
> 　　not!
> As the others and self are identical for him. (Asanga 1992: 275)

I should point out here that this kind of unconditional generosity towards many others is an idea that frequently appears in Asanga's writings. Take another text, Chapter 4 of the *Bodhisattva-bhūmi*, where Asanga discusses the problem of knowing reality (Tattvartha); it is written that,

> The Bodhisattva has many benefits: he rightly engaged in thoroughly ripening the Buddhadharmas for himself and for others, in thoroughly ripening the Dharma of the Three Vehicles. Moreover, thus rightly engaged, he is without craving for possession or even for his own body…. You should know that the bodhisattva thus rightly engaged carefully attends all virtuous beings with worship and reverence. And all un-virtuous beings he carefully attends with a mind of sympathy and a mind of supreme compassion. And in so far as he can and has the strength he is engaged in dispersing their faults. He carefully attends all harmful beings with a mind of love. And in so far as he can and has the strength, being himself without trickery and without deceit, he works for their benefit and happiness, to eliminate the hostile consciousness of those who do evil because of their faults of expectation and practice. (Asanga 1979: 156-157)

Indeed, the ethics of unconditional generosity is essential to Asanga's idea of the ethical life of *Bodhisattva*, who dedicates his/her life to people of both virtuous and un-virtuous natures, even to all harmful beings with an attitude of love. Merging a vision of reality and an ethical practice, the ethics of generosity is indeed crucial to this ultimate knowledge of reality.

However, for the purpose of comparison I should note here that after its introduction into China in the form of Chinese *Weishi* 唯識 (Consciousness-Only) School, less attention was paid to the "many

others" in the ethical sense of acts of unconditional generosity. Rather, the *Weishi* School put more emphasis on the purification of consciousness and its transformation into wisdom. Even when "equality" was mentioned, it did not evoke the idea of unconditional generosity towards many others so much as a spiritual horizon towards which we should aspire.

I tend to be of the opinion that the importance of many others in ethical life started to decline during the development of Indian Yogācāra, so as to give philosophical support to its later and more serious reduction in the Chinese *Weishi* School: the status of many others was reduced from that of ontological otherness to that of constructed otherness, and then the status of constructed otherness was reduced to the transcendental emptiness of the other. This is what is implied in Professor Thomé Fang's argument that Yogācāra begins with a kind of descriptive phenomenology, taking the one hundred dharmas as a description of reality, thus sharing some views of the *Abhidharmakosa*(*Treasury of Abhidharma*). Then, it is developed into a constructive phenomenology in the form of critico-epistemological idealism before finally culminating in a transcendental phenomenology that might well be reconciled to some extent with the philosophy of *sunyata* based on the *Mahāprajñāpāramitrā sūtra*(*Sutra of the Great Virtue of Wisdom*) (Fang: 167-168). In this process of appropriation, the Other, or in my terms, many others, might be reduced to a transcendentally constructed otherness or even to an empty otherness, thereby giving rise to a situation in which there is no unconditional generosity. The focus, therefore, moves to the purification of one's own consciousness rather than unconditional generosity toward many others.

Another example of Buddhist ethics of generosity is the very famous *Bodhicaryavatara* or *A Guide to the Bodhisattva Way of Life* by Santideva (Santideva 1997). There we find a deeply felt and enthusiastic concern for releasing all sentient beings from their suffering on the one hand (ibid., 34) and the striving for the complete happiness of all sentient beings on the other (ibid., 21), by the unsolicited good deeds of a Bodhisattva (ibid., 22). As we read,

> May I be an inexhaustible treasury for the destitute. With various form of assistance may I remain in their presence.
>
> For the sake of accomplishing the welfare of all sentient beings, I freely give up my body, enjoyment and all my virtues of the three times.
>
> Surrendering everything is nirvana, and my mind seeks nirvana. If I must surrender everything, it is better that I give it to sentient beings. (Ibid., 34)

In order to attain nirvana as well as in compassion for all sentient beings, one becomes generous in giving one's own body, one's enjoyment and even one's virtues at all times to all sentient beings. The life of a Bodhisattva is therefore a life of generosity. We read,

> The perfections of generosity and so forth are progressively more and more lofty. One should not forsake a better one for the sake of a lesser one, unless it is in accordance with the bridge of the Bodhisattva way of life.
>
> Realizing this, one should always strive for the benefit of others. Even that which is prohibited has been permitted for the compassionate one who foresees benefit. (Ibid., 56-57)

Generally speaking, this ethics of generosity is well maintained in Chinese Mahayana Buddhism, albeit that the emphasis shifts from caring for many others to the primary concern with self-awareness and enlightenment, and thereby the priority of many others, including their difference, diversity and otherness, cedes to the priority of the search for wisdom, or many others are to be seen only as sentient beings to be treated with *fangbian* 方便 or expedient methods. There remains an exception, however: Pure Land Buddhism continues to put its primary emphasis on *zhongsheng huixiang* 眾生迴向 (turning one's merits to all sentient beings).

Generosity in the Awakening of Faith

Let me now turn to Chinese Mahayana Buddhism, represented here by the *Dasheng Qixinglun* 大乘起信論 (*The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana*, abbreviated here as *The Awakening of Faith*), arguably attributed to Asvaghosa and translated by Paramartha (499-569) into Chinese around AD553. (I do not agree with this attribution and am of the opinion that *The Awakening of Faith* was penned by an unidentified Chinese Buddhist thinker. However, I don't want to involve myself in the debate over its authorship here.) While I recognize the overwhelming importance of this text in Chinese Mahayana Buddhism and that almost all schools of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism have been strongly influenced by it, here I will limit myself to the discussion of the theory and practice of ethics of generosity in this great work. According to my reading, two kinds of generosity may be perceived in *The Awakening of Faith*. The first I will term textual, that is, generosity in the reading and writing of the text of *The Awakening of Faith* itself as resulted from Buddhist compassion; the second may be termed practical generosity

that is realized as virtue in the process of the Buddhist cultivation of ethics. The first kind of generosity can be perceived at the beginning and also at the end of *The Awakening of Faith,* while the second type of generosity is to be found as one among five practices after the ontological foundation is made clear.

　　On the textual level, *The Awakening of Faith* claims to have been written for reasons of generosity and invites us to read it with or for the virtue of generosity. The generosity of the author in creating this text and his explicit appeal to the readers' generosity are expressed in the invocation with which it begins, in its explanation of why it was written and in the concluding prayer. The generosity that is involved in the act of invocation is placed at the beginning of the act of reading: *The Awakening of Faith* begins with the traditional invocation of the Buddha, of the Dharma,[2] and of the Sangha, and adding to them, ends by expressing good wishes for all sentient beings: "May all sentient beings be assisted to discard their doubts, to cast aside their deviated attachments, and to give rise to the correct faith in the Mahayana, **that their Buddha seeds may not be interrupted**." (Hakeda: 23; my emphasis in bold) Such wishing in itself implies generosity and good will towards many others, that is, all sentient beings.

　　Also, generosity is the motivation for writing this text, whose main message concerns the freeing of all sentient beings from their suffering, by which correct understanding and un-retrogressive faith in Buddha's teaching without error, stupidity and arrogance will be achieved, and enlightenment will be attained. This is explained in the beginning section titled "The Reasons for Writing":

> 　　The first and the main reason is to cause men to free themselves from all sufferings and to gain the final bliss; it is not that I desire worldly fame, material profit, or respect and honor. The second is that I wish to interpret the fundamental meaning [of the teachings] of the Tathagata so that men may understand them correctly and not be mistaken about them. The third is to enable those whose capacity for goodness has attained maturity to keep firm hold upon an unretrogressive faith in the teaching of Mahayana. The fourth reason is to encourage those whose

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[2] "I take refuge in [the Buddha] the greatly Compassionate One, the Saviour of the World, omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient, of most excellent deeds in all the ten directions; And in [the Dharma], the manifestation of his Essence, in Reality, the sea of Suchness(**True Thusness**), the boundless storehouse of excellences."(Hakeda: 23) In the following, I'll translate *zhengru* 真如 as *True Thusness*, to replace Hakeda's translation as **Suchness**.

capacity for goodness is still slight to cultivate the faithful mind. The fifth is to show the lower level of the unsettled expedient means by which they may wipe away the hindrance of evil karma, guard their minds well, free themselves from stupidity and arrogance, and escape from the net of heresy. The sixth reason is to reveal to them the practice of two methods of meditation, cessation of illusions, and clear insight, so that ordinary men and the followers of Hinayana may cure their minds of error. The seventh reason is to explain to them the expedient means of single-minded meditation so that they may be born in the presence of the Buddha and keep their minds fixed in an unretrogressive faith. The eighth reason is to point to them the advantages of studying this treatise and to encourage them to make an effort to attain enlightenment. These are the reasons for which I wrote this treatise. (Hakeda: 25-26)

In the above, the author makes clear that the text was written out of Buddhist compassion for all sentient beings and the concern to act always for their ultimate benefit. It is also clear that the composition was necessitated by the situation in the post-Buddha period, that is, the period after the nirvana of Buddha, when Buddha was no longer speaking with a perfect voice that could be understood by everyone equally well. At this juncture there was an urgent need for the act of linguistic strangification,[3] that is, the act by which one communicates Mahayana Buddhist truth in a language that is understandable to different levels of intelligence, understanding and enlightenment.[4] This

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[3] By linguistic *waitui* 外推 or strangification I mean the act by which one translates the language of one's own philosophical/religious or cultural tradition into the language of or understandable to another tradition, to see whether it becomes understandable or absurd thereby. In the latter case, reflection and self-critique should be undertaken with regard to one's own tradition rather than taking a self-defensive stance or using other more radical forms of apologetics. Although there is always some untranslatable residue or hard core of meaningfulness, commonly shared intelligibility would be enough to prove universalizability. If one can only talk of the meaningfulness of one's philosophy/religion within one's own cultural tradition, as some nationalist philosophers and scholars of religion would maintain, this is only proof of its own limit rather than its own merit.

[4] "After the passing away of the Tathagata, there were some who were able by their own power could listen extensively to others and to reach understanding; there were some who by their own power could listen to very little yet understand much; there were some who, without any mental power of their own, depended upon the extensive discourse of others to obtain

act of speaking in a language understandable to many others implies an act of original generosity by which one goes outside of one's own familiar sphere in order to communicate with many others, with strangers, using languages or discourses that are accessible and understandable to them.

Also, at the end of *The Awakening of Faith*, the readers' act of reading and, for sure, the author's act of writing, conclude with a prayer that all merits thereby obtained are to be turned over to the general benefit of all sentient beings, as we read:

> Profound and comprehensive are the great principles of all Buddhas, which I have now summarized as faithfully as possible. May whatever excellent merits I have gained from this endeavor in accordance with reality, be **turned over** to the benefit of all sentient beings. (Hakeda: 104; my emphasis in bold)

The turning over (*huixiang* 迴向) of one's merits is quite usual in the reading and chanting of Buddhist texts and when achieving any merit or good dharma. I'll discuss the ethics of generosity implied in the act of *huixiang* 迴向 (turning over) later on in this paper. For now, suffice to say that here the evoked act of *huixiang* 迴向 refers explicitly to the so-called "all sentient beings *huixiang*" (turning over to the benefit of all sentient beings) and reality *huixiang* (turning over in accordance with reality), although, the *bodhi huixiang* is also implied there, if we take into consideration the previously mentioned invocation and explanation of reasons for writing.

On the practical level, the practice of generosity or that of gift is listed as the first among the five practices: gift to others, precepts, patience, zeal, cessation and insight. Although the latter four practices also include the act of *huixiang*, in particular the act of bodhi *huixiang*, the turning over toward enlightenment, here I will focus on the gift or generosity to many others. It is said in *The Awakening of Faith*:

> How should **one practice giving to others**? If he sees **all who** come to him begging, he should give him the wealth and other things in his possession, in so far as he is able; thus, while freeing himself from greed and avarice, he causes the beggars to be joyful. Or, if he sees one who is in

understanding; and naturally there were some who looked upon the wordiness of extensive discourses as troublesome, and who sought after what was comprehensive, terse, and yet contained much meaning and then were able to understand it." (Hakeda, pp. 26-27)

hardship, in fear, or in grave danger, he should give him freedom from fear in so far as he is able. If there is a **sentient being who** comes to seek instruction in the teaching, he should, according to his ability and understanding, explain it by the use of expedient means. In doing so, however, he should not expect any fame, material gain, or respect, but he should think only of benefiting himself and others alike and of extending the merit toward the merit of enlightenment. (Hakeda: 93; my emphasis in bold)

What is most interesting in the first kind of gift or generosity, sometimes called the material gift or generosity with material goods, is the idea that what makes the receiver happy is not so much the giving of the material goods as the giver's generosity that frees him/her from greed and avarice. It's therefore the fact of giving rather than receiving goods that represents the spirit of generosity on the material level.

The second type of generosity, *wuweishi* 無畏施 the gift of no fear, should not be understood as the paternalistic act of taking those who are fearful under one's protection. Rather, it is a way of setting oneself free, so as to let many others be free, so that they can be themselves, without any existential anxiety or fear. It is through letting-be, not in the Heideggerian sense of *Seinslassen*, but rather in the Buddhist sense of being empty, that one really allows many others to be freed from their anxiety.

The third type of generosity or gift is the instruction of Buddha's Dharma or teaching of those in need of teaching, not out of the desire for fame, material gain, or out of respect for others, but for one's own benefit and that of others and for nurturing enlightenment. The instruction should not be considered as one of the highest generosity; if it were, it could become a pretext for the interest of monks.

Under the genuine Buddhist spirit that sees all beings as equal, we should say that all three kinds of gift to many others are equal, in the sense that they are all equally generous, equally without gain, and equally unconditional. Nevertheless, for a Buddhist life, the attainment of enlightenment should be considered as the highest value, in the state of which one indeed allows oneself and many others to be free, that is to say, allows other people to be themselves, or otherwise to be empty. The generosity of no fear, here understood in the sense of facilitating the enlightenment of others, empowering them to be themselves, or else realizing that they are empty and therefore without any existential fear or anxiety, may be seen as the highest generosity from which the other two kinds follow.

Ontological Foundation of Buddhist Ethics of Generosity

According to *The Awakening of Faith*, Reality Itself, or the *zhengru* 真如 (True Thusness), is the *yixin* 一心 (One Mind) or the *zhongshengxin* 眾生心 (Mind of all Sentient Beings), which includes within itself all worldly dharmas and all beyond-world dharmas, and which manifests itself into both the aspect of True Thusness and the aspect of birth and death. The meaning of Mahayana may be unfolded on the basis of the One Mind or the Mind of All Sentient Beings, because the True-Thus aspect of the One Mind represents the substance or the being of Mahayana; whereas the aspect of birth-and-death or becoming of the One Mind or the Mind of All Sentient Beings represents the attributes and function of Mahayana.

Here we should take note of the difference that may be perceived between One Mind, which represents a monist view of the ultimate reality, and the Mind of All Sentient Beings, which is potentially suggestive of a pluralist view of the ultimate reality. However, this pluralist potentiality is denied, or absolutely absorbed in the monist view, by the identification of the Mind of All Sentient Beings with the One Mind, denying therefore all differences and individuality by treating them as mere delusions. This will be seen in the following analysis, in particular in the metaphors that point to the One Mind as ultimate reality, and multiplicity and difference as mere delusions.

The term "Mahayana" contains both "*maha*" and "*yana.*" There are three aspects to the meaning of the adjective "*maha*" in the compound "Mahayana": first, the greatness of substance, for all dharmas are identical with the True Thusness and are neither increasing nor decreasing; second, the greatness of attributes, for the Tathagata-garbha is endowed with numberless excellent qualities; third, the greatness of functions, for the function of True Thusness gives rise to good causes and effects in this and in other worlds alike. As to the meaning of *yana* in the compound "Mahayana," this refers to the vehicle by which all enlightened ones achieve their enlightenment, and by which all the enlightened-to-be can reach the stage of True Thusness (Tathagata).

In the chapter on Interpretation in *The Awakening of Faith*, the One Mind, as the ultimate reality, is presented as having two gates (aspects): one is the gate of Mind in terms of the True Thusness, and the other is the gate of the Mind in terms of birth and death. These two gates are mutually inclusive.

According to the gate of True Thusness, the One Mind, in itself, is beyond all thoughts and languages that function to differentiate or discern things and concepts out from Reality Itself. It's by way of freeing oneself from all differentiation and discernment that one can return to the Reality Itself that is the Original Oneness. We read: "It is

only through illusions that all things come to be differentiated. If one is freed from all mental ideas or thought, then to him there will be no distinctive mark of all horizons and lands, therefore all things from their origin transcend all forms of discourse, names and conceptualization. And are ultimately equal, without change and indestructible."(Hakeda: 32-33)

This text tells us that, ontologically speaking, all are One and are lived as One, beyond the differentiation of thoughts and languages; therefore there is the dimension of transcendence and otherness, in the sense of vertical otherness, not that of horizontal difference among individual beings. The vertical otherness of the One Mind is based on the unthinkableness and the unfathomableness of the ultimate reality as One. The horizontal otherness existing among individual beings is merely resulted from the magic of thought and language. In the One Mind, there is no place for horizontal otherness. In the state of True Thusness, all things are undifferentiated and are incapable of being explained or thought of, hence the name True Thusness, meaning unthinkable, unfathomable. No otherness or difference exists in individual sentient beings.

According to the Gate of birth and death, the One Mind is rooted in the *rulaizang* 如來藏 (Tathagata-garbha or the Thus Come Treasure), which includes in itself both the aspect of enlightenment and the aspect of non-enlightenment. The Thus Come Treasure is the One Mind in each sentient being or, to put it in anthropocentric terms, in each human being. This is somewhat similar to Classical Daoism, according to which *dao* is the ultimate reality and *de* 德 or power is the *dao* in each and every being. In Mahayana Buddhism, according to *The Awakening of Faith*, One Mind or Mind of All Sentient Beings is the ultimate reality, whereas the *rulaizang* 如來藏 (Thus Come Treasure) is the One Mind in each sentient being (including each human being) by which it is possible for each sentient being and each human being to become enlightened and thereby become one with the One Mind.

"Becoming enlightened" implies a movement from non-enlightenment to enlightenment. Ontologically speaking, all sentient beings are in the One Mind, and therefore are already enlightened. This already enlightened root of all sentient beings is the original state of the Thus Come Treasure in each one of us, thus the term "Original Enlightenment" in *The Awakening of Faith*. However, an individual might not be aware of this original and ultimate state of existence, and therefore he/she exists in the state of non-enlightenment and should enter into the process of actualization of enlightenment. In the state of non-enlightenment, caused by the fact of "not truly realizing oneness with the True Thusness," one acts always according to ignorance, as

perceiving subject, focusing on the names and concepts of things, constantly viewing objects by way of intellectual distinction, concerned with one's own pleasure and pain, with attachment of all kinds, thereby giving rise to karma and therefore sufferings. Activity is thus seen as a sign of non-enlightenment, whereas the ultimate reality or the True Thusness is seen as absolutely static or immobile.

The process of attaining enlightenment is therefore a process of going beyond all mental activities by which one makes distinctions, differentiations and attachments, or the mental activity of thought and language, or even activity as such. This process could be seen as somehow proceeding through the inceptive enlightenment of ordinary man, the enlightenment in similitude of the Hinayana Buddhists and the beginning Bodhisattvas (who are able to be free from all changing objects of thought), the enlightenment of accomplished Bodhisattvas (who are able to be free from thinking or the tendency to abide in thought), and finally the ultimate enlightenment (entering into the original nature of the One Mind beyond all thoughts), which in fact is the return to one's Original Enlightenment.

Practice should be interpreted as one essential phase in the process of returning to Original Enlightenment in the One Mind. Therefore, in a certain sense, the practice of generosity and the ethics it entails is only instrumental in the process of returning from non-enlightenment to enlightenment. Ethics should be considered as situated in this process only, not in the original manifestation of the One Mind itself. Therefore, unlike E. Levinas and J. Derrida who take ethics to be the first philosophy,[5] the status of ethics in *The Awakening of Faith* seems to be secondary, rather than the first philosophy in Buddhism.

This raises a particular philosophical question: if the ultimate reality is the One Mind, whereas the individuality of all sentient beings has only the status of phenomenon, or even the status of delusion, what is the justifiable reason for generosity toward many others? Is it because in One Mind, all sentient beings are the same as me? Or is it because I respect their being different and other than myself? Related to the possible answers to this question, I will refer to the Buddhist concept of *pingden* 平等 (equality) meaning respect for all sentient beings, which can be interpreted in two ways: on the one hand, we may understand equality negatively as no discrimination, no differentiation, no distinction, or on the other hand, more positively, as belonging to the

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[5] This is a radical change in post-modern philosophy: instead of the Aristotelian tradition which takes metaphysics to be the first philosophy, post-modern thinkers such as Levinas and Derrida take ethics to be the first philosophy.

One Mind. If understood in the negative sense, as making all equal merely through the denial of hierarchical difference and discrimination, then the moral agent can still make an effort to treat many others with generosity, not for the reason of reciprocity or for the expectation of any return. However, if interpreted in the positive sense, as belonging to the same One Mind, then one is generous to all other sentient beings only because we all belong to the same One Mind, which is absolute, and belonging to the same reality, absolute altruism is called for.

Metaphors for the Relation between One Mind and Individual Beings

Although, theoretically speaking, there is still some potential ambiguity in the meaning of the ultimately real (One Mind or the Mind of All Sentient Beings) as to whether it concerns many sentient beings in equality (as we may be led to imagine or interpret by the use of the term the Mind of All Sentient Beings), or that all are in the same One Mind without any multiplicity (as seems to be affirmed by the use of the term One Mind), the use of metaphors in *The Awakening of Faith* to describe the relation between the ultimate reality and individual beings or the relation between enlightenment and non-enlightenment, is very helpful in clarifying the true meaning of the ontological foundation of Buddhist ethics of generosity. The first metaphor speaks in terms of the ocean and waves. We read,

> All modes of mind and consciousness [under the state of non-enlightenment] are [the product of] ignorance. Ignorance does not exist apart from enlightenment; therefore it cannot be destroyed [because one cannot destroy what does not exist], yet it cannot be not destroyed [in so far as it remains]. This is like the relationship that exists between the water of the ocean [i.e. enlightenment], and its waves [i.e. modes of mind] stirred by the wind [i.e. ignorance]. Water and wind are inseparable; but water is not mobile by nature, and if the wind stops the movement ceases. But the wet nature remains undestroyed. Likewise, man's Mind, pure in its own nature, is stirred by the wind of ignorance. Both Mind and wind have no particular forms of their own and they are inseparable. Yet Mind is not mobile by nature, and if ignorance ceases, then the continuity [of deluded activities] ceases. But the essential nature of wisdom [i.e. the essence of Mind, like the wet nature of water] remains undestroyed. (Hakeda: 41)

In this metaphor, the non-differentiation of all waves as water excludes the possibility of interpreting each individual as different and autonomous in the context of many others. The water of the Ocean is the same everywhere, despite the appearance of waves caused by the wind.

However, with this metaphor, it is hard to explain why wind and water are inseparable, how the wind is outside of the water and yet still affects the water so as to produce waves. To say that the wind is a metaphor for original ignorance does not tally with the doctrine that original ignorance is within human nature and works within the human mind to create the delusion of individuality. Also, the metaphor of waves and the ocean suggests an ontological quietism in *The Awakening of Faith* in seeing the ultimate reality as quiet and immobile. We may also ask why the essence of water consists merely in its abstract wetness and not in its nurture of life and constantly mobile nature. This is to ask: why does *The Awakening of Faith* take it for granted that "To be is to be quiet," and "To act is to suffer," instead of "To be is to act" and "To act is to create," which for me is a more reasonable vision of reality. If water is by nature not only wet, but also nurtures all forms of life and is constantly moving, then it would be easier for us to conceive how it creates wind which in turn creates myriad waves.

The second metaphor employed in the explanation of non-enlightenment is that of losing one's direction. Non-enlightenment is defined in terms of not realizing oneness with the True Thusness. We read, "Because of not truly realizing oneness with True Thusness, there emerged an unenlightened mind, and consequently, in thoughts. These thoughts do not have any validity to be substantiated; therefore they are not independent of the original enlightenment." (Hakeda: 43) Here the author of *The Awakening of Faith* uses the metaphor of getting lost to explain the relation between non-enlightenment and the original enlightenment:

> It is like the case of a man who has lost his way: he is confused because of [his wrong sense of] direction. If he is freed from [the notion of] direction altogether, then there will be no such thing as going astray. It is the same with men: because of [the notion of] enlightenment, they are confused. But if they are freed from the fixed notion of enlightenment, then there will be no such thing as non-enlightenment. (Ibid.)

This metaphor is very helpful in understanding the ontological relation between original enlightenment and non-enlightenment. Ontologically, original enlightenment and non-enlightenment are one. Conceptually speaking, however, they are different. It is due to the

existence of a certain fixed concept of enlightenment that there is non-enlightenment. Enlightenment as a constructed reality creates the distinction between enlightenment and non-enlightenment. This is not to say that there is no direction in our life at all; Buddhism does not deny that there is direction in our life based on the dynamic vector of relatedness in the spatio-temporal structure of existence as constituted by the network of dependent causation.

However, if this metaphor is taken to mean or represent reality, then the dynamic network of causal dependence will be neglected. In this case, there is the problem of how to coherently combine the metaphor of losing one's direction with the doctrine of the network of dependent causation, though the metaphor of losing one's direction is itself very inspiring in its suggestion that believers make no discrimination between enlightenment and non-enlightenment, which corresponds well to the Buddhist spirit of seeing all things as equal.

The third metaphor, also used to describe the relationship between enlightenment and non-enlightenment, is that of pottery and clay. There are two relations involved here: identity and non-identity. As to identity, we read,

> Just as pieces of various kinds of pottery are of the same nature in that they are made of clay, so the various magic-like manifestation (maya) of both enlightenment and non-enlightenment are aspects of the same essence, the True Thusness. For this reason, it is said in a sutra that "all sentient beings intrinsically abide in eternity and are entered into nirvana. The state of enlightenment is not something that is to be acquired by practice or to be created. In the end, it is unobtainable."(Hakeda: 45-46)

This is to say, given that enlightenment is not to be acquired by practice or produced by any ethical effort, the only way to enlightenment is to return suddenly to the Original Enlightenment, without the need for practice or cultivation. From this perspective, the attainment of enlightenment is something that is beyond ethical practice and moral self-cultivation. As to non-identity, *The Awakening of Faith* says,

> Just as various pieces of pottery differ from each other, so differences exist between the state of enlightenment and non-enlightenment, and between the magic-like manifestation [of the true thusness manifested] in accordance with [the mentality of men in] defilement, and those of men in ignorance who are defiled [i.e. blinded] as to the true nature of True Thusness. (Hakeda: 46)

This metaphor clarifies the idea that an individual belongs to a different unit of existents, just as a piece of pottery has a different and individual body, but to think in such a way is a delusion, a result of the imagination. The passage goes on to say, "Also it has no corporeal aspect that can be perceived as such. Any corporeal aspects [such as the makers of the Buddha] that are visible are magic-like product [of True Thusness manifested] in accordance with [the mentality of men in] defilement." (Ibid.) All items of individual pottery are made of clay, and we have taken notice of the fact that the metaphor of clay is also used to give a real sense of the oneness of the Mind. In this ontological situation, where individuality is delusion and therefore multiple otherness is also mere illusion, there is no need to practice ethics and moral self-cultivation. The overwhelming Oneness of the ultimate reality cancels the need for the practice of ethics.

PART II. THE BUDDHIST IDEAS OF STRANGIFICATION AND GENEROSITY

Some Critical Reflections on the Awakening of Faith

At the end of this discussion of *The Awakening of Faith*, one may ask whether it is, ethically speaking, more valuable to be generous to many others because of their ontological sameness to me, because they share the same ultimate reality, or because many others are different from me, other than me, and therefore it is necessary for me to go outside of myself to do things that benefit them or serve to their good. In my view, if there is no respect for many others in one's mind/heart, and all that exists can be absorbed into ontological sameness, then there will be no ethics at all. That being said, the notion of reducing all sentient beings to the One Mind might be helpful in inviting compassion toward many others by considering them to be the same as myself: that to kill others is to kill myself or part of myself, and to be generous to others is to be generous to myself or to part of myself, and to do good to others is to do good to myself or to part of myself, and so on. In the end, to think in this way will make the effort to be ethical or moral self-cultivation unnecessary or even impossible.

The Concept of huixiang 迴向 as a Buddhist idea of Strangification

In this second part of my examination of Chinese Mahayana Buddhist ethics of generosity, I will examine the concept of *huixiang* 迴向 (*parinama* or turning toward) as one of the most important conceptual and spiritual resources of Buddhism in the era of

globalization. *Huixiang* may be understood in two senses: on the one hand, to turn one's mind upwards or vertically, towards enlightenment or wisdom, and, on the other, to turn one's spiritual merits outwards or horizontally to many others for their spiritual well-being. According to *huixiang,* through the accumulation of merits or good deeds, one can raise oneself to a higher or ultimate form of existence such as *bodhi* or *nirvana*; one can also turn them to the spiritual benefit of all sentient beings, and at the time of mourning for the dead, one can turn one's accumulated merits to the spiritual benefit of the dead, that is, for the peace of his/her soul.

There are several types of *huixiang* in Mahayana Buddhism, including the *bodhi huixiang* 普提迴向 (turning upwards to *bodhi* or enlightenment), the *zhongsheng huixiang* 眾生迴向 (turning to all sentient beings), and the *shiji huixiang* 實際迴向 (turning toward Reality). For the understanding of *huixiang*, we can refer to Huiyuan's entry "*huixiang*" in his *Dasheng Yizhang* 大乘義章 (*The Meaning of Mahayana Buddhism*), where we read:

> The so-called *huixiang* means to turn one's good dharmas to the benefit of others, that's why it is named "*huixiang*". But there are different kinds of *huixiang*. Within the same gate there are three kinds of *huixiang*: the first is *bodhi huixiang*; the second is all sentient beings *huixiang*; the third is reality *huixiang*.

> The so-called *bodhi huixiang* turns itself to the search for the mind of the wisdom that knows all. It is turning all good dharmas that one has been cultivating to all kinds of virtues that belong to *bodhi*. That is why it is named the *bodhi huixiang*.

> The so-called all sentient beings *huixiang* is the mind/heart that is deeply concerned with all sentient beings, and it is because of this concern that one turns all good dharmas realized by oneself to them. That's why it is named the all sentient beings *huixiang*. …

> The third is reality *huixiang*. It is the mind that one disentangles from one's involvement in the realm of beings so that one can look for the True Thusness, that one destroys the realm of beings for the purpose of the True Reality, and uses one's own good nature (root) to turn to the attainment of the all equal and thus true Dharma

Nature. This is named the reality *huixiang*. (Taisho 44: 636c; my English translation).

Huixiang, as the act of transferring one's merits to many others, may be considered as an act going outside of one's self for the benefit of many others, that is to say, all sentient beings, which presupposes an original generosity. I should say that the *zhongsheng huixiang* 眾生迴向 or the turning to all sentient beings does in fact show a kind of generosity towards many others, even if the ultimate end of this is to bring them together to the realm of enlightenment, which is the ultimate end of all Buddhist praxis. However, to bring many others to enlightenment presupposes one's own enlightenment; that is why Buddhism's emphasis is always upon the turning upwards to enlightenment, or *bodhi huixiang* 普提迴向 which means turning to one's own spiritual promotion and conversion into higher forms of consciousness or spiritual forms, to the point of achieving enlightenment. Moreover, since enlightenment is the state of mind that has obtained the ultimate reality, or the True Thusness, both *zhongsheng huixiang* and *bodhi huixiang* are ultimately based on an ontological view of reality which is obtained by the mind of the True Thusness. In this sense, *huixiang* is related to and developed by promoting oneself to the obtainment of *bodhi* and the fulfillment of the True Thusness.

When exploring the concept of "*huixiang*" in *The Meaning of Mahayana Buddhism*, Huiyuan explains that this need to turn towards *bodhi*, or the reason for cultivating *Bodhi huixiang*, is because of the limitation of one's goodness, and that it is the unlimited goodness cultivated for Buddha's sake that could provide an unlimited foundation for turning one's merits to many others. We read,

> …, because the goodness cultivated for one's own sake is limited either in scope or in number, whereas the goodness cultivated for Buddha's sake is unlimited in scope and number. Therefore one should cultivate *huixiang*. What is the meaning of this? Bodhi's merits for nirvana are immense and without boundary, but it could be looked after only by the one singular good nature [of mine]. Since in every side of the great *bodhi* there is always someone leading a life of goodness, once one good *huixiang* is increased and extended, other good natures will follow the example and get into the same process [of increasing and extending]. That's why in Buddhist Scriptures it is always taught that *huixiang* brings the greatest benefit. It is for these three reasons that we should cultivate and practice *bodhi huixiang*. (Taisho 44: 637a; my English translation)

However, in Huiyuan's discussion of the term *Huixiang*, it is not clear how one goes about turning toward wisdom or *bodhi*. It is therefore of interest to look for the procedure of turning towards wisdom in, for example, the conversion of consciousness into wisdom as explained in Indian Yogācāra, or more so in Chinese Weishi, as it is interpreted by Weishi's concept of *zhuanyi* 轉依 (turning and transforming). Here *bodhi huixiang* may be interpreted as the *zhuanyi* 轉依 (turning and transforming) of consciousness into wisdom. I will elaborate a little further on this idea in what follows.

Turning Upwards to Bodhi as Transformation of Consciousness into Wisdom

The concrete procedure of turning towards *bodhi* is most clearly exemplified by the practice of yoga. Yogācāra in India and *Weishi* in China are renowned for their meticulous analysis and minute classification of consciousness, presented most completely in the so-called 100 dharmas which are classified into five categories: Citta-dharma (mind), Caitasika-dharma (mental contents), Rūpa-dharma (material elements), Citta-viprayukta-samskāra (things not associated with mind) and Asamskrta-dharma (non-created elements), as they were elaborated out of the 75 dharmas of the *Abhidharma-kosa* (Takakesu: 72-74). However, all these minute distinctions are not purely intellectual inventions and they in fact appear in the process of Yoga praxis. Because of this, these classifications are very helpful in Yogācāra's pedagogy and in the teaching of Yogācāra's wisdom, and they are most useful for tracking the progress of one's spiritual advancement.

In Yogācāra and *Weishi* Buddhism we find an analytic progression, or better, a phenomenological reduction, from the five consciousnesses to the sixth consciousness or the empirical self-consciousness, then to the seventh consciousness or the transcendental self-consciousness, and finally to the ontological origin of all consciousness, the Alaya-vijñāna or the bhūtatathatā (the True Thusness). Five sense perceptions—seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and tasting—are seen as the five consciousnesses. These should be bracketed or reduced to the empirical self-consciousness, which is the empirical center of the five sensations or the sense-centered consciousness, and thus called the sixth consciousness.

Thus the act of phenomenological reduction is also a process of analyzing the dynamic structure of consciousness, which entails entering deeper and deeper layers of consciousness, from the five consciousnesses to the sixth, then to the seventh, then to the eighth. It is thus a process of acquiring deeper self-understanding and returning to the root of one's true Self.

The seventh consciousness as the thought-centered consciousness, the manas-vijñāna, is the imagined center from which all willing and thinking come about, and often attaches itself to its own imagined centeredness as true self. It may be compared with the Cartesian concept of "*Je pense*", or the Husserlian "transcendental ego." Yet it differs in the sense that the concept of "*Je pense*" for Descartes and the transcendental ego for Husserl are seen as the transcendental constituent of the human self, or better, the transcendental origin of the constituting dynamism of all our empirical experience, while the seventh consciousness for the *Weishi* School is only a derivative transformation of the eighth consciousness.

Finally, the eighth consciousness, the alaya-vijñāna (storehouse consciousness) contains all seeds or potentialities of right/wrong thoughts and good/evil deeds to be manifested and effected in the previous seven forms of consciousness, and at the same time, is also influenced by them. That is to say, the *alaya-vijñāna* contains a double process: on the one hand, it realizes the seeds into deeds and thoughts in the process of manifestation; on the other, it receives their influence or is fumigated by the former seven consciousnesses in actual operation. In the Indian Yogācāra tradition, all these distinctions between psychic layers are eventually abandoned in the process of Yoga praxis for the benefit of the enlightened and for the benefit of many others and they should not be perceived as real distinctions.

For me, the most interesting philosophical idea of the *Weishi* School concerns the transformation of consciousness into wisdom. This concept presupposes that one enters into the ultimate reality, either as *alaya-vijñāna* (according to the tradition of Xuanzang) or as *bhūtatathatā* (according to the tradition of Paramārtha), both of which are related with but still detached from (yet not determined by) all other dharmas and from the determination of all specific representations and names.

By the marvelous function of the ultimate reality, the eighth consciousness is transformed into mind/heart corresponding to the "wisdom of the grand perfect mirror." The metaphor of "grand mirror" is used to describe the reflection of marvelous reality as it is. This is therefore a wisdom that reaches the Reality Itself and sees things in their utmost authenticity and purity.

Then, leading on from this, one transforms the seventh consciousness into mind/heart corresponding to the wisdom of equality. Instead of being self-centered, this is a wisdom that opens one to all beings and sees all others as equal to oneself and perceives all as equally worthy of compassion.

Then, the sixth consciousness may be transformed into mind/heart corresponding to the wisdom of marvelous observation, which produces

enlightened understanding of perceived objects and the capacity to teach different people according to the nature of their own being.

Finally, basing upon all these, the five actual consciousnesses may be transformed into the wisdom of achieving all deeds, by which one can realize all good deeds on the levels of action, words and intention, for the benefit of all sentient beings.

Although there are different views of the ultimate reality, either as alaya-vijñāna in Xuanzang's tradition, or as bhūtatathatā itself in Paramārtha's tradition, it is noticeable that there is always a double process involved in the transformation of consciousness into wisdom. On the one hand, there is the process of retracing self-awareness, tracing back to deeper and more original layers of self-awareness from the five consciousnesses to the sixth, to the seventh, to the eighth consciousness, until we arrive at the Original Ground, that being either the alaya-vijñāna or the bhūtatathatā. On the other hand, there is the process of purifying manifestation, which first transforms the eighth consciousness into the wisdom of the grand perfect mirror, then purifies and realizes the seventh consciousness into the wisdom of equality, then purifies and realizes the sixth consciousness into the wisdom of marvelous observation, and finally purifies and realizes the five consciousnesses into the wisdom of achieving all deeds. We can interpret all this as a process of transforming one's consciousness into wisdom, by which one sees all things as they are, in equality, with full understanding of their concrete existential situations in order to realize good deeds on the levels of action, words and intention, for the benefit of many others.

Turning to Many Others as Act of Strangification and Generosity

Based on the wisdom or *bodhi* obtained through the process of transformation of consciousness into wisdom, one is able to turn towards many others, which, according to my interpretation, may be properly seen as an act of *waitui* 外推 (strangification), that is, the act of going out of oneself to many others, from those with whom one is familiar to strangers, motivated by a certain spirit of generosity. In Chinese Mahayana Buddhism, this process is put in the context of *fangbian* (方便), or expedient methods for dealing with many others in order to bring them to enlightenment, rather than an act of ethical goodness. *Huixiang* here is understood as the act of transferring one's merits to the welfare and eventual enlightenment of all sentient beings. Generosity is here related to the Buddhist concept of gift, emphasizing first of all the gift of assistance toward enlightenment.

The Buddhist concept of gift seems to put more emphasis on the immaterial gift, such as the gift of meaning and dharmas, rather than on the material gift, even if the material gifts that lead to many others' physical happiness are not neglected. In the *Perfection of Wisdom in 150 lines*, concerning the concept of gift, we read:

> The gift of Consecration leads to the acquisition of kingship over everything in the triple world; the gift of meaning leads to the fulfillment of all hopes; the gift of Dharma leads to the attainment of the sameness of all dharmas; the fleshly gift leads to the acquisition of all happiness in body, speech and thought. (Conze 1973b: 187)

Here the most important kinds of gift are the gift of meaning, the gift of Dharma, and the material gift that leads to the acquisition of all physical and mental happiness (in body, speech and thought). However, in my discussion of *The Awakening of Faith in Mahayana*, where three kinds of charitable practices are mentioned, namely the charity in giving material goods, the charity of letting others be without fear, and the charity of instruction, I have shown that, under a genuine Buddhist spirit of seeing all as equal, all three kinds of generosity should be seen as equal: equally generous, equally without gain and equally unconditional.

Most interesting is that, when one practices *huixiang*, one should do so as if one is not doing so; that there should be no agent of *huixaiang*, no method of doing *huixiang* and no object of *huixiang*, so as to make an act of *huixiang* a genuine *huixiang*. This applies to both the upward or vertical *huixiang* and to outward or horizontal *huixiang*. What the *Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines* says on the *huixiang* is more concerned with the mindlessness of upwards *huixiang* in transferring one's merit to enlightenment. There we read,

> When in one who turns over there proceeds the perception of a thought, or if the turning over of the perception of enlightenment involves the perception of a being: Established in perception, false views, and thought, it is tied by the triple attachment. It does not become turned over to those who apprehend it. But when he thus cognizes: These *dharmas* are extinct and stopped, and wherein they are turned over, that is also extinct.
>
> Nor is ever anywhere dharma turned over into a dharma: Then it does become turned over in one who thus considers wisely. When he makes a sign, he does not turn over [to enlightenment], But if [he turns to it as] the signless, [that]

> becomes turned over into enlightenment. Just as though
> food mixed with poison were good to eat, so has the taking
> of pure *dharmas* as a basis been spoken of by the Jina.
> Therefore thus should one train in turning over: As the Jina
> wisely know that wholesome [root],- Its class as it is, its
> origins as they are, its characteristics as they are,- Thus do I
> rejoice [in that wholesome root], thus do I turn [it] over.
> And thus turning merit over into enlightenment, he does not
> upset the Buddha, one who has preached what the Jina has
> taught. As many as there are in the world Buddhisatvas
> who lean on a basis all of them surpasses the hero who
> turns over in this way. (Conze 1973a: 21-22)

In comparison, when we come to sutras favored by Chinese Buddhists, the emphasis is more on the mindlessness of generous acts to many others, especially in the generous giving of material goods. This spirit is developed later in the charity work practiced by Pure Land Buddhism. As I said in my discussion of *The Awakening of Faith in Mahayana*, it is in the generous act of gift that the giver "while freeing himself from greed and avarice, causes the beggar to be joyful." Also, in *The Diamond Sutra*, which is a basic text of all schools of Chinese Mahayana Buddhism, in particular of Chan Buddhism, we find the idea of Buddha's merit as no merit. We read,

> If a son or daughter of good family had filled this word
> system of 1.000 million worlds with the seven precious
> things, and then gave it as a gift to the Thathagatas, the
> Arahats, the fully enlightened Ones…On the strength of
> that this son or daughter of good family would beget a great
> heap of merit, immensurable and incalculable. But if, on
> the other hand, there were such a thing as a heap of merit,
> the Tathagata would not have spoken of a "heap of merit".
> (Conze 1973b: 134)

This non-attachment to one's own generosity, even if one's generosity arises from compassion, will render generosity more genuine and self-transcending. This goes well with the spiritual meaning of emptiness, that is, the non-attachment to any merit or achievement. Most important is not mere idea, but the implementation of idea in the act of generosity towards all sentient beings. The promotion to *bodhi huixiang* would provide the non-foundational foundation to Buddha's merit as no merit, or the mindlessness of one's generous act towards many others. However, it is with regard to all sentient beings that one can bestow this

unconditional generosity. Huiyuan in his discussion of *huixiang* gives the following explanation:

> Third, we say to increase and extend, because all goodness for oneself is narrow and small, whereas all benefits for others have more goodness in number. In order to allow all goodness increase and extend according to the rhythm of things, one should cultivate and practice [all sentient beings *huixiang*]. What does this mean? It means if one practices one good deed to turn to and bestow upon all sentient beings, there will be unlimited numbers of sentient beings to increase and extend this goodness unlimitedly. Once this particular good is increased and extended, all other good natures will be increased and extended in following this example. It is for the reason of these three meanings that one should cultivate and practice all sentient beings *huixiang*. (Taisho 44: 637a; my English translation)

It is for the same reason that Pure Land Buddhism puts emphasis on the *zhongsheng huixiang* 眾生迴向, by which one turns all that one has accumulated as good deeds or good *dharmas*, in willing to bestow them on many others, even to the point of returning from the pure land back to the world in order to bring salvation to many others. There are two kinds of *huixiang* in Pure Land Buddhism: the *wanxiang huixiang* 往相迴向 (the turning towards Pure Land), which means the giving of one's merit in the past and present to all sentient beings for communal rebirth in the Pure Land; and the *fanxiang huixiang* 返相迴向 (the returning back from the Pure Land), which is the act of returning to this world after being born in the Pure Land, through one's compassion for the teaching and transformation of all sentient beings so that they can progress on the Way to Buddhahood.

CONCLUSION

As we can see from *The Awakening of Faith*, the ethics of generosity in Chinese Mahayana Buddhism has both a theoretical and practical aspect. On the theoretical level, the ontology of Oneness or Sameness lays the foundation for this Buddhist ethics. On the practical level, there are various practices of gift, such as the gift of material goods, the gift of no fear and the gift of dharma, among which I perceive the gift of no fear as the gift that allows sentient beings to be themselves, that is, to be Buddha, the enlightened one, and hence there is no more need of fear. However, according to my critical analysis, we can still

question the monist ontological foundation of this ethics of generosity. This concerns the problem of the ontological presupposition of One Mind as the ultimate reality, which takes all sentient beings as belonging with sameness to the One Mind. It is possible that this presupposition might weaken the ontological status of, and the ethical respect for, difference and diversity. It would be more ethical to respect the ontological status of many others, with their difference and diversity, as crucial to the relation among sentient beings.

As I see it, in today's world, ethics should be considered as the first philosophy, not merely as an instrument for enlightenment; and Buddhism should engage in some critical self-reflection on this philosophical issue, whether ethics takes priority over enlightenment or enlightenment takes priority over ethics. This theoretical issue is accompanied by another problem on the practical level: although in Chinese Mahayana Buddhism there is indeed abundant generosity towards many others in the form of *zhongsheng huixiang* 眾生迴向, *bodhi huixiang* always takes priority over other types of *huixiang*. Thus, the transformation into wisdom is prioritized over *Zhongsheng huixiang* and *Reality Huixiang*. In this sense, the original generosity towards many others is given secondary priority, while enlightenment and wisdom enjoy the first priority in most Chinese Mahayana Buddhist schools, with the exception of Pure Land Buddhism. I fully appreciate that, in Pure Land Buddhism, the *zhongsheng huixiang* 眾生迴向 is given first priority, not only in the *wanxiang huixiang* 往相迴向 that gives one's merit in the past and present to all sentient beings for communal rebirth in the Pure Land, but also in the *fanxiang huixiang* 返相迴向 (the returning back from Pure Land), by which one returns from the Pure Land back to this world through compassion for all suffering sentient beings. Here ethical concern is admirably put to the forefront, rather than merely having the status of an expedient measure for obtaining enlightenment, although I fully understand that in Buddhism in general, enlightenment is always crucial.

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CHAPTER VIII

RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN CONTEMPORARY SHANGHAI AND THE TASKS OF EAST ASIAN THEOLOGY

BENOIT VERMANDER, S.J.

INTRODUCTION[1]

Michel de Certeau has noted that, by the mere fact of combining the words of *theos and logos*, "theology" was based upon the tension between a *logos*(a systematic discourse grounded on reason) and a *Kairos* (the surprising event that the coming of the living God always constitutes) (Certeau, 1987: 37). And indeed, as already exemplified by the figures of Abraham and Moses (Gen. 12 and Ex.3) God is experienced as surprise, as event, as the absolute Otherness who disrupts one's ways of thinking and acting. Therefore, the theological language shaped by tradition on the one hand and the narrated experience of God enacted in a 'here and now" on the other hand entertain an uneasy relationship, as they mutually challenge their premises and formulations. If theology does contribute in an ecclesial discernment on the faith experience that believers share among them (1 Jn 4:1-6), it must accept at the same time to let its language and focus be renewed according to the way God makes himself present, continuing the narrative of the salvation history. For Truth's language is necessarily History itself (see Certeau, 1987: 45).

This is why theology is not only a discourse but also a *way of proceeding*. First, theology as a task to be undertaken entails a critical discernment about the way its discourse is enacted, assessing the procedures through which its propositions are written and communicated. Second, an authentic theological discourse is elaborated within a common experience of the Word of God, an experience that its precisely endeavors to translate into a language. In this regard, the crafting of a Christian community is akin to the crafting of a theological style (Certeau, 1987: 39). And in so far as institutions (seminaries, parishes and other places) may resist the novelty of God as it manifests itself through communal inventiveness, a truly theological way of proceeding may sometimes consist in theologizing outside such contexts.

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[1] This article was first published in "Korean Journal of Systematic Theology"(September 2014), pp.7-33.

This article elaborates on such premises, as it tries to articulate into a whole ethnographic observations and theological propositions. The first part explores further the link between what I just called "communal inventiveness" and the theologian's task.

The second part – the central one – presents a few findings from an ongoing research on Shanghai's religious communities. The third part offers a few considerations on the theological significance of religious effervescence in the present Chinese context.

1. COMMUNAL INVENTIVENESS AS A THEOLOGICAL RESOURCE

1.1. The Acts of the Apostles: Novelty and Communal Wisdom

The *Acts of the Apostles* provide us with the most achieved example of a theological elaboration that proceeds throughout as a meditation on the way communities are shaped, challenged and renewed. It can be said that, in AA, the discovery of God's salvation project and intimate mystery is inseparable from the invention of communal structures and ways of proceedings. The progressive opening of the Christian community to the challenge of "Otherness" manifests the radical otherness of the God whom Christians worship and whose images they are perpetually led to subvert. Otherness may take the figure of Paul, the former persecutor to whom Jesus has revealed himself outside the Apostles' preaching, the figure of the Greek-speaking faithful whose needs challenge community structures (AA 6), and most decisively the one of the pagans towards whom the Spirit has taken the initiative (AA 10, 11, 15). Similarly, the institutional distinction soon established between the "service of the tables" and the "preaching of the Word' is immediately subverted by the outbreak of a persecution, which sees the deacons Stephan and Philip proclaiming the novelty in God in a radically innovative fashion (AA 6-8), thus revealing that the communal sharing of the bread is indeed the locus from which the Word is performatively uttered. Furthermore, the progressive building of interconnected Christian communities, as documented both by AA and by the Pauline Epistles, will be the privileged place where God's revelation is furthered and reflected upon, in a process that continues till today each time a Christian community engages in a reflexive process upon its mission and its way of behaving (or not behaving) in the spirit of the Gospel.

As I just noted, the experience of the living God fosters a sense of *novelty* that challenges the images and discourses that pretended to circumscribe his being and message. At the same time, experience needs to be stored and memorized — and accumulated experience is justly

described as "wisdom". Through rumination of past events, Christians (as other groups also do) develop a "communal wisdom", which helps them to discern what are the images of God they are called to overcome, or – to say it otherwise – what are the idols that stand on the way to a deeper understanding of what they are called to believe and become. The theologian Paul Beauchamp has justly emphasized the communal character of biblical Wisdom: "Wisdom can be defined as a 'counter-idol', and, likewise, the Book could be defined as a 'counter-image.' Indeed, Wisdom occupies the same space as the one in which the idol stands: the world, the creation, that which is neither man nor God. Instead of closing the passage, she opens it. But Wisdom takes shape in the same place as the image does, at the threshold where the desire chooses its direction....Wisdom hastens to God, led by a prophetic impulse. Understood in this light, Wisdom can be associated to what tradition calls the *figures*[2] of the Old Testament....Wisdom is not a *figure* per se, but it includes all the *figures*, the place of truth where each one of them, in a 'here and now', has been actualized." (Beauchamp, 1982: 77) Wisdom is communal in that it shapes and closes the Book by recognizing and organizing the plurality of voices that it contains: "The Wisdom Books are meant to give voice back to the people, to whom the Law and the Prophets had been {unilaterally} speaking."(Beauchamp, 1977: 142).

1.2. Religious Ethnography and Theology of Religions

Hopefully, the above considerations will convince the reader that Christian communities in China can legitimately be seen as a theological setting among others – a place that can be observed in such a way as to meditatively reflect upon the way God's word and deeds manifest themselves in today's world through communal inventiveness. While being anchored into ethnographic observation, such endeavor remains autonomous from social sciences in its ultimate purpose and probably makes sense only from the theologian's standpoint. Specifically, such endeavor can contribute to renew theological concerns and methods within the East Asian context.

However, the present article goes one step further. It does not limit itself to the observation of the Christian communities; it considers the nexus of all religious communities operating within a single megacity – Shanghai – as a theological setting. Before trying to justify such stance, a short presentation of our underlying ethnographic project is in order.

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[2] Figure: *figura*, i.e. an allegory, a symbol prefiguring a latter-day event or person.

This article is largely based on some provisional results from an ongoing study on religious communities in Shanghai, which I am conducting together with the British ethno-photographer Liz Hingley. As one knows, traditionally, the study of "Chinese religions" has been mostly taking shape within the framework of the village and of rural life, while China's accelerated urbanization is radically changing the social context in which religious manifestations take place. At the core of our enquiry lies the assumption that Shanghai, as a world metropolis, shares a number of common features with other metropolises, one of them being that such cities creatively redefine religious boundaries—the ones of their original population and the ones of the people from afar who become part of their fabric. In other words, we started from the assumption that Shanghai could help us to think creatively about "religion" and its various demarcations in Chinese context, "[emphasizing] the contextual specificity in which such lines of demarcation are drawn and policed."(Garnett and Harris, 2013: 3-4) Analyzing Shanghai's religious setting in the line of what has been attempted for other contemporary cities rather than on the basis of "Chinese exceptionalism" could thus provide us with a number of interesting vantage points.

In this regard, the experience developed by Liz Hingley when documenting religious creativity in migrant's urban settings, both in Birmingham and Belleville (Hingley, 2011; Hingley and Hertozg, 2013), has seemed to us an asset for investigating not only the migratory dimension of Shanghai religiosities but also the ingenuity of religious practices developed within an institutional context that does not allow for their full and free expression. Somehow, the "trajectories" developed by migrants in a religious environment that is at first alien to them would suggest the tactics devised by the inhabitants of Shanghai for building up religious markers, paths and spaces in an urban setting from which they are largely dispossessed. In any case, it is the creativity developed by city dwellers when re-mapping religion that would call for the one to be displayed by the investigators tracking their paths.

In our ongoing research, we are thus trying to detail how the observation of Shanghai's religious practitioners leads one to assess different religious mappings of the urban space induced by the interaction between state strategies and individuals/communities' tactics. These mappings are inscribed into material spaces and space arrangements that photography documents. Pictures and analysis ultimately concur in describing actual practices, their inscription into urban structures, and the mental geographies that arise from these spatialized practices.

Our approach emphasizes the fact that religious communities are part of an urban nexus, translating people's creativity and renewed

solidarity into networked spatial mappings. Rather than isolating Christianity from its religious neighbors we chose to consider it in its global settings. When navigating from ethnography to theology, such stance implies that the communal creativity displayed by Christian local churches reveals its meaning when referred to the way different religious groupings take shape and develop. It makes religious ethnography an entrance door to a theology of religions that stresses the *dissemination* of Christian communities within a world divided and structured through an array of faiths and spiritual quests. Rather than isolating Christianity from the world of lived religions it rather stresses that it develops in solidarity with others – others without whom it would be unable to achieve its task. In such perspective, Christianity has less vocation to gather all men than to be scattered throughout all people – less vocation to possessing a land than to depart into Exile. The Church needs the others for fulfilling the mission it receives (in the way Jesus was truly himself only because he was grounded into his relation with his Father, his disciples and all people he was encountering), and she is faithful to her origins only when she recognizes how much she needs, lacks and desires the others, a lack constitutive of her very being. The ethnographic/theological approach I develop here testifies to this understanding of what the "Christian style" needs to be today (see Théobald, 2008).

2. RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES IN SHANGHAI TODAY

2.1. Religious Spaces

Major Chinese cities are one of the prominent loci where the country's religious sphere is being reshaped. The study of religious spaces provides one with an interesting starting point. Religious buildings marking the urban space "belong" both to the religious communities they serve and to the entire city. These landmarks encompass symbols and narratives that are shared by all or are interpreted differently from one group to another. In traditional China, the city god temple was certainly invested with special communal meaning: rooted into the earth gods' cults widespread in rural China, it became a state institution when the founder of the Ming dynasty, Taizu (r. 1368-1399), made compulsory the creation of a city-god temple in every county or prefecture (Lagerwey, 2010: 49; Davis, 2001: 82). Accordingly, in Shanghai, an existing temple was converted into the municipal city-god temple. Today, when speaking of the "city-god temple" (*chenghuang miao* 城隍庙), one refers both to the temple complex, located within the old walled city, and to the district of stores and shops surrounding it. Traditionally, guilds or board of trustees were

the caretakers of temples deserving a given territory. The Daoist Association was put in charge of their management from 1951 onwards. Today, *Chenghuangmiao* is a tourist and commercial attraction, which is, at the same time, home to Taoist rituals and teaching – a state of affair that can be found in most Chinese cities: the most representative and/or well-kept city temple hosts the local Daoist association while being at the center of a cultural/commercial district or of a "culture street" that supposedly epitomizes the past and the spirit of the city.

In Shanghai, beside the city-god temple, other religious buildings officially mentioned as city landmarks include the Jade Buddha, Jing'an and Longhua Temples, the Wenmiao (Confucius Temple), the Sheshan Catholic Basilica, the Xujiahui Catholic Cathedral, the Protestant Huai'en, Mo'en and Hengshan churches, the Songjiang and Taoyuan mosques, the Baiyuanguan and Cinciyang Daoist Temples, but also the Orthodox Church and the Jewish Refugee Memorial Hall, though neither Orthodoxy nor Judaism are official religions[2]).

"Religious landmarks" are sometimes multipurpose or functioning on a status somehow unclear. Part of the reason is historical: Religious buildings were all converted to other uses during the Cultural Revolution, or even before in some cases. A good number of them were progressively given back after 1980 to the congregations to which they belonged, provided they were affiliated with the government. Orthodoxy not being one of the five recognized religions, the status of the Saint Nicholas Church in Shanghai – a striking building noticeable on a rather large area – has remained ambiguous. It was built in 1934, on the initiative of White Russians. The church was closed in 1949. It was first converted into a warehouse, a laundry and, later on, a washing machine factory. On February 15, 1994 the building was recognized as a city-level cultural relic preservation unit. Services were resumed on a weekly basis during Shanghai World Expo, in 2010, after the loft was re-consecrated. Since then, services can still be performed, under special authorization, and only for some Orthodox feast days. "Cultural relic", St Nicolas recovers its liturgical purpose on feast days. It now stands at the center of the spatial consciousness of Shanghai's tiny Orthodox community.

The Sheshan Basilica constitutes a religious landmark of much larger significance. From the 1870s onwards, the site has been progressively developed as the major Catholic pilgrimage site in China – and currently the only official one. Located on the western periphery of Shanghai, it was object of special devotion for the population of mariners and fishermen active on the large waterways network of the area, many of them having been converted to Catholicism. The month of May, which is dedicated to Mary, is the one when most pilgrimage

activities continue to take place, May 24 being the date dedicated to the Virgin of Sheshan.

Pilgrimage to the site was often made by boat. The site is nowadays easily accessible from a metro station located on Line 9, opened at the time of Shanghai World Expo.

Many other religious spaces could be cited, which showcase the complexity of local memories, of interaction between international and Chinese communities, and of the importance of landmark contributing to make the city a web of "sacred spaces" that resonate differently from one community to another but ultimately associate into a shared geography. At the same time, the frontiers and functions of religious spaces – from recognized landmarks to *ad hoc* meeting places – can be porous and evolving. The religious geography of the city is always in the making, created and recreated by the resourcefulness of believers.

2.2. Centers and Peripheries: the Paradoxical Situation of the Protestant Churches

One often insists on the social support that Chinese religious communities extend to their adherents, in an environment where the social link has been considerably weakened. However, not all religious communities offer the immediate solace of a close-knit grouping in which sharing would build up intimacy and solidarity. At least on the surface, the Protestant Hongde (鸿德) church, in Hongkou district (虹口区), may even seem to be on the opposite side of such a model. The 1928 building is a large-scale structure located in Duolun street (多伦路), a "culture street" dedicated to the Shanghai of the Republican era. Named after a former Presbyterian minister, the edifice harbors a large and solemn worship hall on its second floor, with additional tribunes on the third floor. The renovation was financed and directed by American Presbyterians in 1998. A huge pulpit and, behind it, massive choir stalls face the congregation. The hall proved soon to be too small, and an additional worship place was created on the first floor, with one hundred people or more being able to be seated. On Sundays, a giant screen helps attendants sited on the first floor to participate in the service being celebrated on the second. Smaller size services can also be celebrated here. Curiously, the decoration style of the first floor, conducted in 2000 by a local pastor, differs very much from the strict Presbyterian style of the second floor. Two pulpits are located on the aisles, giving more symbolic space to the communion service. On the wall facing the faithful hangs an inscription, "The True Source of All Beings"(万有真原), worded by the Kangxi Emperor (reigned 1661 to 1722) at the time he was reputedly close to Christianity. An illustrated Way of the Cross,

much Catholic in style, decorate the lateral walls. Thus, different Christian cultures coexist in the same building, and the faithful do not seem to take much notice. It sometimes happens (says one of the pastors) that some young people wish to have their wedding celebrated on the first floor, the atmosphere of which they like best, but this is not so frequent an occurrence.

Its structure of governance testifies further to the fact that the Hongde church works as an "organization", and in no way as an informal grouping. In conformity with the model followed by the "Three-Self" Church[3] in Shanghai, the congregation is part of a network of three churches located in the same area, with a head pastor and three other pastors taking care of its leadership, responding collectively to a lay Elder. Though the numbers offered seem approximate, there might be close to 2,000 people following the three services in Hongde, and close to 10,000 for all the Sunday services celebrated in the network of three churches it belongs to. Whatever the exact figures may be, it is clear that the attractiveness of the church comes from its capacity of mobilization and its organizational strength. In Hongde, forty lay monitors are in charge of the Sunday school, and are supervised by volunteers who are preferably recruited among certified teachers in public schools.

Another factor that makes the Hongde church work more as an organization than as a grassroots gathering is the social diversity of its congregation, which is due to the sociology of the district. If some faithful are extremely well off, others live on municipal subsidies. This does not encourage congregation members to ordinarily mix together. No meals or other forms of gatherings are organized after the Sunday services. Four times a year, alms are taken for ensuring some kind of mutual help within the community and for helping some poorer people outside the Church, people whose names have been forwarded by official street committees.

Does this mean that the church does not provide for close contacts, sense of intimacy and small groups encounters? The reality is more complex. First, as one can expect, there are gatherings on a regular basis of youth or bible study groups. A young woman pastor indicates that she has purposely divided some groups she is responsible of, from assemblies of around thirty people to gatherings of ten. Participants are also linked through social networks, though the pastor notices that the interaction on these networks is less intense than is the case with groups

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[3] The Three-Self Patriotic Movement (三自爱国运动) in association with the China Christian Council (中国基督教协会) form the state-sanctioned Protestant church in China, often called the Three-Self Church (三自教会).

of the underground Protestant church active in the same area. The workings of such groups evolve with time. One of them, originally created for providing volunteers to Shanghai 2010 World Expo, has since become an English-language Bible study group. More important may be the fact that there seems to exist a kind of "division of work" between the faithful and the official leaders of the church. For instance, though there is a general desire that marriages may be formed within the fellowship, the church itself is not organizing any activity to that end. But such *ad hoc* gatherings will take place at the home of some members of the congregation. Families also organize meals, at home or in restaurants, for personal events that they feel justify thanksgiving. In other words, the church functions as a kind of umbrella that provides for organizational strength, respectability, and both political and religious 'orthodoxy." As its internal design suggests, it also caters for a diversity of religious tastes and traditions – a fact made necessary by the variety of congregational origins that the Chinese Protestant Church had to gather into one.

Such original diversity is certainly not completely forgotten, since, according to the pastors, many members of the congregation come from families converted to Christianity for several generations. Within the churches' network to which Hongde belongs, the respective Methodist and Presbyterian origins of two of the churches are indicated by the names of the missionaries they recall, while the third church, posterior to the Republican period, is known simply by the name of the neighborhood it serves.

Such way of proceeding may remind one of a trend that has nurtured lively debates among Chinese sociologists. From the early 2000s onwards, some Chinese social scientists have been arguing that, in China, civil society expresses and defines itself in a process less governed by competition than by cooperation with the state (Deng, 2002). A book dedicated to the study of the Chamber of Commerce of the city of Wenzhou emphasizes the devolution of power and influence it has progressively been benefiting from, and states that "participation" rather than "independence" is the goal pursued by most of the organizations that the West ranks among the expressions of civil society (Yu et al., 2008). Moreover, the authors add, throughout Chinese history, if civil society had ever been a reality it was characterized by its role as provider of public goods and services (Buddhist charitable works, Confucian lineages sponsoring schools and road construction...). In the Chinese context, "participation" in social organizations is a pre-requisite for their "independence" – and it is not "independence" that would allow in a second stage to ensure "participation". Chinese authors therefore often see in the "participative growth of Chinese civil society"

the way China progressively constitutes a new type of socio-political space. This may partly apply to the religious space as well.

In the case of official religious associations (such as the Three-Self Church), drawing a parallel with professional organizations is legitimate enough, and "participation" can go hand in hand with an expansion of the area of initiative granted by the State. Such perspective may shed some light on the workings of the Hongde church: it needs to ensure that its apparatus works clearly and simply within the framework provided by state regulations, using such regulations for progressively asserting more legitimacy and influence. This is precisely such institutional growth that allows the faithful to engineer modes of gatherings that are flexible enough for answering the diversity and development of their spiritual and communal needs.

Underground religious expressions somehow challenge the "participative" model by relinquishing the safety offered by the institutional umbrella and thus opting for a faster and freer growth of grassroots faith gathering. This may be understood less as a political statement than as an expression of psychological and spiritual needs that gives special weight to immediacy and spontaneity. Such groups are prone to heavily rely on new medias (Yang, 2009). The stress created by the "participative" model may be also felt in a special way by the Church leaders in charge of its swift functioning: in the Hongde Church, a young pastor recruited in 2006 from the official Nanjing seminary has decided, after a few years of ministry, to join the underground Church.

2.3. Openings

Our research is presently including communities in Pudong district, belonging to Christian, Buddhist and popular religions, Jewish, Orthodox and Hindu expatriate communities often interacting with Chinese, a minute analysis of various Catholic parishes, underground Protestant churches located at the end of the metro lines, and Moslem communities from different ethnic background, among others. Various lessons can already be drawn from such research. One is that the positioning of a community in terms of "centrality" or "periphery" is certainly assessed and expressed more clearly when this community is part of a traditional local culture, defining itself against a larger urban background. Such communities are now hard to find in Shanghai, as the city has been entirely remodeled by expansion and urban planning. However, specific local cultures can still be isolated in Shanghai, the continuity and resilience of which are even striking.

Migrant groups (omnipresent in Shanghai) often meet on the basis of regional and dialectal affiliations. The plasticity of places, trajectories and liturgical forms offered by these communities certainly constitutes

their most striking feature. Participants create spaces and rituals that reshape the territories they live in. By doing so, they are also solidifying networks that happen to often reinforce existing connections, as the ones provided by the workplace, while charging them with new meaning. If it does make sense to speak of a religious "re-mapping" of the urban space, unofficial communities are certainly the ones that are the most consciously engaged in such an operation.

Finally, the search for "privacy" is very much part of Shanghai's spiritual quest. Home sanctuaries are numerous – be they Buddhist shrines or Christian meditation rooms. Reading the Scriptures, sharing a meal with a selected group of friends, looking for silence and spiritual retreat – these are fairly common aspirations in the overburdened life of urbanites, even if these traits are found more frequently among the upper middle class.

3. RELIGIOUS ETHNOGRAPHY AND THEOLOGICAL DISPLACEMENTS

3.1. Spiritual Geography and Peace-building

I will give only a sketch of the theological consequences that can be drawn from such ethnographic exploration. Again, the work of Michel de Certeau could serve as a guide for reflecting upon the inventiveness of believers and communities in their effort to define trajectories that express their creeds and modes of gathering (see especially Certeau, 1984). Somehow, a spiritual geography emerges from within the city, which might evoke for us the way the Spirit is shaping the Celestial Jerusalem in which we will dwell. After all, from Genesis to Revelation, humankind walks from a Garden to a City.

The first consideration that the variety of this spiritual geography might evoke to us has to do with the Gospel imperatives on peace-building as part of discipleship's constitutive nature (Vermander 2011 & 2013). In an urban context marked by potential or actual confrontations, but also by encounters and fluctuating frontiers, believers should not renounce the ideal of living and praying side by side as a privileged form of dialogue. In this light, and even if such posture looks "idealistic", the importance of a spiritual, even "mystical" approach towards interreligious understanding in dense urban neighborhoods cannot be over- looked.

Shanghai is a city marked by conflicting narratives, which the religious buildings contribute to embody and memorize. Knowing and sharing these narratives is an important element at play in a theology of religious encounter. More generally, the level of confidence existing among the various religious groups active in China as well as between

these groups and state organizations varies according to regions and circumstances. Let us remember in passing that Shanghai has been historically the city where the encounter between Christianity and Confucianism took flesh, as Xu Guangqi (徐光启, 1562-1633), a leading Confucian official, led his whole household towards baptism, his properties becoming thereafter the center of Catholic activity in the Jiangnan region, in what is now the heart of commercial Shanghai, the Xujiahui(徐家汇) district. The dialogue between Confucianism and Christianity allowed for creative synthesis, facilitating both the renewal of Confucianism and the advancement of Catholic theology. At that time, a dialogue among faiths and spiritualities was speedily advancing, in a climate respectful of national sovereignty and cultural differences. Such atmosphere was ruined, for a good part because of the dissensions within the Catholic Church during the "Chinese rites" controversy (the condemnation of Chinese rites enacted in 1704 by the Holy See was reversed in 1939.) Hermeneutical reflections on the way Chinese Christian theology pragmatically evolved during the late Ming-early Qing period remain a resource for peace- building and theology of religions in contemporary China.

3.2. Charities and Religious Inventiveness

There is another trait that deserves special mention: the religious growth that China currently experiences, especially in the cities, is leading towards the organization of faith-based charities. Our ethnographic study has still to document this trend in more details. Religious charities are anchored into Chinese history. Confucian lineages were providing funds for public work and education. For a long time, Buddhist lay associations had been helping the poor and organizing disaster relief. Popular religion was structured as a network of solidarity. After the introduction of Christianity in China, the new religion made itself known through hospitals, orphanages and schools. The religious revival happening in China from the 80s on could not go without a new focus on charitable and social work. For sure, religious groups have been restricted in their efforts by the regulations that apply to all sectors of society. Still, with time passing by, things are evolving, and official religions have been often able to set up bodies working with or having found accommodation with local governments. The phenomenon is quite clear in the metropolises of the East coast, and Shanghai is a case in point: Muslim organizations care for their poorer believers coming from the northwest, often perceived with much diffidence in a Han-dominated environment. Large Buddhist temples provide students with fellowships. Protestant churches pay attention to urbanites' psychological needs, and some even try to open service

centers to that effect. Catholics support development projects for small rural communities in Shanxi province or for far-away leper villages. Chinese believers are ready to dedicate time and money through their churches, while they would not consent to do so through other channels. The core issue is not about "how much" religious charities can contribute to China's society, and it is certainly not about them substituting for state organizations, as the latter function according to a well-designed if not always fully effective model. It is about the inventiveness and capacity to "feel' social and personal needs not yet answered that characterize faith-based initiatives. It is about the quality of care and creativity that communities of believers are ready to contribute. It is also about their capacity to think and collaborate together, thus contributing to social solidarity and cohesiveness.

The mention of these two trends could be complemented by other observations. The main point is that ethnographic observation allows for *theological displacements*, pointing towards issues that define how Christian communities look anew for God's presence in a world into which they are spread like the salt that is good for nothing but to give flavor to everything it mixes with (Mk 9:50).

CONCLUSION

Assessing the nature of religious trends in China, especially the ones having to do with the growth and maturation of Christian communities, constitutes an endeavor that goes beyond sociological and missionary concerns. It represents a work of theological discernment, dealing with questions that bear on the future of theology per se: What does religious inventiveness in the historically and politically loaded Chinese context tell us about the way God's revelation unfurls itself in the milieus and languages of our time? What does the coexistence of various religious traditions and styles of spiritual quest in mega-cities imply for a renewed understanding of Christian identity, as conflicting theologies of religious pluralism divide today the community of theologians? Which form is the search for "the Kingdom in our midst" taking in Chinese metropolises, and what is the significance of their protean spiritual awakening for the rest of the world? Today, China is not to be seen only as a "special case" in the world religious landscape or as a field for Christian missions, – a field that would be both particularly difficult and promising. The endogenous development of Chinese religious communities is to be appreciated per se, not only because of its specificities but also because it raises issues that are of universal significance.

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CHAPTER IX

BRING CHRIST TO ALL CULTURES ON EARTH AND BRING ALL CULTURES TO CHRIST: SPREADING THE SPIRIT OF FU JEN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

BERNARD LI

THE SPREAD OF CATHOLICISM INTO CHINA

It is said that the first person to go to China to spread Catholicism was Thomas the Apostle who travelled onto China after establishing the Church in India but there is no historical record of this journey and no information in existence that proves this ever happened. However, there is evidence of the Gospel being spread to China during the Tang dynasty by the Nestorian Church, a Christian sect founded by the Patriarch of Constantinople Nestorius that broke away from the Catholic Church. The Nestorian Church is called *jingjiao* in China. However, there are some differences between Nestorianism and traditional Catholic faith. Nestorians believe that Jesus has two persons: One is the second divine person of God and another is the human person. Also, the Virgin Mary is merely the mother of the human person Jesus. This is a doctrine that was intolerable to Catholics. However, Nestorians do strictly adhere to all other Catholic articles of faith.[1]

Nestorian missionaries who accompanied Central Asian caravans to preach in China had amazing results. They entered India, Ceylon, Mongolia and the Yellow River valley. At the height of their influence, the Nestorian Church had 200 bishops in Asia. In 1625, the Nestorian Monument in China from the Tang dynasty period (AD781) was unearthed near Xian. The writings on the monument described the spread of Nestorianism in China during the reign of Emperor Taizong of the Tang Dynasty in 636 which is best evidence of Nestorian proselytization in China. However, Nestorian influence began to wane after the 9th century in China.[2]

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[1] Motte, Joseph S.J. *Zhongguo tianzhujiao shi* (中國天主教史) (History of Catholicism in China) (Guangqi chubanshe, 1992), p. 8

[2] Ibid., p. 10

The Crusades that began after the 10th century awakened Western Europeans to the need to learn about non-Christian peoples and generated passion and enthusiasm for missionary work.

When Genghis Khan reigned, Pope Innocent IV sent an envoy to meet the Great Khan, and chose John Pian del Carpine to carry out this difficult mission. He did not accomplish his mission but his journal helped introduce China to Europeans. Later in 1269, two Venetian merchants Niccolo and Maffeo Polo returned to Italy from China. This was the first time the Catholics from the West had direct contact with China and the faith there gradually took form.

In 1289, Pope Nicolas IV sent a Priest of the St. Franciscan Order, John of Montecorvino, to travel through Persia, by ship to India and then to China. He was the first Catholic missionary to set foot in China. He built churches and monasteries that resulted in the conversion of countless numbers of Chinese and Mongols and received permission for about 15,000 Caucasian followers of the Orthodox faith to enter China through Mongolia. John of Montecorvino died after arriving in Beijing. After the other envoys sent by the Pope returned to Europe, the churches established in China by John of Montecorvino eventually vanished over time. Of course, their disappearance was connected to the isolationist policies adopted later on by the Ming Dynasty.[3]

When Columbus discovered the New World, navigators and explorers were keen to spread the Gospel, and missionaries were sent for that purpose. Fr. St. Francis Xavier S.J. wanted to preach in China but died from a fever after arriving at Shangchuan Island off the southeast coast of Guangdong Province in 1522. In a 25-year period after 1557, a number of Jesuits arrived at Macao and attempted to enter in China to perform missionary work, but they all were expelled. In 1578, Fr. A. Valignano S.J. advocated intensive study of the language and customs of China before preaching in China and called on Fr. Ruggeri and Fr. Matteo Ricci. They dedicated themselves to learning the Chinese language and Confucian thought, wore the clothes of a Confucian scholar and entered China as Western scholars.

Matteo Ricci entered Beijing in 1601. In his later years, he aroused the interest of Chinese scholar-officials by Western learning including mathematics, astronomy and geography. When many important officials at court joined the faith, Ricci was able to maintain good friendships with them. The most famous of these converts were Xu Guangqi (1562-1633) and Li Zhizao(1565-1630). They helped Ricci translate scientific texts and enthusiastically spread the holy teachings after their baptism. Another convert was Yang Ting-yun. These three men were hailed as the three pillars of early Chinese Catholicism. Their

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[3] Ibid., p. 24

passionate preaching, protection of Church doctrines and Western missionaries during the times of political persecution made an immeasurable contribution to the Church. Dominican and Franciscan missionaries arrived in China from Philippines in 1626.

In 1622, Pope Gregory XV founded the Congregation for the Propagation of the Faith to send missionaries around the world to preach the faith. At the end of the Ming Dynasty in 1650, the Catholic faith was being openly spread in a numbers of provinces around China. After the fall of the Ming Dynasty, only Yunnan and Guizhou had never heard the Gospel of Christ.[4]

During the reigns of the Shunzhi Emperor and Kangxi Emperor in the early Qing Dynasty, Fr. Johann Adam Schall von Bell S.J. and Fr. Ferdinand Verbiest S.J. carried on the missionary spirit of Matteo Ricci. Being fluent in Chinese, Fr. Lodovico Buglio translated the Missal, Sacrament of Rites and Priest Breviary into Chinese and began to train local priests.

The Dominican Missionaries gave China its first priest, Fr. Gregorio Lopez, during this period, who subsequently became the first bishop in China (1616-1691).

At the end of the 17th century, the Church had been hard at work for a century in China. The Chinese Catholic Church had three dioceses at Macao, Nanjing and Beijing, five vicar Apostolics, 130 missionaries, among them 59 Jesuits, 29 Franciscan priests, 18 Dominican priests, 15 secular priests, nine Saint Augustine priests and around 300,000 followers. The Catholic Church enjoyed some stability in China at this time because the emperor valued the scientific knowledge of the missionaries in Beijing.

Unfortunately, the Catholic Church had a serious problem with the ancestor veneration rites. Chinese cult of ancestor had been developed together with rituals for various gods, showing respect to ancestors and honoring Confucius. The Jesuits believed that ancestor veneration rites were just a social custom with no religious significance. However, Dominican priests believed the tablet used for ancestor worship was seen as a memorial tablet for the spirits of ancestors and therefore the cult for ancestor was a religious act.

In 1720, the papal legate Jean Ambroise Mezzabarba sent a letter to missionaries that explained the text of the eight permissions regarding the rites controversy which permitted Church members to worship ancestor tablets in their homes, practice rites for the deceased and non-religious sacrificial rites in China. The Holy See conducted a thorough study of this problem in 1735. Following seven years of review, Pope Benedict XIV abolished the eight permissions in 1742. This

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[4] Ibid., p. 70.

prohibition presented great difficulties to Chinese members of the Catholic Church but the Pope believed the prohibition was necessary to maintain the purity of the faith.[5]

After the rites controversy, some educated believers left the Church and others suffered government persecution. Everyone went into hiding. Those believers who did not perform cult of ancestor and sacrificial rites and could not participate in exams were honored by the Church. In 1811, the Church found it was difficult to spread the faith throughout China. Religious persecution was commonplace when the Treaty of Nanking was signed in 1842. Afterwards, a number of countries signed unequal treaties with China that made missionary work even more difficult. In 1846, the Daoguang Emperor issued an edict which allowed free belief and the building of churches. After the first Sino-Japanese war and Hundred Day's Reform, the Empress Dowager Cixi laid the blame for the misfortune of China on missionaries. Churches were destroyed and Christians were massacred during the Boxer Rebellion in 1900. Riots broke out in a number of provinces across China. This was the greatest disaster in the history of the Church.

The Xinhai Revolution had overthrown the Qing Dynasty and led to the establishment of the Nationalist government. In the following years, the Nationalists launched the Northern Expedition against the warlords, and then fought the Japanese invasion for eight years. During that period of time, the work of missionaries was to take care of church members and to train catechists. They also opened secondary and tertiary education institutions and performed charity work. Diplomatic relations were established between the Vatican and China. In 1946, Mgr. Riberi became the first Apostolic Internuncio to China. China had 29 native bishops and the Apostolic Vicar of Qingdao, Tien Ken-sin, was appointed as the first Cardinal in China and East Asia by Pope Pius XII.[6]

After the Communist takeover in 1949, some Chinese Catholic Church members fled to Taiwan and some remained in Mainland China. Between 1949 and 1951, missionaries were arrested and put in jail in Mainland China. Afterwards, the majority was expelled from the country and most of these came to Taiwan to continue preaching. After the Chinese government embarked on a program of opening and reform in 1980, the State Administration for Religious Affairs was established to oversee all religious matters including the Catholic Church. In Taiwan, the Church has enjoyed stable and steady growth until the present. The Holy See and the ROC government in Taiwan have established formal diplomatic relations.

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[5] Ibid., p. 96.
[6] Ibid., p. 135.

CATHOLIC CULTURAL EXCHANGES IN CHINA

As described above, Catholic culture was introduced concurrently into China when the Catholic Church was spread to China. The true systematic introduction of Catholic culture began with Matteo Ricci at the end of the Ming Dynasty and beginning of the Qing. Matteo Ricci S.J. (1552－1610) and Michel Ruggeri S.J. (1543-1607) were allowed to enter and reside in Zhaoqing, Guangdong in 1583 (1582?)[7] and were received by the Viceroy of Liangguang, Guo Zhitai, and the Zhaoqing prefect magistrate Wang Taishou. They brought many items from the West such as statues of the Madonna, maps, astrolabes, dispersive prisms as well as books like the *"Euclid's Elements"* to aid their missionary work. These novelties that Ricci brought from the West piqued the curiosity of many Chinese. The maps that he carried especially opened the eyes of Chinese to the outside world.

In 1584, Ricci produced and published the *Kunyu Wanguo Quantu* (World Map). This was the first contact that Chinese had with contemporary world geographical knowledge. He took the opportunity while explaining these Western things to introduce the Catholic faith. Ricci translated the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer, Magnificat and the Catechism of the Catholic Church and Chinese people quickly became interested in the Catholic religion. Matteo Ricci wrote and published in Chinese *Tianzhu shiyi* (The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven) in 1603. Many Chinese became highly interested in this book. Michel Ruggeri wrote *Tienzhu shilu* (The True Record of the Lord of Heaven) first in Latin, then translated and edited by Mateo Ricci and published in Chinese in 1630.

In the summer of 1589, the new governor of Guangdong confiscated the Western style building where Ricci lived, who therefore moved to Shaozhou. During his time in Shaozhou, his two companions died one after the other. Fr. Antonio d'Almeida died in 1591 and Francisco de Petris passed away in 1593. Moreover, Michel Ruggeri returned to Europe, only Ricci remained to perform missionary work in China. One comfort to Ricci was an acquaintance that he made in Zhaoqing, the scholar Qu Taisu, became his good friend and disciple. He helped Ricci translate Book 1 of the *Euclid's Elements*. Due to Qu Taisu's efforts to spread the good words, and with Ricci's self-made gifts such as gyroscopes, terrestrial globes and sundials presented to high court officials, Matteo Ricci steadily made a name for himself among local officials and nobility and was invited by his friend Qu Taisu to go to Nanxiong.

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[7] Zhang Xiping *Gen sui Li Madou dao Zhongguo* (跟隨利瑪竇到中國), (Wuzhou chuanbo chubanshe), p. 37.

Ricci studied the *Four Books* during his time in Shaozhou and was the first person to translate them into Latin. Through his contact with Qu Taisu and other upper class Chinese, Ricci came to understand that the clothings of Buddhist and Daoist monks were not respected by Chinese society and their social status was relatively low. In order to facilitate interaction with Chinese officials, Ricci was granted permission by Alessandro Valignano to let his hair and beard grow and started wearing Confucian clothing in 1594.

On September 22, 1596, Ricci successfully predicted a solar eclipse that quickly made him famous. During this time, he made friends with Jiang Huang and other members of the Confucian elite, gave a lecture at the White Deer Grotto Academy and was warmly received by the Prince of Jian'an. In the reports that he wrote to the Jesuits, he explained the reasons for his fame: The first was the locals had never met a foreigner. The second was Ricci's memory was extremely good and many Chinese would like to study his methods. As a result, he wrote a book in Chinese called Ricci's Memory Palace to introduce these memorization techniques. The third was he was able to use the *Four Books* and Five Classics to preach Christian doctrine. The fourth was his knowledge of natural sciences. The fifth was his reputed ability to practice alchemy. The sixth was some people asked him to teach them about Christianity. In addition, Ricci wrote an essay *On Friendship* as an exercise in Chinese writing which inadvertently won the admiration of local scholars.

In 1600 while he was living in Nanjing, Ricci with the help of Qu Taisu made friends with a number of esteemed officials like Ye Xiang-Kao, the Philosopher Lee Zhi and Xu Guangqi. Of course, this was primarily due to their admiration of Ricci's knowledge of the natural sciences. One thing worth mentioning is Ricci held a series of debates with the Monk San Huai (aka Monk Snow Wave of the Dabaoen Temple in Nanjing). In the first debate, he was clearly able to gain the upper hand through his scientific logic and thinking. Ricci also built the fourth church inside China on Chongli Street (known today as Shangshu Lane) near the Zhengyang Gate (known today as Guanghua Gate). Later, the famous Catholic Church, the Shigulu Church, was built at the site around the corner from the Chengxilou Temple. These activities made Nanjing into one of the most important centers of missionary work in the history of the Chinese Catholic Church.

On May 18 1600, Ricci set off to the capital with Diego de Pantoja (1571-1618) and the gifts he had prepared for the emperor. Arriving in Beijing on January 24, 1601, he earned the trust of the Ming Emperor Shenzong by presenting him with a chime clock, a Bible, the "*Kunyu Wanguo Quantu*" (World Map) and an ancient piano. In the same year, Emperor Shenzong issued an edict allowing Ricci and others

to reside long-term in Beijing. The Chinese court at that time did not realize that the purpose of Ricci's long stay in Beijing was to spread Christianity. Afterwards, Ricci was able to make friends with Chinese scholar-officials in Beijing due to his extensive knowledge of China and the West. He frequently discussed subjects such as astronomy, the human spirit, heaven and hell with guests and wrote a new book in Chinese, the *Ershiwu yan* (Twenty-Five Sayings) that earned him much respect among Chinese intellectuals. By 1605, there were 200 followers of the Catholic Church in Beijing. Of these, a number were high ranking officials. The most famous of these was Xu Guangqi, a *jinshi* degree holder and a member of the Hanlin Academy, who become very influential later in Ricci's career in China.[8]

Ricci successfully created a foundation for the introduction of Catholic culture into China and intercultural exchanges that produced wonderful results. It could be said that Fu Jen Catholic University is probably the only institution capable of shouldering this great responsibility.

THE KEY ROLE OF FU JEN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY

In 1866 (the 5th year of the reign of Emperor Tongzhi) The Qing court decided to establish the Imperial University of Peking in an effort to enlighten the country and asked the Administrator Apostolic of Beijing, Joseph Martial Mouly, to oversee this matter. He declined the offer, however, due to the lack of suitable talents.

In 1906 (the 32nd year of the reign of Emperor Guangxu), the North China Bishops' Conference hoped that a university could be founded in Beijing but could not realize this hope due to considerations including rituals, staff and funding. In 1903, the Aurora Institute was founded in Shanghai by Fr. Ma Xiangbo S.J. that was later renamed Aurora University.

In 1912, to assist the revitalization and education of China's cultural creativity, to introduce new knowledge of the world and to propagate Catholic doctrine, two prominent Catholic laymen Ma Xiangbo and Ying Lianzhi petitioned Pope Pius X to send talented instructors to Northern China to found a Catholic University, seeing that the Catholic Church only had two universities in China. The plan was eventually shelved due to the outbreak of war in Europe.

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[8] Xu Guangqi (April 24, 1562-November 10, 1633), late Ming scientist, agriculturist, politician, China-Western cultural exchange pioneer, whose baptized name was Paul. *Born in Shuntin Prefecture, Shanghai County (today Shanghai City), Catholic*, known as the foremost of the three pillars of Catholicism.

In 1913, Ying Lianzhi founded Fu Jen Academy in the Fragrant Hills in the western suburbs of Beijing to admit Catholic youth for instruction in the classics and history. In 1918, Fu Jen Academy was shut down due to a lack of funding. In 1919, Pope Benedict XV sent Mgr. de Guébriant as an inspector to tour educational institutions in China, who had sent out questionnaires regarding seminary education and the founding of tertiary institutions for Church members. After returning to Rome, his report expressed ideas similar to the recommendations made by Ma Xiangbo and Ying Lianzhi, and stated that there were not enough higher Catholic education institutions in China. In 1920, the Catholic priest, Seton University Professor, George Barry O' Toole OSB went to Beijing to meet with Ying Lianzhi to learn about the vision of founding a Catholic university. The school founding plan was submitted in person to the Pope. In 1921, the Prefect of Propaganda Fide Cardinal Van Rossum passed the order to Abbot Primate Fidelis von Stotzingen and the Pope commissioned the American Benedictine Order to establish a Catholic university in China. In 1922, the Prefect of Propaganda Fide sent a written request to each abbey in the American Benedictine Order to cooperate and assist with the establishment of a Catholic university in China.

In 1923, Pope Pius XI encouraged members of the Benedictine Order to establish schools in China and took the lead in this effort by donating 100,000 Italian lira. The American Order of St. Benedict placed Archabbot Aurelius Stehle from St. Vincent Archabbey of Latrobe, Pennsylvania in charge of the project. After receiving the order, Aurelius Stehle asked Dr. O'Toole to serve as the president and oversee these matters. In May 1924, the Order sent Rev. Kohbeck, OSB to Rome to discuss founding the school with Cardinal Wilhelm van Rossum. In June, Archabbot Aurelius Stehle became the first Chancellor of the school and was placed in charge of all matters related to the future Catholic University. In September, Benedictine Fathers Ildephonse Brandstetter and Placidus Rattenberger were welcomed by Archbishop Celso Constantini and Ying Lianzhi when they arrived in Beijing.

It can be seen from this basic introduction that Fu Jen Academy in Beijing was established for the purpose of fulfilling clergy training requirements. It also resulted from an effort against the anti-Confucianism, natural sciences' atheistic attitude and the evolutionist theory's opposition to all religions that emerged during the 1919 New Culture Movement.

Fu Jen University has made a sgnificant contribution to East-West cultural interchange and the promotion and cultivation of local talents since its founding in Beijing in 1925, such as the establishment of the "*Monumenta Serica*" (Journal of Oriental Studies) and the creation of a platform for Chinese-Western cultural exchanges. The nurturing of

young scholars influenced social reflection. For example, new literary developments from people like Chang Hsiu-ya, Su Xuelin and Ye Jiaying became a force in the spread of Catholic influence in Chinese culture. The heroic displays in resisting the Japanese army by the faculty and students when Beijing fell to the Japanese during the Second Sino-Japanese War resulting from the character education at Fu Jen University made it the only university whose enrollment was recognized by the Nationalist government after the war ended.

There was regime change in China in 1949. When the Chinese Communists took over Mainland China, they implemented atheist policies, arrested and expelled Catholic missionaries and even closed all Christian schools during the college consolidation in 1951. Fu Jen University was merged into Beijing Normal University under these circumstances.

Though Fu Jen University suffered a huge blow, the alumni of Fu Jen University who fled to Taiwan did not lose hope. They established the Fu Jen University Alumni Association in 1956. In addition to serving as a rallying point for alumni, the association also actively petitioned the Vatican for the reestablishment of the school in Taiwan. After years of effort and with the support of Pope John XXIII and the ROC Ministry of Education, Fu Jen University was successfully reestablished in Taipei in 1961.

The Graduate Institute of Philosophy was the first department created at the newly reestablished Fu Jen University in 1961 that displayed the urgent mission to engage in Chinese-Western cultural exchange. The university administration, three faculties together with 10 departments were established in 1963. His Eminence Cardinal Paul Yü Pin adopted the school motto Sanctitas, Bonitas, Pulchritudo, Veritas and the three kinds of knowing (knowing people, knowing the material world and knowing Heaven) are its essence. The school song (輔仁以友，會友以文；吾校之魂，聖美善真；三知是求，明德日新；蔚起多士，文質彬彬；福音勤播，天下歸仁；世進大同，神旨永遵；祝我輔仁，其壽千春；祝我輔仁，其壽千春) is a fusion of the spirit of Catholicism and Chinese culture. President Paul Yu Pin resumed heaven and ancestor worship rites in 1968 that alleviated some of the injury caused to the Church over the years due to the Chinese Rites controversy. This also demonstrated that the Catholic Church respected local culture, thus provided a more stable foundation for the fusion of Chinese and Catholic, even Western, culture. Fu Jen University remains faithful to this model until today.

The successor of President Paul Yu Pin, Archbishop Stanislaus Lo Kuang (1978-1992), closely adhered to the methods of his predecessor and also added "philosophy of life" into the developmental model for

Chinese-Western cultural fusion. The foundation was based on scholasticism that provided methods and goals for this process, using Chinese philosophy as content and ways of expression. The methodology of Archbishop Luo also established the basic framework for Taiwan scholasticism.

The development of Taiwan scholasticism can also be said to have originated from the large number of Chinese priests with advanced degrees abroad who steadily came back after 1961 to Taiwan due to the extension of the Taiwan dioceses (the dioceses of Hsinchu and Tainan and Taichung, Chiayi and Hualien were elevated to dioceses from the existing Taipei, Kaohsiung, the apostolic prefectures of Taichung, Chiayi and Hualien) and these young priests who brought plenty of energy and vitality to the various dioceses achieved amazing pastoral results (according to a survey conducted by the Taiwan Diocese Bishops' Conference, the number of Catholic believers in Taiwan increased from over 40,000 to 300,000 in the twenty year period from 1961-1981). They spent their remaining energy teaching various courses at colleges and universities (for instance, Fr. Maurus Fang Hao taught at National Taiwan University's Department of History, then serves as Dean of Faculty of Art and Sciences at National Chengchi University; and Fr. Chao Ya-bo first taught at National Taiwan Normal University and then at National Chengchi University) shouldering the responsibility of Catholic and Chinese cultural exchange. In this effort, the majority of manpower was concentrated at Fu Jen University, and the Foreign Language Department and Philosophy Department were its most representative examples. The Foreign Language Department was reestablished at the Monumenta Serica Institute and a translation team was formed to start the systematic translation of Western humanities and classics. The Philosophy Department is dedicated to the development of philosophy upon the foundation of scholasticism and its fusion with Chinese philosophy.

Before 1963, Taiwan scholasticism could be considered to be in its inception period. In fact, none of the teachers of scholasticism had yet arrived in Taiwan. The teacher who arrived first was Fr. Albert Chao who taught aesthetics and Western philosophy at National Taiwan Normal University. He was also the first person to have introduced Existentialism to Taiwan. Prior to 1963, there were very few Catholics in the faculties of National Taiwan University and National Taiwan Normal University except in their foreign language departments. The reason why so many people followed the steps of these priests was not because of their philosophy. It was because those priests would help recommend them to study abroad. This period could be considered the start of the germination period for scholasticism in Taiwan.

It can be said that the period from 1963 to 1970 was the founding period for Taiwan scholasticism. Many people started to be admitted to Fu Jen University. I myself was one of those students at that period of time. The entire development of Taiwan scholasticism can be said to be centered at Fu Jen Catholic University. At that time, the majority of priests who had received degrees abroad and returned to the country also taught classes at Fu Jen University and would use Catholic philosophical concepts in their teaching. It is unfortunate that these priests used Catholic standing terminology in their teaching and did not attempt to translate these terms into Chinese common everyday language. European culture had not yet been adapted into a form that was accessible to Taiwanese/Chinese culture. Some people liked this kind of teachers. Others had trouble in understanding them. They thought it was too stiff and found it difficult to accept. During that period, there were also many priests who could not adapt to life in Taiwan. After all, Taiwan was relatively poor at that time and European countries and the United States were much more affluent. These priests came to Taiwan from other countries so they had difficulty getting accustomed to the lifestyle, traffic and food in Taiwan. There were many things which were hard to adapt to. Fu Jen University initiated some new contexts in the period from 1970 to 1987 because there were some alumni who studied philosophy that completed their studies in Taiwan or returned after earning their PhD degree abroad.

The period from 1987 to 2000 can be said to be the development period for Taiwan scholasticism. At its peak, the department heads of all philosophy departments in Taiwan had graduated from Fu Jen University's Department of Philosophy. For example, Vincent Shen at National Chengchi University, Fu Peirong at National Taiwan University, Paul Yun-ming Jiang at Chinese Culture University, Wei Yuan-gui at Tunghai University and myself at Fu Jen Catholic University. That period was considered to be the peak of entire Taiwan scholasticism development.

After the year 2000, Taiwan scholasticism entered a transitional period. European and American philosophy, in particular analytical philosophy, started to flourish in Taiwan at this time and scholars in related fields served in key government positions. As they dominated the promotion process in Taiwan, scholasticism was overshadowed. As of today, many schools besides Fu Jen University offer scholastic courses as electives. The spread of scholasticism appears to be dependent on specialized institutions. As a result, during the time I served as president of Fu Jen University (2004-2012), all of the Catholic academic research institutions at Fu Jen University (Institute of Scholastic Philosophy, Institutum Historiae Ecclesiae, John Paul II Peace Institute, Center for

the Study of Science and Religion and Monumenta Serica Institute) were merged together to create the Academia Catholica in 2008.

The establishment of the Academia Catholica at Fu Jen Catholic University was not only a response to the calls made by the Second Vatican Council, but also an effort to promote research on the fusion of Catholicism and Chinese culture, not only with the purpose to achieve individual goals but more generally to structure a research program for society. A variety of academic seminars have been organized (over one hundred conferences of all sizes were held from 2008 to 2013) since the founding of the Academia Catholica. They not only made an impact but also served as a bridge for the Catholic Church on both sides of the Taiwan Straits as called for by Pope John Paul II. Since 2004, young scholars from various colleges and academic institutions in Mainland China have been invited to participate in the Scholasticism Seminar held in Taiwan to increase the number of scholars researching scholasticism. Also, young priests and nuns from various seminaries in Mainland China have been invited to participate in the Scholasticism and Counseling Seminar every year since 2009 to help Chinese priests and nuns learn how to effectively use scholasticism as a preaching and counseling tool.

Inside Academia Catholica, the Institute of Scholastic Philosophy hopes to train scholars to understand European languages, read classical texts and develop real expertise. As of today, it is hoped to train more researchers, like He Jiarui and Zhang Yimin, who are very passionate about doing research in Platonism, Aristotelianism and scholasticism. With people like them, scholasticism could be more comprehensively developed in Taiwan. The Institutum Historiae Ecclesiae basically encourages graduate and doctorate students to do research on the history of the Chinese Catholic Church or even in the context of comparative historical study. John Paul II Peace Institute recruits a group of scholars to collect previous papal literature and study the related social doctrine and science policy from ecumenical councils, and attempts to combine the related scientific and religious studies effected by Chinese and Western scholars at the Center for the Study of Religion. The Monumenta Serica Institute continues its cooperation with the Institute Monumenta Serica at Sankt Augustin, Germany.

How can the above research work be completed? We established the Cardinal Paul Yu Pin Catholic Talent Fostering Foundation to encourage aspiring young scholars to apply for financial assistance. Over the past five years, over fifty people have received assistance totaling close to 30 million NT dollars. We hope that more financial aid can be provided in the future.

Another task in the effort to join together Catholic culture and contemporary society is the establishment of the Fu Jen School. During

my two terms as President of Fu Jen University, I believed that the departments at Fu Jen University became more or less complete during the second and third years of my term, therefore the entire school could start to conduct comprehensive Catholic academic research which was the reason why the Fu Jen School was established. The chairman of the Board at that time, Cardinal Paul Shan Kuo-hsi, was very supportive of this way of thinking. The vision was to divide Fu Jen School research into five teams: (1) The Basic Theory Team is founded upon philosophy and theology; (2) The Quality of Life Management Team studies how to raise the quality of life of modern Chinese people; (3) Justice and Peace Service Team studies social justice; (4) Physical, Mental and Spiritual Integration Team studies how to achieve physical, mental and spiritual balance; and (5) Bioethics Team. These five teams and all departments of the Fu Jen University, as I see it, may participate in a bigger joint research project. It seems best to commit school-wide resources to making progress in the field of Catholic academic research. As a result, teachers from different departments were invited to join in this large research project. However, due to the divergent backgrounds of the teachers and the fact that not everyone held the Catholic faith, it was inevitable that people would just follow their own expertise. This was good and the spirit of Catholicism was slowly emphasized through the development of separate expertise. The research of the Fu Jen School must be conducted by persons who can reflect deeply on their faith in order to develop the unique spiritual characteristics of Catholicism. There was some criticism from some of our colleagues at the university during the development process of the Fu Jen School. Some believed that their academic qualifications were lacking. However, Catholic schools are not entirely about academics. They are also for recruiting monks and nuns as well as training missionaries. In the year that Fu Jen University was founded in Beijing, two-thirds of the students were Catholics and many priests and nuns were trained from among them. The education system in Taiwan is restrictive in this respect. In Taiwan, schools are not allowed to admit only Catholic students so the only possibility is to participate in the Joint University Entrance Exam System and admit students assigned through this system who are not necessarily Catholics. So the atmosphere at the school is not the same as before. The teachers are also from different faiths. Therefore, it is hoped that steady communication can help to bridge this gap.

Philosophical counseling, in my mind, is another place where progress can be made. During my term as President of the university, I noticed that generally only two things were talked about when "counseling" is discussed in Taiwan: having a healthy mind and body. It is as if there is nothing else besides psychology. However, Catholics emphasize having a healthy mind, body and spirit. But it is necessary to

first understand how to reach the spirit that relates to the importance of philosophy. Inserting the understanding that the spirit lies above the body and mind into this system is the only way to an elevated role for spirit. So philosophical counseling starts from the ability to play this role. Development of philosophical counseling is not just for the Philosophy Department. It is also directed at the overall development of Catholic Church. As a result, it was decided to change the name to "Christian Religious Counseling" because the Christian religion places emphasis on the mind, body and spirit as a whole. Once this concept is introduced, there is an enthusiastic response from the entire Christian world, but only a weak response from the Catholic circle. The main reason is this: there are a lot of people who practice psychological counseling in the Christian world but they never reach the core. Many of Christian counselors have deep faith, but 90 percent of the people in the psychology field are not believers, so it is difficult for them to reconcile their faith with their psychological theories. These Christian counselors are very excited when philosophical counseling concepts are introduced. Every time there are activities held related to Christian Religious Counseling, a large number of Christians come to the classes, which provide an outlet for them. However, not very many participants were Catholics. The main reason is that Catholic priests and nuns are too conservative and not very proactive. I receive a lot of different suggestions when I am involved with organizations such as Institute of Scholastic Philosophy, Philosophical Counseling Association, and Fu Jen School. However, my ultimate purpose is to enhance the spiritual essence of people's life. If there were not a high degree of understanding, it would have been difficult to reach this point.

The future path of development for the Academia Catholica is: theology & philosophy, education, philosophical counseling, social theory and art, which include the development of Catholic music, painting, dance and drama. If there are one or two researchers in each field, there can be about 15 positions. We have currently established philosophical counseling, scholasticism, sinology, music, history, social justice, science and religion, and hope to add education, social theory, law, dance and painting in the future. The art of the Catholic Church is amazing! The only thing that the Catholic Church lacks is drama. There have been many famous Catholic movies in the past, such as the *Ten Commandments*, *Exodus* and the *Story of Jesus*. Why can't we have a drama troupe perform these classic stories? This is one of the hopes I have for the Academia Catholica.

This research institute should not just operate on one level. It should operate in a multi-level building and include different research organizations that conduct their researches together. Also, I have set up a

Catholic Studies Program[9] with the goal of nurturing talents for the Catholic Church. The establishment of these organizations is to develop faith for its practice in life. Faith should not just exist in theory. The major difficulty for the Catholic Church is that faith sometimes separates from life. Unless one pursues a religious life and serves in a position in the Church, ordinary people do not see any benefit in taking a theology class, but they could see the connection between philosophy and life through philosophical counseling. This is what is truly important. So, I personally feel that it would be really difficult to apply Catholic philosophy to life if one does not go in the direction of philosophical counseling.

CONCLUSION

If we examine the significant successes and failures in the cultural exchanges between the Catholic Church and China, the following things are worth studying.

The Failure of the Nestorians

Nestorianism spread into China in the seventh century. According to the Nestorian Monument in China[10], the Nestorian Alopen Abraham[11] reached Changan in the 9th year of the reign of the Tang Emperor Taizong, that is in 635AD. The Emperor Taizong (599-649) ordered his Chancellor Fang Xuanling (579-648) to receive him. Since "its religious teaching ….provides relief that is of benefit to people, it is good that it may spread under heaven."[12]Thereupon, the government gave Alopen the Daqin Monastery and 21 monks. During the reign of Emperor Gaozong (650-683) Nestorian churches were built at sites all over the country. "The religion spread through ten circuits and temples filled one

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[9] Founded in 2011, it accepts persons with Christian background especially Catholics, and it offers specialized Catholic courses and encourages application for double majors, minors, education courses or other credit courses, based the applicants' needs so that Catholic believers can fulfill their mission to the Church. (see http://www.fjac.fju.edu.tw/fjac/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=214&Itemid=999)

[10] A stone tablet was unearthed in Xian in the fifth year of the reign of the Ming Emperor Tianqi (1625) with the inscription *Daqin jingjaio liuxing zhongguo pai bing song* (大秦景教流行中國碑並頌) and 1780 Chinese characters as well as some Syriac text.

[11] See Zhu Qianzhi, *Zhongguo jingjiao* (中國景教) (Chinese Nestorianism) (Renmin chubanshe, 1993), p. 73.

[12] See *Daqin jingjaio liuxing zhongguo pa* (大秦景教流行中國碑).

hundred cities." In the fifth year of the reign of the Emperor Wuzong (845), the emperor issued an edict to ban Buddhism that applied to the Nestorian Church as well.

This ban by the Emperor Wuzong was called one of the Three Disasters of Wu.[13] The emperor at the time was a devout practitioner of the Daoist religion. In the fall of the fifth year of Kaicheng (840AD), he summoned Zhao Guizhen and 80 other Daoists to the palace and conducted golden register rituals and Daoist ceremonies in the three palaces. Chancellor Li Deyu detested Buddhism. These two officials would frequently disparage Buddhism in front of the Emperor Wuzong.[14] In October of the 2nd year of Huichang (842AD), Emperor Wu ordered the confiscation of monastic lands and property, destruction of Buddhist temples and statues, and forced monks and nuns to return to secular life.[15]Buddhism suffered a massive blow.[16] Manichaeism and Nestorianism also got caught up in the persecution and were gradually forced to leave the Chinese central areas.

For this event, it is worth discussing what kind of attitude the Nestorians had during the persecution of Buddhism. We can look at it from two perspectives. The first is political power; and the second is bad influence from the contradictory attitude in Buddhism. From the perspective of political power, the Emperor Wuzong considered the relationship of Buddhism to political power when deciding whether or not to persecute Buddhism. He said "I, Gaozu, Taizong, suppressed uprisings by military force and governed China by civil administration. The implementation of these two policies was sufficient for the country to resist the lowly Western religions!"[17] From the perspective of contradictory attitude in Buddhism, this latter made compromises in their faith in order to win favor from those in power. By only concerning itself with outward expansion, there was less attention paid to the believers who needed enlightenment, too. The Nestorians, by adopting

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[13] The Three Disasters of Wu occurred in Chinese history were: 446AD by Emperor Taiwu of Northern Wei, AD574 by the Emperor Wu of Northern Zhou and the Emperor Wuzong of Tang.

[14] *Jiutangshu – wuzong ji* (舊唐書·武宗紀) (volume 18 top section): (歸真自以涉物論，遂舉羅浮道士鄧元起有長年之術，帝遣中使迎之，由是與衡山道士劉玄靖及歸真膠固，排毀釋氏，而拆寺請行焉。」

[15] *Jiutangshu – wuzong ji* (舊唐書·武宗紀) (volume 18 top section): (還俗僧尼二十六萬五百人，收充兩稅戶""收奴婢為兩稅戶十五萬人).

[16] According to accounts recorded in the *Tang Huiyao*, over 4600 temples were demolished and temple property at the Zhaoti, Lanruo and approx. 4600 other temples was confiscated. 260,500 monks and nuns were forced to return to secular life.

[17] *Jiutangshu – wuzong ji* (舊唐書·武宗紀) (volume 18).

the Buddhist model and seeking favor from government officials, also became a target of the ban, a blow from which they would never recover.[18] From this event, we can see that maintaining the special characteristics of the Church should take precedence over the need of localization.

The Success of Matteo Ricci

The arrival of Matteo Ricci in China was a momentous event and a major breakthrough for the Church. From this success, there may arise some reflections and self-examination for the benefit of China.

First, with regard to Matteo Ricci's accommodating Christianity with Chinese culture through his study of the *Four Books* and Six Classics, Ricci believed that the God of the Christian faith was the *huangtian dadi* or *tiandi* (sovereign ruler of heaven), the supreme God that was mentioned in these classics. Ricci wrote in his journal: "I found in ancient Chinese books that they had always worshipped a supreme god that they called the *huangtian dadi* or *tiandi*. They probably believed heaven and earth were animated objects and joined together into one organism with the supreme god. Chinese also worship a variety of lesser gods that protect the mountains, rivers and four corners of the world."[19] Since this supreme god is seen as loving good and hating evil, he was gradually transformed into a moral and ethical force in the universe and the idea of rewarding good and punishing evil that has been passed down from ancient times in China. One can find the idea of an immortal soul and even the concept of heaven being the eternal resting place for souls. Ricci pointed out, "regarding the immortality of the soul, ancient people seem to have no doubt about this and it seems like they even believe souls continue to live on in heaven for a long time after death but nothing is said about what is in hell."[20]

Starting from a theological viewpoint, Ricci believed that ancient Chinese could listen to the voice of their conscience and understand the idea of salvation. Therefore, he hoped that many of these ancient people who lived according to natural law could receive salvation through the infinite mercy of God. Those who have strived to do their best shall receive the grace bestowed upon them by God.[21]

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[18] See James C.M. Yu *Jiaohui lushi: jingjiao zai hua jianshi* (教會歷史：景教在華簡史) (Church History: Brief History of Nestorians in China).

[19] Liu Junyu et al. *Li Madou quanji* (利瑪竇全集) (Complete Works of Fr. Matteo Ricci S.J.) Vol. I (Taipei: Guangqi chubanshe; Fu Jen daxue chunbanshe, 1986), p. 80

[20] Ibid., p. 84.

[21] Ibid., p. 80.

The reason why Ricci was able to make friends with members of upper-class society was not only because the upper class were able to understand his thinking, but more importantly there was no great difference between his Catholic doctrine and the Confucian views held by scholars.

In Matteo Ricci's *Tiantzu shiyi*, Catholic doctrine and Confucian thinking are incorporated together. Its content conforms to Confucian ethical concepts which made it easier for the Chinese scholar-official class to accept. The last chapter of the *Tianzhu Shiyi* summarizes Western customs, missionary celibacy and the reasons why Jesus was born in the West (總舉大西俗尚，而論其傳道之士所以不娶之意，並釋天主降生西土來由), in which it is said that the Pope is a foundation of Catholicism. The Pope is tasked with conveying the teachings of the Lord to the world and preventing heresy, and emphasizes that there has been a continuous and unbroken line of Popes ever since Peter, the disciple of Jesus, established the Vatican. As a result, the Pope and Jesus not only have spiritual connection but also a physical connection. Ricci believed that this was a special characteristic of the Catholic Church and the source of its preeminence.

A Turning Point for Fu Jen University

What from the above account can we apply to the future development of Fu Jen University? In order to avoid the mistakes of the Nestorians, I believe we need to learn from the spirit of Matteo Ricci. The spirit of Matteo Ricci, which is to put faith first and the core Western culture system second. During the Rites Controversy, Catholic rites were of foremost importance to the Dominicans while the feelings and traditions of Chinese were seen as insignificant. This naturally caused an extreme backlash that eventually led to the ban of Catholic Church. Is this really the purpose of spreading the Gospel? It is unbelievable that Christ can be forsaken in order to protect the system. President Paul Yu Pin restored the veneration rites of heaven and ancestor in 1968 to make up for this regrettable injury to Chinese feelings and traditions. Therefore, prophetic work shall be the focus of future development at Fu Jen University, especially because only prophetic work can earn their respect.

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CHAPTER X

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH ON FREEDOM OF RELIGION AND RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IN CHINA

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INTRODUCTION

"Freedom of religion" has always been a multi-dimensional concept with multiple meanings in the development of history. The various understandings of religion and freedom in differing times, spaces and cultures, create a variety of views on freedom of religious belief. Therefore, the concept of "freedom of religious belief" is necessarily related to our reflection of theology, philosophical analysis, and the discourses of law and politics.

In Christian tradition, acceptance of faith and religious conversion are not forced, and this is regarded as a matter of course. The reasons for this are as follows:

1) God created human beings and gave them intellect and free will. Through the incarnation of Jesus Christ, God provided man a covenant of eternal salvation. However, God wants man to accomplish this salvation in freedom and return to God of his own free will. If this cannot be done in freedom, God will be self-contradictory. Forced belief, therefore, is worthless in the face of God.

2) No powers or rights in the world can overrule or destroy this human right of freedom to believe and commit to religion. Jesus said, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." (Mathew 22: 21) In Pilate's interrogation of Jesus, Jesus also answered, "My kingdom is not from this world. If my kingdom were from this world, my followers would be fighting to keep me from being handed over to the Jews. But as it is, my kingdom is not from here." (John 18: 36) [1]

For centuries, however, the practice of this religious freedom was limited. The Greek and Roman empires had an integrated system of

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[1] Stefan Mückl, "Die Gewissens-, Glaubens-, und Religionsfreiheit als zentrales Menschen recht", in *Handbuch der Katholischen Soziallehre*. Anton Rauscher (Hrsg.) (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2008).

politics and religion in their tradition, and practiced a "Polis-Religion." [2] The rapidly developing Christian Church, as a monotheistic religion, was unavoidably opposed to this Roman concept of Polis-Religion. Despite Paul's comment that, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities; for there is no authority except from God, and those authorities that exist have been instituted by God." (Roman 13: 1) A true religious Christian, nevertheless, must refuse the worship of the Roman emperor and refuse to regard the Roman emperor as God. The Roman Empire's response to this refusal, unfortunately, was lawful punishment—to banish the Church as a forbidden religion. [3]

In 311 CE, Galerius began to take on a more tolerate attitude towards Christians. In 311, Constantinus I and Licinus together issued the *Edict of Milan* and announced Christianity as a legal religion. This marks the end of the *Diocletianic Persecution* period and a new era for equality of all religions. However, this era did not last long. On the 28th of February, 381 CE, Theodosius I issued the *Edict of Thessalonica* and declared that Catholicism was the sole state religion. Catholicism therefore began to possess the advantages and privileges of the Roman Empire and all subordinates of Theodosius I were ordered to worship God. The freedom and equality of all religions in the Konstantinischen System thus no longer appeared.[4] From these historical facts, we can conclude that the freedom of religion in the Christian tradition is not merely a simplified freedom of choices; rather, it is a choice for objective truth in faith. Therefore, during the Diocletianic Persecution, the early Latin Christian apologist Tertullian (160-?) in one way argued for the natural right to believe in Jesus, and in another, rejected the political interference of this right. [5]

However, once Catholicism became state religion, the Church approved of the new law which ordered national subordinates to accept catholic faith. The Church possibly justified itself by saying that Jesus had analogized the kingdom of heaven with a wheat field, suggesting the weed and wheat grow together before the harvest; (Mathew 13: 24-30) and had analogized the kingdom of heaven with a wedding banquet, inviting strangers to join in the feast; (Luke 14: 16-24) and also, Paul the Apostle said, "For what have I to do with judging those outside? Is it not those who are inside that you are to judge? God will judge those outside.

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[2] Karl-Heinz Ladeur, and Augsberg, Ino.*Toleranz – Religion – Recht.* Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007, s.16;Vgl. E.-W. Böckenförde, *Staat, Nation, Europa* (Frankfurt: a.M. 1999), S. 258ff., bes. Anm.7.

[3] Martin Heckel and Walter Kasper, "Religionsfreiheit", in *Staatslexikon.* Vieter Band, s.821.

[4] K.H. Ebenda and I. Augsberg, a. a. O. s.17.

[5] Martin Heckel and Walter Kasper, a. a. O. s. 822.

'Drive out the wicked person from among you.'"(1Corinthians 5: 12-13) This, however, is not a practice of the ultimate value. The true practice of the ultimate value is the return to God after the Eschatological judgment and a Catholic commitment corresponding to this. The early Church seemed to be willing to fulfill religious conversion by political force. And it also seemed to procrastinate with the separation of itself from the secular regime. As a result, the ancient principle in Christian tradition "No one is forced to believe" (ad fidem nullus est cogendus) was not made law until the beginning of the twelve century.[6]

The rise of secularism against the Church pervaded throughout Europe in the 19th century, resulting from rationalism, liberalism, and indifferentism. Pope Gregory XVI issued the encyclical *Mirari Vos* (August 15, 1832) in which he condemned the religious perspective of liberalism and indifferentism and claimed that unlimited freedom of religion was an erroneous point of view.[7] Following this, Pope Pius IX in the encyclical *Quanta Cura* (December 8, 1864) also strongly denounced liberalism. European society at the time had allowed people to choose their own religion for themselves, and this had been regarded as a personal right. Pope Pius IX, however, in his encyclical pointed out, "From which totally false idea of social government they do not fear to foster that erroneous opinion, most fatal in its effects on the Catholic Church and the salvation of souls, called by Our Predecessor, Gregory XVI, an 'insanity,' 2 viz., that 'liberty of conscience and worship is each man's personal right, which ought to be legally proclaimed and asserted in every rightly constituted society…'" [8] In the encyclical *Libertas Præstantissimum* (June 20, 1888), Pope Leo XIII supported this position: "…the profession of one religion is necessary in the State, that religion must be professed which alone is true, and which can be recognized without difficulty, especially in Catholic States, because the marks of truth are, as it were, engravers upon it. This religion, therefore, the rulers of the State must preserve and protect, if they would provide—as they should do—with prudence and usefulness for the good of the community." [9]

Pope Pius XII was slightly different from other popes. On the 6th of December 1953, he addressed the Catholic Jurists Association in Italy,

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[6] Stefan Mückl, a. a. O. s. 80

[7] Vgl. Mirari vos, in: A.F. Utz / B. Von Galen (Hrsg.), *Die katholische Sozialdoktrin in ihrer geschichtlichen Entfaltung*. Eine Sammlung päpstlicher Dokumente vom 15. Jahrhundert bis in die Gegenwart (Originaltexte mit Übersetzung). Aachen 1976, Nr. II, 13.

[8] Vgl. 《Quanta Cura》in: ebd., Nr. II, 29.

[9] Vgl. 《Libertas præstantissimum》, in: A.F. Utz / B. Von Galen (Hrsg.), a.a. O., Nr. 1157.

clearly stating, "What contradicts the truth and the moral law does not possess the objective right to exist, propagate or exercise. Even this is not ruled with the national law as the enforced measures; it can be justified by the higher and broader benefit of the good."[10] He claimed that these discourses were based on the "principle of tolerance," and this particular statement is often cited in essays concerning freedom of religion.

From what we have stated, it is necessary to clarify some relevant concepts. The concept "tolerance" in terms of religion occurs only when a certain religious truth and world view are above all presupposed. Therefore, from a historical perspective, the value of Catholic freedom of religion resides, not in freedom itself, but in religious truth. Freedom, without basing itself on faithful truth, is meaningless. Only in this understanding can we realize the reason why Pope Gregory XVI, Pius IX, and Leo XIII criticized liberalism, indifferentism, and the concept of religious freedom in communism.

THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL AS A TURNING POINT AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

The Catholic concept of religious freedom experienced a breakthrough after *Pacem in Terris* (Peace on Earth, April 11, 1963) was issued by Pope John XXIII. This encyclical for the first time treated "freedom of religion" as a basic human right: one has the right to worship God according to the principle of conscience, and has the right to conduct religious ceremonies in private or public life. Just as Lactantius (250-325) claimed, "this is the very condition of our birth, that we render to the God who made us that just homage which is His due; that we acknowledge Him alone as God, and follow Him. It is from this ligature of piety, which binds us and joins us to God, that religion derives its name." [11]

Although *Pacem in Terris* did not explicitly announce that one has the right to choose any religion to follow, its statement concerning the right to worship God "according to one's conscience," still implied that religious conversion related to one's freedom of conscience is a natural human right. In 1948, the United Nations issued *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* which contains a multitude of basic human rights, and this declaration entails an implication of international law. It thus seems reasonable that *Pacem in Terris* is regarded as a

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[10] Vgl. A.F. Utz / B. Von Galen (Hrsg.), *Aufbau und Entfaltung des gesellschaftlichen Lebens. Soziale Summe Pius XII*. (1954-1961), Nr. 3978.

[11] Quoted from Pope John XXIII's encyclical letter *Peace on Earth*.

prelude to *Dignitatis humanae* (*Declaration on Religious Freedom*) of The Second Vatican Council.[12]

Pacem in Terris* and *Dignitatis humanae* both proclaimed that one has the right of religious freedom.[13] The key, however, is to define what freedom of religion is. The emphasis on freedom of one's conscience in *Dignitatis humanae* seems to deviate religious freedom from theological truth to personal conscience. The entire *Dignitatis humanae* did not mention the sin or original sin of the human being, which, however, is able to influence or discredit man's conscience.

True religion should guide us to the Truth. *Dignitatis humanae*, however, reveals no theological characteristics of the Catholic Church, but instead, offers only a methodological teaching system. For instance, in the methodological teaching system: "The inquiry is to be free, carried on with the aid of teaching or instruction, communication and dialogue, in the course of which men explain to one another the truth they have discovered, or think they have discovered, in order thus to assist one another in the quest for truth."(DH3) The word "truth" occurred many times, yet all of these discourses on truth ended with the conclusion that "as the truth is discovered, it is by a personal assent that men are to adhere to it."(DH3) Truth, seemingly, subordinates to the human conscience, will, and person: "It is in accordance with their dignity as persons-that is, beings endowed with reason and free will and therefore privileged to bear personal responsibility-that all men should be at once impelled by nature and also bound by a moral obligation to seek the truth, especially religious truth. They are also bound to adhere to the truth, once it is known, and to order their whole lives in accord with the demands of truth."(DH2) The Second Vatican Council appeared to have started a "Copernican Revolution (Kopernische Wende)," so to speak, a revolutionary shift from the right of truth to that of a person.[14]

What is the difference between freedom of conscience and that of religion? Freedom of conscience should be the root of religious freedom,

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[12] Vgl. Martin Heckel and Walter Kasper, a. a. O. s.826: auch Utz, A. F. "Die Religionsfreiheit aus katholischen Sicht," in: Ders. *Ethik des Gemeinwohls*, s.820

[13] See: "Dignitatis humanae 2," *Second Vatican Counscil Documents*, Taipei City : the Secretariat of Chinese Regional Bishops' Conference, 2006, p. 623. In this paper, Dignitatis humanae will be shown in a Latin abreviation "DH" right after the quotation with the indication number of the article, for instance, DH2.

[14] Vgl. Böckenförde, Ernst-Wolfgang. "Religionsfreiheit als Aufgabe der Christen," in: Ders. *Kirchlicher Auftrag und politische Entscheidung*. Freiburg i. Br. 1973, s.72 ff. Cf. Sweet, William. "Freedom of Religion: From Toleration to Human Right," *Freedom of Religion*. Edited by William Sweet (Bangalore: Dharmaram, 2010), p. 19.

since religious conversion must result from the decision of conscience. However, all moral decisions come from the choices of conscience. In fact, religious freedom is different from general freedom of conscience; it is moreover related to social tension and cultural elements. Religious values are able to influence decision making in terms of economics and politics. *Dignitatis humanae* emphasizes one has the freedom of religious conversion, and based on this freedom one has the right to choose a way of life and community to join. Thus, in every religion or country, everyone enjoys the same freedoms. The constraint of freedom belongs to universal normative principles. These principles are expressed in *Dignitatis humanae* as such: "within due limits,"(DH2) "provided just public order is observed,"(DH3) or "subject to certain regulatory norms."(DH7) *Dignitatis humanae* clearly stated, "In the use of all freedoms the moral principle of personal and social responsibility is to be observed. In the exercise of their rights, individual men and social groups are bound by the moral law to have respect both for the rights of others and for their own duties toward others and for the common welfare of all." (DH7)

Religious freedom as a human right is protected by the government, since *Dignitatis humanae* proclaimed, "The protection and promotion of the inviolable rights of man ranks among the essential duties of government." *Dignitatis humanae* further indicated, "…government is to see to it that equality of citizens before the law, which is itself an element of the common good, is never violated, whether openly or covertly, for religious reasons. Nor is there to be discrimination among citizens." (DH6) From this quotation one may argue that there is not one religion in the world which possesses privilege or priority over other religions, not even the Catholic Church which declared itself to contain all Christian truth.

From what has been so far stated, we may raise the following questions with regard to the concept of religious freedom proposed in *Dignitatis humanae*: 1) Is religious truth secondary to man's free will and to his conscience? If so, then, 2) Is the fallible conscience which has the right to make mistakes proved by theological statements? 3) Is the "principle of tolerance" of Pius XII no longer valid after the Second Vatican Council, since no religious truths from any religion possess the priority? 4) Is the "Copernican Revolution" of the Second Vatican Council so essential that it has become a revolution of truth of faith? 5) Do the statements concerning freedom of religious belief from Gregory XVI, Pius IX, and Leo XIII concord with the *Dignitatis humanae*?[15]

The questions raised in this paper are the most crucial questions for our understanding of the Catholic view on religious freedom. The

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[15] Vgl. Utz, A. F.. a. a. O. s.282

reason that some traditionalists, such as Marcel François Marie Joseph Lefebvre (1905-1991) and his followers, broke away from the Catholic Church is obviously connected to their understanding of religious freedom. Their public declarations and theological statements have also proved this.

CLUES IN UNDERSTANDING THE LITERATURE OF THE SECOND VATICAN COUNCIL

The Church has held 21 ecumenical councils in its history. Based on traditional values, these councils have continuously developed the dogmas of the Church. The development of dogmas may be viewed as something new on a superficial level; nevertheless, they are in fact merely new declarations of the same faith tradition. For instance, the dogma on the Assumption of the Virgin Mary (announced by Pope Pius XII, 1950) is simply an explicit declaration rooted in the implicit thoughts of traditional dogmas. The Catholic Church has never been authorized to produce dogmas. It has only the right to illustrate the "treasury of faith (depositum fidei)" that Jesus left for the Church.

According to its tradition, the Church is "infallible" in the determinations of its dogmas, that is, the Church's formal and public declarations concerning dogmas are "infallible." Surely, we shall not regard this "infallibility" as a magic that the Pope possesses. The Pope ponders on dogmatic theology, just as does every catholic. We are to be aware of the fact that the Pope subordinates to God's will and he executes Jesus' words. As Jesus said, "And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven."(Mathew 16:18-19) Therefore, all theologians are to follow the instruction of the Holy Spirit when expounding upon the Church's determination of meanings of dogmas. This instruction is directed to the preservation of traditional Church dogma.

As a result, the fact that the Second Vatican Council made efforts to respect the rights of every person, especially the right to freely choose a religion, does not imply any abandonment of traditional truth of its faith. Furthermore, the Second Vatican Council attempted to reflect upon its tradition of faith in a contemporary environment, and to respond to this new trend of thoughts in terms of religious freedom which appeared with the change of the times. This position is clearly illustrated in *Dignitatis humanae*: "This demand for freedom in human society chiefly regards the quest for the values proper to the human spirit. It regards, in the first place, the free exercise of religion in society. This

Vatican Council takes careful note of these desires in the minds of men. It proposes to declare them to be greatly in accord with truth and justice. To this end, it searches into the sacred tradition and doctrine of the Church-the treasury out of which the Church continually brings forth new things that are in harmony with the things that are old."(DH1)

Dignitatis humanae never forgoes the insistence of truth in faith, and it firmly declared, "We believe that this one true religion subsists in the Catholic and Apostolic Church," and "all men are bound to seek the truth, especially in what concerns God and His Church, and to embrace the truth they come to know, and to hold fast to it." Pope Benedict XVI in his Christmas' address to members of the Roman Curia and Prelature soberly indicated that the main idea of *Dignitatis humanae* belongs not to metaphysical or dogmatic categories, but to the field of social teachings. [16]

From what we have stated, we can conclude that any discourses which interpret ideas in *Dignitatis humanae* as a rupture from the Church's dogmatic tradition or regard them as an essential mutation of church dogmas, are discourses contradicting the development principle of dogmas in continuity. In fact, according to this principle, the new ideas that have emerged are implicit thoughts in traditional dogmas which are now made explicit. After the promulgation of *Dignitatis humanae* on December 7, 1965, by Pope Paul VI, the traditionalist Marcel François Joseph Lefebvre (1909-1991) reacted against this by expressing his insistence on tradition,—to exit the Church.

If the tradition that Lefebvre supported means "treasury of faith (depositum fidei)" that Jesus left for the Church, and he exited the Church because of its deviation from this tradition, he must have successfully pointed out the contradictions of the Second Vatican Council literature to the Christian faith. However, Lefebvre obviously failed to do so. We found not one theological discourse attesting to his ideas from his public declarations and documents. Still, he used the words of St Paul the Apostle as a pretext to justify his position: "But even if we or an angel from heaven should proclaim to you a gospel contrary to what we proclaimed to you, let that one be accursed!" (Galatians 1: 8)

Lefebvre in his declaration (November 21, 1974) [17] and in his open letter to the Church (November 21, 1983)[18] several times cited Pope Pius IX's *Syllabus Errorum* (The Syllabus of Errors), issued on the same day of *Qunta Cura*, to condemn the changes made in the Second

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[16] Vgl. Mückl, Stefan. a. a. O. s. 82.

[17] See website:http://www.chinese-catholic.com/Traditional_Chinese/TC%201974%20Declaration.htm

[18] Ibid.

Vatican Council. These changes, for him, resulted from modernism to which the previous pope was opposed. In these documents he regarded permission of novelties in ceremonies as a destruction of tradition, and completely neglected the fact that these new ceremonies help the participants know more about the values of their faith. From this point of view, it seems that the tradition that Lefebvre follows is likely a tradition only supported by his personal experience of emotion. If tradition is merely a tradition of methods of ceremonies to worship God, it is absurd that Lefebvre took such radical action to exit the Church for the protection of tradition.

Syllabus Errorum was Pope Pius IX's official letter which was handed over together with *Qunta Cura* to the then secretary of state, Antonelli, who delivered it to all bishops of the Church. *Syllabus Errorum*, a collection of religious statements from Pope Pius IX, in which he criticized ideas against the Church at that time, was kept by a committee whose members included Pecci, the latter Pope Leo XIII. It is necessary, therefore, when citing *Syllabus Errorum* as supporting evidence, to scrutinize its content as still valid.

To conclude, if Lefebvre's tradition is not merely a tradition of his emotional preference, but the real tradition of dogma, his criticism of *Dignitatis humanae* must have come from a misunderstanding of it. Nevertheless, it remains problematic if we raise the question—the Church in one way admits that one has the freedom to choose a religion, and in another, it asserts itself as the sole true religion, so, as a consequence, does a person have the right to make a wrong decision in choosing a religion? To answer this question, we have to further expound upon freedom of conscience and religious belief.

In the introduction of this paper, we have discussed the concept of "freedom" in Christian tradition, and we also have pointed out that this concept is always related to values. This ancient philosophy of the Church with regard to the concept of freedom is indeed the guiding principle of *Dignitatis humanae* of the Second Vatican Council.

THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION ON FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE AND FREEDOM OF RELIGION

In terms of freedom of conscience and freedom of religion, our reflection starts from a reflection on the most primordial value. This reflection focuses more on the person and his relation to God, yet one's social order and social life are not involved. The grace of salvation from God is granted to everyone, and it is not fulfilled until there is a rational response to it. This involves also the reliability of the messengers through which salvation is conveyed. Without a person's response with his natural conscience, God's grace cannot be received. To accept grace

from God, however, the basic rationality of man is required, since man cannot believe in self-contradictory things. Paul the Apostle said, "For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." (1 Corinthians 1:18) God's grace and man's reason are not conflicting, and the goal of theology is to expound on this non-contradiction of dogma, instead of constructing dogma.

God has created man and endowed him with his nature, and man has the nature to pursue ultimate Truth. Man's conscience plays the role of adjusting his behavior, and conscience aims at truth and instructs man's will with regard to what "should" or what "should not" be done. Conscience, essentially, has no freedom, but it is the prerequisite of freedom, otherwise we are not able to differentiate man from animals. Our statement that conscience, following its nature, has no freedom is different from the situation in which conscience loses itself or is suffocated, for instance, in brainwashing or as such. This kind of situation tells us about the importance of education. Priest Utz (A. F. Utz O.P.) once asked with cautious deliberation, "How could we possibly identify conscience with freedom? If it is so, we are not able to realize the bound between morality and law."[19] It is according to the same understanding of conscience and freedom that freedom of conscience is brought to light in *Dignitatis humanae*: "…man perceives and acknowledges the imperatives of the divine law through the mediation of conscience. In all his activity a man is bound to follow his conscience in order that he may come to God, the end and purpose of life. It follows that he is not to be forced to act in a manner contrary to his conscience. Nor, on the other hand, is he to be restrained from acting in accordance with his conscience, especially in matters religious." (DH3)

Facing apocalyptic truth from God, conscience must follow. There are cases where man has tried his best to seek the ultimate truth but has failed. This is probably the case Cardinal Augustin Bea (1881-1968) called "innocent erroneous conscience."[20] Now if we put in the social order the concept of "religious freedom," according to our theological and philosophical reflections, it is then obvious that religious freedom expressed in *Dignitatis humanae* of the Second Vatican Council is not recognized as the right to freely choose a religion, but the right to freely pursue truth and true religion. *Dignitatis humanae* clearly indicates that the sole true religion is Catholicism (DH1). *Dignitatis humanae* thus neither breaks from the Catholic tradition as "treasury of faith," nor contradicts the statements of Pope Pius IX and Pope Leo XIII—they

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[19] Vgl. Utz, A. F. a. a. O. s.287
[20] Ebenda. s. 281

firmly asserted, when criticizing indifferentism, that Catholicism is the sole religion of choice.

According to *Dignitatis humanae*, one should pursue the Catholic truth. This of course means that Catholicism is the sole true religion, and its truth is objective. One should objectively recognize the fact that Catholicism is the sole true religion. Nevertheless, man's recognition of truth involves not only the objective aspect, but also the subjective, such as environmental influences or the ability of cognition and differentiation. Man, at any rate, must use his reason, through which he pursues truth and then recognize the true religion, so that he is able to accept this faith. It is necessary for the Church to admit that this is what God desires, namely, God wants man to pursue the truth and true religion with his reason. "No one is forced to believe" is the principle that the Church never violates. Therefore, during the process of man's journey from seeking truth to finally obtaining it, the Church adopts the principle of tolerance and admits one's natural right to choose a religion. This admission, however, is not a tolerance of erroneous choices, and we shall not mistake the natural right to choose religion for the right of erroneous choices. The principle of tolerance adopted by Pope Pius XII today remains valid.

The Church does not have the right to force one to believe in Catholicism. Thomas Aquinas said, "…these [unbelievers] are by no means to be compelled to the faith, in order that they may believe, because to believe depends on the will..." [21] In a mediaeval theocratic state, people debated whether it is right to ask unbelievers' children, especially Jews' children, to be baptized by law. In this context, Aquinas pointed out that the Divine law does not do away with natural law. And it is the parents' duty to safeguard the salvation of their children, especially before they are able to use reason.[22] Aquinas cited Paul the Apostle's words and said, "Now the primary subjection of man to God is by faith, according to Heb. 11:6: 'He that cometh to God, must believe that He is.' Hence faith is presupposed to the precepts of the Law." [23] Moreover, he emphasized, when discussing the issue "the precepts relating to hope and fear," that "… the act of faith inclines man's mind so that he believes the Author of the Law to be One to Whom he owes submission, while, by the hope of a reward, he is induced to observe the precepts,"[24]

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[21] Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, II-II, Q. 10, a. 8. The English translation by Fathers of the Dominican Province is adopted in this paper.
[22] Ibid., II-II, Q. 10, a. 12.
[23] Ibid., II-II, Q. 16, a. 1.
[24] Ibid., II-II, Q. 22, a. 1.

Therefore, the idea expressed in *Dignitatis humanae* that one has the basic right to freely choose religion refers in fact to one's right to pursue true religion. This understanding is clearly stated in *Dignitatis humanae* 2:

> It is in accordance with their dignity as persons—that is, beings endowed with reason and free will and therefore privileged to bear personal responsibility—that all men should be at once impelled by nature and also bound by a moral obligation to seek the truth, especially religious truth. They are also bound to adhere to the truth, once it is known, and to order their whole lives in accord with the demands of truth. However, men cannot discharge these obligations in a manner in keeping with their own nature unless they enjoy immunity from external coercion as well as psychological freedom. Therefore the right to religious freedom has its foundation not in the subjective disposition of the person, but in his very nature. In consequence, <u>the right to this immunity continues to exist even in those who do not live up to their obligation of seeking the truth and adhering to it and the exercise of this right is not to be impeded, provided that just public order be observed.</u>

I underline a few sentences to stress that the right to freely choose religion understood in *Dignitatis humanae* means the right to choose true religion.

If we examine a church member, from our reflection on the right to choose true religion, we may propose this question: is the right to choose true religion also valid for a person who is already a Catholic? According to the theology of grace, which results in an abstract expression concerning the relationship between grace and one's will, no one is without guilt for losing faith. In practice, however, life is more complicated. A Catholic who left the Church, either due to never truly believing, or indeed having an internal crisis of faith in the Church, was not at any rate to be forgiven in mediaeval times. Society today may accept certain reasons for leaving the Church; yet, this theological insistence remains. Aquinas aptly said, "Just as taking a vow is a matter of will, and keeping a vow, a matter of obligation, so acceptance of the faith is a matter of the will, whereas keeping the faith, when once one has received it, is a matter of obligation." [25] Aquinas' words echo *Dignitatis humanae*: men are "bound to adhere to the truth, once it is

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[25] Ibid., II-II, Q. 10, a. 8.

known, and to order their whole lives in accord with the demands of truth."

POLITICAL REFLECTION ON RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

The Aquinas principle—"acceptance of the faith is a matter of the will, whereas keeping the faith, when once one has received it, is a matter of obligation"[26]—was appropriately applied to Catholic states (Orbis Catholicus) during mediaeval times. Following this principle in today's society, *Dignitatis humanae* of the Second Vatican Council further emphasizes, for the concern of the needs of contemporary man, that "the demand is increasingly made that men should act on their own judgment, enjoying and making use of a responsible freedom, not driven by coercion but motivated by a sense of duty."(DH1) So to speak, people nowadays require "immunity from coercion in civil society" in terms of their religious beliefs. Responding to man's contemporary needs, *Dignitatis humanae* dose not leave aside the Church's responsibility of insisting faithful truth and spreading the Gospels. *Dignitatis humanae* thus proclaimed that man, according to his nature, is bound to seek the truth, especially religious and Catholic truth, and he is also bound to adhere to the truth, once it is known, and to order his whole life in accord with the demands of truth.

Apparently, *Dignitatis humanae* regards human nature as the universal foundation of all men, through which one pursues moral and religious truth. Therefore, we see the statement in *Dignitatis humanae* 1:

> Religious freedom, in turn, which men demand as necessary to fulfill their duty to worship God, has to do with immunity from coercion in civil society. Therefore it leaves untouched traditional Catholic doctrine on the moral duty of men and societies toward the true religion and toward the one Church of Christ.

In *Dignitatis humanae* 2, this perspective that human nature is the common foundation for the acceptance of both moral values and religious truth is more clearly demonstrated: "the right to religious freedom has its foundation in the very dignity of the human person as this dignity is known through the revealed word of God and by reason itself...It is in accordance with their dignity as persons-that is, beings endowed with reason and free will and therefore privileged to bear personal responsibility—that all men should be at once impelled by nature and also bound by a moral obligation to seek the truth, especially

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[26] Ibid., II-II, Q. 10, a. 8.

religious truth. They are also bound to adhere to the truth, once it is known, and to order their whole lives in accord with the demands of truth...Therefore the right to religious freedom has its foundation not in the subjective disposition of the person, but in his very nature."

A new perspective emerged in *Dignitatis humanae*, that is, *Dignitatis humanae* admits that a Catholic enjoys religious freedom in civil society, yet he does not have that in the moral or religious sphere. *Dignitatis humanae* 3, therefore, says,

> …the exercise of religion, of its very nature, consists before all else in those internal, voluntary and free acts whereby man sets the course of his life directly toward God. No merely human power can either command or prohibit acts of this kind…The religious acts whereby men, in private and in public and out of a sense of personal conviction, direct their lives to God transcend by their very nature the order of terrestrial and temporal affairs.

The Church in fact can never enter the souls of its members, and therefore is unable to judge what level of guilt a member has if he loses his faith. Namely, the Church is in no way able to tell whether a member loses his faith from an innocent or sinful mistake. So, it is clear that, according to what is stated in *Dignitatis humanae* 3 that the state has no right to judge affairs from the order of grace which transcends the order of terrestrial and temporal affairs, and thus everyone can enjoy religious freedom; moreover, the Church as a terrestrial and temporal group of faith is also unable to make accurate judgments on its member's conscience, and it thus has to merely appeal to the universal principle of religious freedom, and be tolerant towards its members, as well as regard them as those on the way to truth.

Therefore, the principle of tolerance, illustrated in Pope Pius XII's address to the Catholic Jurists Association in Italy on December 6th, 1953, is still adopted by *Dignitatis humanae*. A gap exists between the terrestrial and temporal order and the order of grace. A solution for this gap needs to recourse to Eschatology in Christian faith. The entire discourse of *Dignitatis humanae* 11 is dedicated to illustrate this viewpoint.[27] One famous example, used in *Dignitatis humanae* 11, is based on a biblical story (Mathew 13: 30; 40-42) in which the cockle and wheat grow together until the harvest. If we apply this example to human law, we can then understand Aquinas' discourse on human law: "Now human law is framed for a number of human beings, the majority

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[27] See Shih Hsung (Thomas) Yang, "What is Catholic Social Theory?" *Fu Jen Journal of Philosophy* 43, pp. 9-10.

of whom are not perfect in virtue. Wherefore human laws do not forbid all vices, from which the virtuous abstain, but only the more grievous vices, from which it is possible for the majority to abstain; and chiefly those that are to the hurt of others, without the prohibition of which human society could not be maintained." [28] So, "… human law does not prescribe concerning all the acts of every virtue: but only in regard to those that are ordainable to the common good—either immediately, as when certain things are done directly for the common good—or mediately, as when a lawgiver prescribes certain things pertaining to good order, whereby the citizens are directed in the upholding of the common good of justice and peace." [29]

Tolerance with regard to human law, as revealed in Aquinas' statement, contributes to our understanding of religious freedom: all religions are equally juxtaposed in the human field where only man's reason resides. This does not completely concord with the order of grace and, of course, is not the ideal situation. However, this should be permitted in man's rational order. This permission, if we may analogize it with the case of human law, closely resembles "tolerance of human law."

Political law falls into the field of man's reason in the terrestrial and temporal order. The state, therefore, does not possess unlimited or unconstrained power in terms of the right of religious freedom. It should be confined to moral law. Following this, the injury is "done to the human person and to the very order established by God for human life, if the free exercise of religion is denied in society, provided just public order is observed," (DH3) and religious communities "in spreading religious faith and in introducing religious practices everyone ought at all times to refrain from any manner of action which might seem to carry a hint of coercion or of a kind of persuasion that would be dishonorable or unworthy, especially when dealing with poor or uneducated people." (DH4) In addition, "a wrong is done when government imposes upon its people, by force or fear or other means, the profession or repudiation of any religion, or when it hinders men from joining or leaving a religious community." (DH6); the principle of government in terms of religious freedom then should be as follows: "the freedom of man is to be respected as far as possible and is not to be curtailed except when and insofar as necessary." (DH7)

SOCIALIST RELIGIOUS THEORY AND PRACTICE IN CHINA

The Communist Party of China (CCP) in its 7th representative

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[28] Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologiae, II-I, Q. 96, a. 2.
[29] Ibid., II-I, Q. 96, a. 3.

assembly defines the thoughts of Mao Zedong (Mao) as "an integration of general truth from Marxism-Leninism and revolutionary practice in China." It is stated that Mao's thoughts are the guide of the whole party,[30] and this declaration is still considered valid today even after the de-maoist movement conducted by Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997). [31] According to Mao, the mission of the CCP is to improve Chinese society through Marxism-Leninism. Religious theory of the CCP, doubtlessly, bases itself on Marxism.

Marx's position on religion derives from his critiques of religion. *Criticism of Hegel's Philosophy of Right* is a work which criticizes Hegel's notion of nation. In the introduction of this book, however, Marx frankly claimed that the first dimension of the world's revelation is religion, and "criticism of religion is the premise of all criticisms."[32] Furthermore, "as religion is the struggle compendium of human thoughts, the political state is the struggle compendium of human practice."[33]

Marx, from the perspective of his texts, aimed at illustrating the principles of socialism in the context of criticism of religion: "The principles of socialism, speaking overall, involve solely practical human existence. We shall however pay our attention also to the other dimension, that is, man's theoretical life. Accordingly, we regard religion and science as the objects of our criticism."[34] Marx's critiques on religion is, in one way, a battle between his own theory and German philosophy, and, in another way, a task towards determining the direction of practice in terms of the movement of socialism. It involves a unity of theory and practice which is characteristic of communism.[35]

Marx's communism as a unity of theory and practice is based on a material worldview, only from which he is able to make this declaration: "the criticism of Heaven is turned into one of the earth; the criticism of

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[30] See the documents on the seventh plenary session of the sixth central committee of the CCP (April 20, 1945), quoted from *Selected Works of Mao*, Vol. 3, p. 904.

[31] The 12th representative assembly of the CCP (September 6, 1982) reaffirmed four cardinal CCP principles: to keep to the socialist road, to uphold the people's democratic dictatorship, to adhere to leadership by the Communist Party, and to insist on Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong's thought. Please read the documentary records of the 12th representative assembly of the CCP, p. 81.

[32] Karl Marx, "Criticism of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," *Complete Works of Marx*, Vol. 1, p. 452.

[33] Karl Marx, "A Letter to Arnold Ruge, May 1843," *Complete Works of Marx*, Vol. 1, p. 417.

[34] Please see *Complete Works of Marx*, Vol. 1, p. 417.

[35] Shih Hsung (Thomas) Yang, "Communism," *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Vol. 3 (Fu Jen Catholic University Press, 1997), No. 1475-1478.

religion into one of law; and the criticism of theology into one of politics."[36]

According to Marx, criticism itself is not the aim, rather, it is a means which establishes "truth from this side," "creates the new world," "liberates human beings," and furthermore, "revives the human essence." Therefore, not only nations and classes will disappear, but also religion when the new world of communism arrives.[37]

Based on historical materialism revealed by Marx's *Preface to A Critique of Political Economy* and his guidelines of political economy, [38] religion, pertaining to man's spiritual life, is the superstructure (Überbau) of social consciousness. The existence of society determines social consciousness, and man's thoughts are merely the material metamorphosis of the mind. Consequently, Marx's understanding of religion is as follows:

1) Human society creates religion, and religion for humans therefore is essentially unnecessary, that is, its existence is an existence of defect.

2) The existence of religion is a defect, yet there is no need to search for the reason of its defect in religion itself. The relationship between liberation of religion and that of politics becomes the relationship between liberation and all human liberations.

3) Teaching on religious tolerance and on the pursuit of Heaven has anesthetized man's power of reflection and motive for revolution. Therefore, religion is the opiate of the masses.

4) "The positive abandonment of private property, as a positive abandonment of all alienated possessions of man's life, is a return to man's self from religion, family and nation." So, "communism is a positive abandonment of private property, a solution for conflicts between humans, a revival of man's essence, and also, an answer to the enigma of history."[39]

CCP in China, following Marx's theory of religion and the common truth of Marxism-Leninism, established the Religious Affairs

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[36] Karl Marx, "Criticism of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," *Complete Works of Marx*, Vol. 1, p. 453.

[37] Ibid., p. 455. Also see Karl Marx, "A Letter to Arnold Ruge, May 1843," *Complete Works of Marx*, Vol. 1, pp. 414-415.

[38] Karl Marx, "Preface to A Critique of Political Economy," *Complete Works of Marx*, Vol. 13, pp. 8-9.

[39] Karl Marx, "The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844," *Complete Works of Marx*, Vol. 42, p. 120. Also see Shih Hsiung (Thomas) Yang, *A Criticism to Marx's Criticism of Religion*, National Taiwan University's Research on National Development, pp. 202-210.

Office and the patriotic church, through which the state interferes with religious affairs. This is reasonable, since for the CCP the solution of religious alienation is also the solution of political alienation. The communist party, which represents the interests of the proletariat, has its power and legitimacy only before communism is fully realized.

In fact, integration of the common truth from Marxism-Leninism and the Chinese revolution did not go as smoothly as expected. The reason being, the integration of the two necessarily involves the communication of different cultures and lives, and this communication cannot truly occur if the impacts on law, politics and economy in a certain culture are disregarded. What is more, the integration of common truth from Marxism-Leninism and the Chinese revolution to some degree is also the integration of Marxist-Leninist philosophy and Chinese culture, which, of course, increased the complexity of the problem.[40]

On the 10th of May, 1966 Yao Wenyuan declared the "Reactionary Nature of Sam Ka Tsuen," which directly provoked the national people's movement named "Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution." This movement aimed at changing the superstructure in order that China could transform itself into a communist society. As a result, the movement possessed the following characteristics: 1) to criticize Chinese traditional culture (such as "Destroy the Four Olds"); to place social values above family values; to criticize Confucius and advocate Qin. 2) to establish the people's commune as the socio-economic and political organizational unit; and to highlight the "base" (Baxis) in communism.

Unfortunately, this Proletarian Cultural Revolution ignored the fact that a socialist society requires material conditions supported by strong productivity, and consequently put itself into the predicament of voluntarism. Still, the revolution held the same understanding of the human being as that in Marx's historical materialism. As Mao said at the Yan'an Forum on Literature and Art, "There is no human nature as it is, but only the nature of classes."

After the ten-year revolution, the "policy of reformation and opening" conducted by Deng Xiaoping has brought China not only a change of political direction,[41] but also a new concept of private property which differs from other forms of socialism. In addition, cultural policy in China also made drastic changes, for instance, "bring down Confucianism" turned into everywhere "establishing schools of

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[40] Vgl. Shih-Hsiung (Thomas) Yang, <Die Sozialphilosophie von Arthur F. Utz aus Chinesische Sicht>, 47. Jahrgang Heft 2 (April 1993), S. 158f.

[41] Shih Hsung (Thomas) Yang, *Marx's Economy Philosophy: The CCP's Socialist Market Economy* (Taipei: Wu-Nan Book Inc, 2004), pp. 202-205.

Confucianism." Indeed, many scholars had attempted to integrate the philosophy of Confucianism and that of Marxism, but little has been achieved in this field. The reason for this, I think, is that these two systems of philosophy have entirely different metaphysics and epistemology, and especially, different understandings of human nature.

Confucianism, nevertheless, is believed to be similar, albeit in a different way, to the theory of natural law developed by Thomism and Catholicism. Both of the two put weight on practice and regard the human person as an independent subject who is required to judge his own actions in daily life. This theory of natural law is exactly our foundation, and in this paper it is used as crucial standpoint to view and observe the freedom of religion. Pope PIUS XI in *Divini Redemptoris* (March 19, 1937) showed the errors of communism and pointed out that, the first way to correct all ill effects of communism is to conduct a Christian life, spread the love of the Gospel, practice charity, and realize justice.[42] The truth of faith is brought into light only in practice, this is indeed an insight. As what we know from the Gospel: "By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

A Chinese scholar who studied Christianity once asked a member of the Patriotic Church: "will you follow the government or the Pope when it comes to church affaires?" "The Pope," he answered. The scholar continued, "Why is that?" He answered, "For going to Heaven." The answer may sound a little utilitarian, but it indeed manifested directly the fact that the ultimate concern of human being is never offered by the government which can merely establish "truth from this side."

CONCLUSION

According to our understanding of freedom of religion, which resulted from our analysis of the *Dignitatis humanae*, our theological reflection, and reflections on politics and law, we may conclude the following statements as answers to questions raised in this paper.

First, "No one is forced to believe" is a statement of revelation and truth taught by the Church Fathers and Holy Masters of the Church tradition. This truth is exactly what is stated in the *Dignitatis humanae* 1: "Religious freedom, in turn, which men demand as necessary to fulfill their duty to worship God, has to do with immunity from coercion in civil society." In fact, all articles from *Dignitatis humanae* emphasize only freedom from external coercion, but they never imply that a human being has freedom from pursuing truth, because a human being, indeed,

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[42] Shih Hsiung (Thomas) Yang, "What is Catholic Social Theory?" *Fu Jen Journal of Philosophy* 43, p. 9.

is in no way free from morality and religious truth. *Dignitatis humanae* never abandons the insistence of truth and church tradition, as being condemned by those who did not read it carefully enough. Rather, *Dignitatis humanae* requires all to pursue the sole truth which is revealed by Jesus Christ and handed down by the Apostles. It, therefore, is in no way a turning point implying the abandonment of objective truth of faith. Precisely speaking, it aims at responding to the question of how to express sole truth in the context of the appeal of human dignity and independent consciousness. In *Dignitatis humanae*, there is no such reversal from truth to conscience. While facing truth, conscience does not possess freedom, and it is exactly under this principle that *Dignitatis humanae* emphasized only freedom from external coercion.

Second, the statements on truth and Truth itself coexist. Yet Truth is not limited by space and time, while statements of truth include all elements of time, space, environment, and social consciousness. In the 18th and 19th centuries under an anti-Church atmosphere, the emphasis on the exclusiveness of Church teaching was considered to be more efficient to correct the negative social climate. Over time, *Dignitatis humanae* admitted that man has the freedom to choose a religion, which in fact expresses God's will more clearly: man shall accept the revelation and grace from God in his true freedom. Therefore, *Dignitatis humanae* does not contradict the statements of Gregory XVI, Pius IX, and Leo XIII; they all believe in and inherit from the same faith. Pope Benedict XVI thus said that *Dignitatis humanae* in the Second Vatican Council belongs not to metaphysical or dogmatic categories, but to the field of Catholic social teaching.

In the Second Vatican Council literature, the most meaningful documents for our age are definitely *Pastoral Constitution: On the Church in the Modern World* and *Dignitatis humanae* (*Declaration on Religious Freedom*). These two documents both emphasize the ideas that natural law is the source of independent knowledge and the Gospel is the model of action, and furthermore, in the integration of these ideas God's creation and salvation are infused. The more the independence of natural law is stressed, the more deeply the relationships between "creation and salvation," "nature and grace," and "natural law and the Gospel" in Church social teaching is illustrated.

Third, in understanding the relationship between man's reason and Church teaching by the Second Vatican Council, man's reason is not a tool of grace, but rather the precondition of grace. *Dignitatis humanae* admits that man has the freedom to choose a religion according to his reason, and this freedom conforms to man's nature. However, in terms of creation, man is born with Original Sin. His intellect and will are not ultimately perfect, and his conscience, thus, may be innocent yet guilty. Since the Church is not able to enter man's conscience to judge whether

or not his conscience is guilty, it is reasonable for the Church to adopt the principle of tolerance. So, Pope Pius XII's principle of tolerance is not dated. The Church must believe all are in the process of pursuing Truth.

To conclude, in morality an innocent mistake is in no way equal to the right to make a mistake. As Aquinas said, in God's grace, faith is prior to all rules. Still, Church members ought to follow Church canons and practice charity to maintain their faith.

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The Council for Research
in Values and Philosophy

PURPOSE

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Studies in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

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A set of related research efforts is currently in process:

1. *Cultural Heritage and Contemporary Change: Philosophical Foundations for Social Life*. Focused, mutually coordinated research teams in university centers prepare volumes as part of an integrated philosophic search for self-understanding differentiated by culture and civilization. These evolve more adequate understandings of the person in society and look to the cultural heritage of each for the resources to respond to the challenges of its own specific contemporary transformation.

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3. *Joint-Colloquia* with Institutes of Philosophy of the National Academies of Science, university philosophy departments, and societies. Underway since 1976 in Eastern Europe and, since 1987, in China, these concern the person in contemporary society.

4. *Foundations of Moral Education and Character Development.* A study in values and education which unites philosophers, psychologists, social scientists and scholars in education in the elaboration of ways of enriching the moral content of education and character development. This work has been underway since 1980.

The personnel for these projects consists of established scholars willing to contribute their time and research as part of their professional commitment to life in contemporary society. For resources to implement this work the Council, as 501 C3 a non-profit organization incorporated in the District of Colombia, looks to various private foundations, public programs and enterprises.

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