



Cultural Diversity and Transversal Values:



United Nations
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East–West Dialogue on Spiritual
and Secular Dynamics

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International Research Center for Japanese Studies
Research Center for Moral Science (Japan)

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Contact

The Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue, Culture Sector

UNESCO, 1, rue Miollis, 75732 Paris Cedex 15 – France

Tel: +33 1 45 68 40 86 / 42 75

Fax: +33 1 45 68 55 97

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Opening statement by Koïchiro Matsuura Director-General of UNESCO

Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you this morning to UNESCO on the occasion of the international symposium on Cultural Diversity and Transversal Values: East–West Dialogue on Spiritual–Secular Dynamics.

In bringing together researchers of very different nationalities and backgrounds and mobilizing various sectors of UNESCO to address the same issue, this meeting is in itself a real achievement.

Allow me, therefore, first of all to give my heartfelt thanks to the many French, Japanese and other partners who have agreed to take part in this collective debate or to offer it their invaluable support. I would also like to take this opportunity to give special thanks to the Japan Foundation for its generous financial support, and to Mr Eiji Hattori for coordinating all the work with skill and efficiency.

I sincerely welcome this meeting, because it brings into perspective the interplay between three dimensions that we cannot dissociate: cultural diversity, the transversal and shared nature of the values that underlie cultures and civilizations, and, lastly, the forces at work in the complex and varying interactions between cultural practices and world views.

As you know, the General Conference of UNESCO less than a month ago adopted a convention on the protection and promotion of the diversity of cultural expressions. Through that instrument, the Member States wished to express their concern about the dangers of cultural impoverishment and uniformization in the context of intensified globalization, and their commitment to combating that phenomenon through greater support for the very principles of diversity, by providing States with the means to formulate cultural policies in a climate of dialogue that is respectful of human rights.

However, the protection of cultural diversity cannot be effective unless dialogue between cultures, and particularly between their religious and

spiritual expressions, is strengthened in order to ward off the threats that loom when ignorance and rejection of the Other supplant tolerance, understanding and openness.

Thus, by seeking to bring the two cultural entities of the Far East and the West together in dialogue, and in focusing on the relationship between cultural transfer and modernity, this symposium ties in perfectly with one of UNESCO's ongoing concerns which, as the Constitution states, is to develop and to increase the means of communication between peoples for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives.

This call for dialogue and for the opening of borders and disciplines has been at the heart of the Organization's major international projects: I am thinking in particular of the well-known East-West Major Project of the 1950s and 1960s, which led to the creation of institutions in various countries and to translation on an unprecedented scale, or the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue project, which since the 1980s has contributed to the strengthening of cultural cooperation between numerous countries and to the creation of many other interregional dialogue projects based on the 'roads' principle.

Since that time, our efforts to strengthen the dialogue between the peoples of the East and West have not ceased. Thus, UNESCO has strongly encouraged the establishment of dialogue at the interregional level, particularly between thinkers and philosophers from different regions of the world, on the model of the philosophical dialogue between Asia and the Arab world launched in November 2004 and the philosophical dialogue between Africa and Latin America, which is to be launched at the end of this month.

The aim of meetings like this one is of course to foster such dialogue. The comparative approach that you plan to adopt at your various working sessions on the dynamics of cultural transfer, the sharing and plurality of values and the mechanisms for genuine intercultural dialogue will open up valuable horizons and will undoubtedly pave the way for greater dialogue.

I am therefore convinced that this symposium will enable us to gain a better understanding of the processes of modernization, to examine the concept of cultural diversity in greater depth, to formulate recommendations of use in promoting broader interregional dialogue and to develop a methodology that might serve as the basis for the development of dialogue between other geocultural spheres.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The existence of dialogue and exchange, whether between individuals, societies or States, presupposes mutual acceptance and respect between the parties. So, in order to understand one another, it is important to create a favourable environment and to identify common points of reference.

It is therefore imperative – especially if we wish to address concerns relating to the divisions, inequalities and new forms of ignorance created at the heart of knowledge societies – to pursue this critical work through efforts to analyse, compare and interpret the expressions and values that form the foundations of our common humanity.

While we are convinced of the need for universal recognition of the plurality and equal dignity of cultures, the establishment of a meaningful dialogue between those cultures, without taboos or fetishism, is undoubtedly the best way to foster mutual understanding and avoid age-old misunderstandings.

Allow me therefore, in that hope, to reiterate how happy UNESCO is to welcome you. I wish you a useful and productive session and I shall be following your work with the greatest of interest.

Thank you for your attention.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Matsuura', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Koïchiro Matsuura
Director-General of UNESCO

Ist Session:

The East–West Encounter in History

Moderated by Jean-Pierre Boyer, Secretary-General
of the French National Commission for UNESCO

The Confucian ethic and the spirit of East Asian modernity

Tu Weiming

It is obvious that the state of the world is far from dialogical, harmonious or peaceful. The vision of the world as a 'global village' entails the shared aspiration that as globalization broadens and deepens, the sense of interconnectedness and togetherness among peoples from all corners of the globe will be greatly enhanced. Indeed, since the 1960s, when our naked eyes, informed by the transcending gaze of the astronauts, were able to see for the first time in human history the blue planet in its entirety, we knew as an irreducible fact that we are interconnected and together on this earth; our lifeboat, if not our vehicle for ultimate salvation. An increasing number of children in Boston, Paris, Tokyo, Beijing, New Delhi, Moscow or Istanbul are aware that all of our natural resources, from soil to air, are limited. If we do not take care of our home on earth, no 'kingdom of God' or 'other shore' will automatically emerge to save us. We often teach the young to love their neighbour, respect difference and be concerned for others, for, as educated and liberal-minded students of the Enlightenment legacy of the modern West, we cherish the hope that rationality will prevail over violence and bigotry and that stability rather than chaos will characterize the international community.

However, it has become abundantly clear in recent years that economic globalization does not necessarily lead to a reduction of poverty. Instead, economic globalization may have contributed to unemployment and social disintegration. Globalization is a spectacular display of the power of human ingenuity, especially in information and communication technologies. It is a powerful engine of economic, political, social and cultural transformation, as demonstrated by the dynamism of the market. It is obvious that the unprecedented flow of trade, capital, investment, finance, tourism, migration, information and knowledge has generated such dynamism that the world is becoming interconnected, intertwined, and indeed wired, into a 'global village', and that the ancient Chinese idea of 'great unity' is no longer a utopian vision but a realizable, even practicable, aspiration.

An essential feature of this shared aspiration is the view that the politics of domination should be replaced by the politics of communication, networking, negotiation, interaction, interfacing and collaboration. The assumption of the 1960s (when modernization theory was in vogue at Harvard) that the worldwide process of rationalization defined in terms of industrialization, urbanization, Westernization and modernization would wipe out cultural, institutional, structural and ideational differences is no longer tenable. Globalization is inevitably a process of homogenization. The conspicuous presence of English in any form of international discourse, the spread of fast food, American-style entertainment, youth culture and evangelical Protestantism are obvious examples. Yet, the thesis of convergence, meaning that the rest of the world will eventually converge with the modern West, in particular the United States, is at best an American dream.

In the 1980s, developmental economists and comparative sociologists advocated the thesis of reverse convergence occasioned by the so-called miracles of Japan and the Four Mini-Dragons. ‘Asian values’, ‘network capitalism’ and ‘the Asia-Pacific Century’ were advanced as alternatives to Western modernism. There was a pervasive sense that the motivating force for global transformation had shifted from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The 1997 Asian financial crisis that spread from Thailand to Indonesia and South Korea prompted radically different interpretive strategies. Authoritarianism, crony capitalism and the absence of the rule of law were identified as the underlying reasons for the troubles with the Asian way. The diagnostic reading is indisputable: no healthy market economy can develop without transparency, public accountability, trust and fair competition.

Obviously, there is a great deal that Asian business leaders can and should learn from the West. Actually, for more than 150 years, East Asian intellectuals have been devoted students of Western learning. In the case of Japan, commitment to Dutch learning (*rangaku*) and subsequently British, French, German and American learning since the Meiji Restoration of 1868 has been instrumental in propelling Japan into a super economic power of the twenty-first century. Since the May Fourth Movement of 1919, a defining characteristic of being a public intellectual in China is possessing knowledge about the modern West. Even at the height of the Cultural Revolution, the image of the West (the United States, in particular) as an advanced stage of civilizational development was never in doubt. Ironically, it was the most articulate French intellectuals, such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, who glorified Maoism as the wave of the future in the Paris

revolt of 1968. Indeed, the great strength of modern East Asia is its intellectual and spiritual self-definition as a learning civilization. This may very well be the most precious legacy of Confucian humanism.

The first character in the Confucian *Analects* is ‘learning’ (*xue*). Learning to be human is a ceaseless process of self-realization. Confucius, in his spiritual autobiography, envisions his life history as a lifelong commitment to learning:

At fifteen, I set my heart upon learning.
At thirty I established my self.
At forty I no longer had perplexities.
At fifty I knew the Mandate of Heaven.
At sixty I was at ease with whatever I heard.
At seventy I could follow my heart’s desire without transgressing the boundaries of right.¹

In the Confucian perspective, not only a person, but also a family, a community, a nation, a region and the world must learn. All human constructions – economic organizations, social structures, political institutions, universities, churches, philosophical systems and ideologies – are evolving processes. Without learning, preferably guided by a communal critical self-consciousness, they inevitably become stagnant.

Understandably, among non-Western societies, East Asia has been most thorough in its commitment to Western learning. The general impression that Chinese, Japanese and Korean intellectuals are primarily interested in Western science and technology and that they have resisted Western spirituality, such as Christianity, is apparently true, but the assumption that the ‘quest for wealth and power’ was the primary motive of East Asian intellectuals to emulate the so-called ‘advanced techniques’ of the West is misleading. The Chinese historical experience with the Mongol invasion and the Manchu conquest clearly indicate that military might and material resources alone could not have overwhelmed the Chinese intelligentsia. It was the Western civilization behind the gunboats and gunfire that truly impressed Confucian literati such as Zeng Guofan, Zhang Zhidong, Kang Youwei and Liang Qichao. For them, what the West symbolized was more than the effectiveness and efficiency of soldiers and traders, but the institutions and underlying values that constituted the totality of

1. The Confucian *Analects*, II.4, quoted from William Theodore De Bary, Wing-tsit Chan and Burton Watson (eds.), 1960, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*. New York, Columbia University Press, p. 22.

the Western impact. The so-called Self-Strengthening Movement, involving building an industrial infrastructure and training generations of experts, could not have come about without the awareness that leaning from the West, requiring a long-term national effort, was necessary for China's survival.

Virtually all prominent Westernizers in China, Japan and Korea have been Confucian scholar-officials. Although they were fully convinced that Western civilization was superior – more advanced in military technology, political institutions and social organizations – and that they had to thoroughly transform their own way of life, they were also confident that, through conscientious learning, they would be able to adapt and eventually prevail. This combination of iconoclastic attack on the outmoded feudal past and optimistic assertions about the bright future enabled East Asian intellectuals to persist in their Western learning without losing a firm sense of direction for nation-building. Indeed, the complex interaction of powerful currents of thought characterized by Feng Qi as the unprecedented 'disputation of ancient/modern and China/the West' provides the ideological background for understanding China's struggle against imperialism and colonialism, the collapse of the Manchu dynasty, the founding of the Republic, the resistance against Japanese aggression, the triumph of Marxism-Leninism on the Chinese intellectual scene, the establishment of the Chinese Communist Party, and the rise of Mao as the helmsman who guided China to become a unified civilization-state again.

From a cultural perspective, learning from the Enlightenment of the modern West has been a dominant theme among East Asian intellectuals. Vera Schwarz and Li Zehou have diagnosed the central problematic of Chinese intellectuals since the May Fourth Movement as being the overshadowing of Enlightenment learning by patriotic sentiments of saving the nation. Their interpretive stance is compatible with the classical Levensonian thesis that the predicament of the modern Confucian thinker is an intellectual identification with the modern West allied with an emotional attachment to China's past. This results in an affective deficiency in Western learning and a cognitive deficiency in identifying with traditional China. In a deeper sense, the predicament of contemporary Chinese intellectuals also lies in their unquestioned commitment to a particular version of the Enlightenment of the modern West. They believe that secular humanism as exemplified by the French Revolution and its attendant positivism, utilitarianism, scientism, materialism and progressivism is the only path to China's survival and flourishing.

Arguably, the Enlightenment mentality is the most powerful ideology in human history. Both capitalism and socialism evolved from this mentality. The

market economy, democratic polity and civil society are all its tangible results. The underlying values, such as liberty, rationality, rule of law, human rights, and dignity of the individual, of modern institutions, including universities, multinational corporations, the mass media and non-governmental organizations, are pre-eminent Enlightenment values. Not surprisingly, one of the most powerful intellectual movements in China in the 1980s was the ‘New Enlightenment’ movement. The demands for freedom of speech, public accountability, transparency and political legitimacy made by the proponents of this ‘New Enlightenment’ movement may have been temporarily brushed aside by the Tiananmen tragedy of 1989, but they remain relevant and it seems inevitable that they will surface again as policy issues to be openly discussed. Actually, the current debate between liberals and new-leftists on distributive justice is but a variation on the same theme.

However, despite the prominence of the Enlightenment mentality in Chinese scholarly discourse, the need to broaden its intellectual scope and deepen its ethical basis is obvious. As feminists, ecologists, communitarians and comparative religionists have pointed out, the Enlightenment mentality is seriously flawed. Premised on anthropocentrism, instrumental rationality, Euro-centrism, male-orientation and egoism, it is inadequate in providing symbolic resources for understanding religion, nature, community and cultural diversity. Habermas’ brilliant interpretation has substantially enriched the heritage of the Enlightenment project, but it has not fundamentally altered its life-orientation as a form of de-natured and de-spirited secular humanism.

There is an urgent need for a comprehensive and integrated humanistic vision that is in harmony with religious beliefs and sensitive to ecological concerns. Can we broaden the intellectual scope and deepen the ethical basis of the Enlightenment mentality so that it can serve as a source of inspiration for the human community in dealing with the grave issues of poverty reduction, unemployment, social disintegration and environmental degradation?

On the surface, the intellectual and spiritual resources in the human community are rich and varied. In what Ewert Cousins characterizes as the New Axial Age, the great historical religions provide abundant knowledge, wisdom and spirituality for creative minds to think through the dilemma of the human condition. In addition to the three world religions of Buddhism, Christianity and Islam, belief systems such as Hinduism, Jainism and Sikhism in South Asia, and Confucianism and Daoism in East Asia, seem to have inexhaustible supplies of great ideas. Indigenous traditions, such as African, Shinto, Maori, Polynesian, Native American, Intuit, Mesoamerican, Andean

and Hawaiian funds of spirituality, are also boundless. In the academic community, an increasing number of scholars are devoted to fields of inquiry that are implicitly or explicitly critiques of the Enlightenment legacy of the modern West – cultural anthropology, Asian philosophy, comparative religion and cultural studies, just to mention a few.

Admittedly, economic globalization, as the ethos of the World Economic Forum in Davos noticeably demonstrates, is so overwhelming in shaping the discourse in international politics that cultural diversity as advocated by the World Social Forum in Caracas or the World Spirit Forum in Arosa pale in comparison in terms of power, wealth and influence. Yet, culture matters. Since 2000, even the World Economic Forum has addressed issues such as the future of religion and identity politics. There is wide recognition that social capital, cultural competence and ethical intelligence are vitally important for leadership in political economy. No political or business leader can afford to ignore ‘soft power’ in the twenty-first century.

The idea of the economic person who, as a rational animal, understands his or her self-interest and tries to maximize profit in the free market adjudicated by law appears to be a very impoverished idea, let alone a source of inspiration, for leadership training in institutes of higher learning in North America. The economic person certainly exhibits values such as rationality, liberty, legality and rights-consciousness. Yet, values such as responsibility, civility, decency, sympathy, empathy, compassion and social solidarity are absent. It is no longer persuasive or adequate to characterize liberty, rationality, the rule of law, human rights and dignity of the individual as ‘universal’ values, whereas justice, righteousness, sympathy, civility, responsibility and social solidarity are but ‘Asian’ values.

The time is ripe for a dialogue among civilizations focusing on the core values that are necessary for human survival and flourishing. A philosophical enterprise to identify a ‘universal ethic’ must be augmented by thick descriptions of paths of learning to be human in the global community. Civilizations do not clash.² Only ignorance does. The danger of shared vulnerability as well as the hope of shared aspiration impels us to move beyond unilateralism to work towards a dialogical civilization.

In the Age of Reason, when the Enlightenment movement began to shape the Western mind-set, some of its leading thinkers, notably Voltaire, Leibniz and Rousseau, took China as an important referent country and

2. Samuel P. Huntington ‘The Clash of Civilizations?’ *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 72, No. 3 (1993).

Confucianism as a significant referent culture. But only one generation after the Opium War of 1839, China had degenerated from the Middle Kingdom to a geographic expression. And since the May Fourth Movement two generations ago, Confucian humanism has been relegated to the feudal past, as only *historically* significant, by some of the most articulate modern Chinese intellectuals. But in the last century, Confucian thinkers were engaged in its creative transformation through Westernization and modernization. With a view towards the future, it is likely that the spirit of East Asian modernity, imbued with Confucian characteristics, will serve as a reference for public intellectuals in North America and Western Europe as well as for intellectuals elsewhere in the world.

Biography

Tu Weiming was born in Kunming (China) in 1940 and is now Professor of Chinese History and Philosophy and of Confucian Studies at Harvard University, and Director of the Harvard-Yenching Institute. He grew up in Taiwan, graduating there in Chinese studies at the University of Tunghai in 1961, and then taking an MA (1963) and PhD (1968) at Harvard. He has taught Chinese intellectual history, the Philosophies of China, and Confucian Studies at the University of Princeton (1967–1971) and the University of California, Berkeley (1971–1981), and at Harvard since 1981. He has also taught, as a visiting professor, at Peking University, Taiwan University, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and the École Pratique des Haute Études, France. Professor Tu holds honorary professorships from Zhejiang, Renming, and Zhongshan Universities and the Shanghai Academy of Social Sciences, and has been awarded honorary degrees by Lehigh, Michigan State (Grand Valley), and Shandong Universities. He is a vice-president of the International Association of Confucian Studies, an international adviser to Rahman University in Malaysia, a member of the Group of Eminent Persons appointed by Kofi Annan to facilitate dialogue among civilizations, and a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. He has published several books in English and Chinese, in addition to dozens of articles, primarily focusing on the modern transformation of Confucian humanism. A five-volume anthology of his works in Chinese was published in 2001.

The impact of cultural transfers on secularism in France

Jean Baubérot

My paper is in four sections: the first two give a very brief introduction to French secularism as the outcome of a historical constructive process, and the others, slightly longer, deal more specifically with the influence of cultural transfers on that secularism. They will be followed by some closing remarks.

The French word *laïcité* (secular) and the related English terms ‘laicity’, ‘laity’ and ‘layman’ have Latin and Greek origins, deriving originally from the Greek *laikos*, meaning ‘of the people’. They are rooted in the distinction drawn in the Christian Middle Ages between lay persons (baptized Christians who have not entered Holy Orders) and clergy (who have).

The sixteenth-century Protestant Reformation made this distinction less absolute by according a degree of religious power to lay persons; indeed, in the nineteenth century it was possible to refer to some Protestant Churches, in particular Scandinavian and Anglican, as ‘lay-governed’, indicating that supreme authority was wielded by lay persons. It was Calvin who first gave the adjective ‘lay’ a positive sense and began its expansion beyond the strictly religious sphere: he speaks of a ‘lay judge’, meaning one who does not take canon law into account when giving judgement (Fiala, 1991).

The birth of modern France in the French Revolution involved a violent political/religious conflict and led to a shift of meaning: in the nineteenth century, the term was used with reference to the separation of civil society and religious society (‘the separation of Church and State’), in which the state did not wield religious power nor the church(es) political power. This is now the dictionary definition of *laïcité*.

Historians and sociologists, of course, can refine these dictionary definitions by distinguishing (following the philosopher Ferdinand Buisson, first theoretician of this secularism, in 1883) between *secularization*, the historical process whereby various institutions emancipated themselves from the power and influence of religion and gained their independence, and *secularism*, the (ideal) end result of that process: freedom of conscience and

practice, and the equality of all citizens and of the various religions. Secularism, then, normally covers three interacting aspects (Bauberot, 2004).

In everyday usage, however, one aspect or another may predominate; and in the media, especially, the predominant usage refers to the movement of emancipation from religious influence as something involving struggle. Now some people have been claiming in the last fifteen years or so that secularism is ‘uniquely French’. This year, 2005, France celebrates the centenary of the act separating Church and State; time perhaps for a reminder that, as with other historical and social phenomena, French secularism was not unaffected by cultural borrowings.

Secularism, in France, concerned schooling first of all. The secularization of public education was enacted along with compulsory schooling (1882). It followed an investigation by the Ministry of Public Education into how those countries which had already introduced compulsory schooling were reconciling this with freedom of belief. One of the countries investigated was Japan – and it was by no means usual at that time for a Western country to imagine it might learn something from a non-Western one. All the same, it was the Dutch, United States and British solutions that were felt to be of particular interest, because their situations were similar to the French (they were predominantly Christian), but not too similar (their culture was largely Protestant). As the Minister, Jules Ferry, put it, it was precisely the different part played by the ‘laity’ that led to this dissimilarity: in a country suffused with Protestant culture, it was in some sense legitimate for lay persons to interpret the Bible in their own way. The morality taught by secular teachers could therefore be built on a foundation of ‘deconfessionnalized’ Christianity – one owing no allegiance to any Church, though still based on the Bible. In France, on the other hand, a religion-based morality could only come from the Church, since schoolteachers were lay persons with no religious legitimacy (Chevallier, 1981; Bauberot and Mathieu, 2002).

The solution found in France was the institution of a ‘secular morality’ that was not only non-confessional but also non-religious (Mely, 2004). This morality was Kantian through and through; but Jules Ferry also found another instance – Buddhism – that showed it was possible to dissociate morality (as a universal value) from Christianity (as a particular religion): ‘This still-lively religion [Buddhism],’ he said, ‘has its morality, its principles, and an ideal that is in truth just as pure, just as exquisite, as the most demanding and most refined ideal of Christianity.... Buddhist morality extends compassion even to animals and plants, proving that a morality founded on the most demanding

principles of conduct – a morality founded on service if ever one was – can coexist with beliefs that are utterly foreign to Christian doctrine. Buddhism knows neither punishment nor reward.’ (quoted by Chevallier, 1981).

This praise of Buddhism is related to Jules Ferry’s opposition to the articles of faith of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s concept of *civil religion*¹, whereby the injustices of our present world are compensated for in another through the reward of the just and the punishment of the wicked. It is worth noting that the secular morality taught was to include duties towards animals, something by no means taken for granted at the time. It is not so much the particular (implicit) interpretation of Buddhism that is remarkable (for modern specialists may well find it questionable, or seriously incomplete), but rather the interest in Buddhism and above all its acknowledged moral legitimacy, at a time when the West tended on the whole to be full of its own superiority.

The departure from Rousseau’s ‘civil religion’ and its beliefs also involved an insistence on *solidarity*; and one of the sources referred to for this was Confucius. French secular morality lays stress on the material and intellectual assets we inherit at birth: houses, tools, food, books, scientific and other knowledge, techniques, etc. – a whole range of assets accumulated through the work of centuries. Secular morality regards these as ‘benefits from the dead’: for most of those who have laboured to raise civilization to its present pitch are no longer alive. Secular morality is fond of the saying that ‘The dead are dead but the good they have done does not die’. When, after such lessons, the teacher asks who we should be grateful to, the pupil is expected to speak of various categories of adults (parents; schoolmasters, etc.) and then to mention the ancestors: the dead are honoured in this way because of the ‘benefits’ they have conferred. This will naturally introduce references to Confucius, and the veneration of ancestors; it is even said sometimes that ‘the cult of the ancestors’ is a ‘legitimate cult’ (Bauberot, 1997).

Thus we find in the view of history taught by this morality a sort of ‘republican Confucianism’. It provides a way of showing that morality and justice may well not be reconciled at the level of the individual (requiring a Hereafter), but are at the level of Society, understood as a collective group of individuals working for each other as well as for themselves. This balance between society and the individual may be regarded as one of French secular morality’s most strongly emphasized features.

1. Jean-Jacques Rousseau coined the term ‘civil religion’ in Chapter 8, Book 4 of *The Social Contract*, to describe what he regarded as the moral and spiritual foundation essential for any modern society.

While the 1905 Bill for the Separation of Church and State was going through France's Parliament, the committee and its rapporteur Aristide Briand studied the legislation of other countries. They distinguished three categories of these: first, those still at a stage that was 'more or less theocratic, in that the state is either subordinate to or at least closely united with the Church, and recognizes the predominance of one religion over all others'; next, countries which have reached a stage of 'semi-secularism' (France belonged to this group at the time Briand was drafting his report); and, lastly, countries where there was real separation, which had therefore attained secularism: Canada, the United States, Mexico, Cuba, and Brazil. The United States seemed to Briand a country where there was real secularism, but also a degree of mutual benevolence between the political and the religious spheres which might in future (this was 1905) generate aspects of 'clericalism'. Mexico was seen as a particularly secular country, with a marked secularism which still did not prevent the existence of a strong Catholic Church (this was of course before the highly anticlerical Mexican Constitution of 1917). Briand felt that the separation in France could take all these various models into account, and indeed others where, though there might not be complete separation, the Catholic Church at least continued to practise in peace, quite separate from the state (Great Britain, Switzerland).

We can see, then, that secularism is and was by no means 'uniquely French', and that France was eager to heed foreign examples. This showed particularly clear results in the Act's central Article 4, which was 'borrowed' from the United States and from Scotland in what amounted to a real transplant of a major component of the English-speaking world's political culture (collective freedom as another dimension of individual freedom, not just an extension of it) into French universalism – what is conventionally termed 'abstract republican universalism' (Bauberot, 2005). The background of a solidarity-based morality which I have already described may to some extent have created a cultural climate favourable to such a transplant.

I have two closing remarks. The first is that the current notion of 'uniquely French secularism', and equally that other argument, subtler but just as false, which seeks to make out that French secularism – that particular historical construct – is *the* universal value so far as secularism is concerned, both involve secularism as the affirmation of an identity, or indeed secularism as the banner of a movement to shrink the French identity in upon itself. It refuses to think about certain social changes which are going on now, and which pose new challenges to secularism. If we are to look at this scientifically,

we shall have to give full weight to the cultural exchanges and borrowings which have been necessary ingredients even of those things that people regard as their most peculiar possessions.

Secondly, these cultural borrowings are of two kinds. Some take place among the countries of the West: the liberalism of the French Church and State Separation Act, for instance, draws on John Locke rather than on the French Enlightenment. I say this, firstly, because Locke was the founding philosopher of ‘limited government’ and the Act abolishes all proactive measures of state superintendence of religion, replacing them by arrangements for monitoring behaviour ‘after the fact’. Secondly, because Locke’s *Letter Concerning Toleration* established a much clearer distinction between civil and religious authority than any of the French Enlightenment’s thinkers, who tended rather towards Gallican views of the subordination of religion to the state. And lastly, because Locke, unlike Rousseau, distinguishes theological from civil intolerance.

These contributions, however, are not limited to Western sources. There was also a relatively strong interest in Oriental thought, which must not be exaggerated for partisan purposes but which is too often passed over in silence. The founders of French secularism – politicians and pedagogues alike – were fully caught up in the attraction to all things Oriental which was to be found generally in late nineteenth-century France, and by no means only among artists and writers as is too often thought.

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Biography

Jean Baubérot is Honorary President of the École Pratique des Hautes Études in France, where he is Professor of the History and Sociology of Secularism and Director of the Sociology of Religion and Secularism Group of the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS).

He has written many works, the most recent being *Laïcité 1905–2005: entre passion et raison* [Secularism 1905–2005: Between Passion and Reason], Seuil, Paris, 2004; *La Laïcité à l'épreuve. Religions et Libertés dans le monde* [Secularism Under Challenge: Religion and Freedom Around the World] (editor), Paris, Encyclopaedia Universalis, 2004; *Histoire de la laïcité en France* [History of Secularism in France], third edition, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2005; and a historical novel: *Émile Combes et la princesse carmélite* [Emile Combes and the Carmelite Princess], Paris, Éditions de l'Aube, 2005.

Deus nyorai and the fear of Christianity in Japan in the Meiji period

Hartmut O. Rotermund

When the earlier ‘Unequal Treaties’ came to be revised, the Japanese Empire found itself obliged under the terms of that revision to open up the entire archipelago to the signatory powers, and to allow foreigners the right to travel freely within Japan, to reside, trade and proselytize there, and so on. During the years before these new treaties came into force (in July 1899), the prospect of a possible sudden influx of Westerners gave rise to widespread discussion and a great number of published ‘considerations on preparing for future cohabitation [with the foreigners] on Japanese soil [*naichi zakkyo*]’. These Westerners, it was feared, would be a threat to cultural stability, and might even bring a deep change in Japan’s traditional values and ways of life; and the encounter – or confrontation – with them would, in the opinion of the authors of these publications, be a blow to an empire which was assumed to have its own ‘unalterable special nature’, fundamentally different from that of the West.

These discussions on living together were indeed a warning against the impact of an alien civilization; but they were also intended to inform and to instruct – the wealth of statistics offered is evidence of this, as are the frequent references to contemporary history. These writings were, in a sense, published in order to rouse the national consciousness; they report on real events and actual (observed or reported) situations, but they also, for the greater part, rehearse received ideas and many commonplace notions from a stock of imaginings quite far removed from reality.

The West’s most lasting influence, many authors feared, would be spiritual and religious: this was why, from the point of view of both Buddhism and Shinto, the coming cohabitation was something to deplore.¹ What would be the influence of Christianity in the religious world of Japan? What was there to fear? Nothing, said some; others, a great deal; many felt that, ‘as this cohabitation is a first occasion, we cannot tell’.²

1. Inoue T., 1889. Reprinted in Yoshino et al, 1932, p. 516.

2. Nakanishi G., 1894. Reprinted in Inoue, 1992, p. 180.

Christianity in Japan had begun with Francis Xavier in 1549: cleverly enough, it seems he had spoken neither of Jesus nor of Christ, but of a ‘branch of Buddhism that came from the West’. Thus God became *deus nyorai*, and Christian doctrine a ‘Christian Buddhist law’, the missionaries ‘monks’; and Christianity found it easy at the start to tackle Buddhism in Japan by offering a ‘new, Christian-style Buddhism’. Later banned throughout the Edo period, Christianity only penetrated the archipelago again with the arrival of Commodore Perry and the concluding of a trade treaty.

Most often the authors we are concerned with here criticized the whole of Christianity, but we also find some who distinguished between Catholics and Protestants in terms of doctrine, church organization, practices and evangelism. While there were indeed many among the Westerners, as some said, who believed ‘a perverse doctrine’ and one ought not to make friends with such believers, the fact was that the foreign arrivals would also include people who ‘believe in the Buddhist law’; fellow-believers could therefore be expected as well.³

One might well fear an initial ebbing of the two religions ‘which have nourished the Japanese spirit’ – Buddhism and Shinto – after the new treaties came into force. Christianity would by no means adjust harmoniously to Shinto (this was an allusion to the basic opposition between monotheism and polytheism). As for its influence on Buddhism, there was in fact quite a range of views. Some predicted that the influence would be positive; others the reverse.

I do not think there will be great disturbances. The Buddhism of our days has no impact on the higher social classes; its function is no more than to provide a focus for the beliefs (or superstitions) of the common people. As for Shinto, we need not bother with that at all. Seeing that the Japanese are lukewarm on religion, Christianity may be expected not to have much real following, either (Inoue, 1992, pp. 349–50).

Some authors imagined they could posit a difference between East Asian religious sensibility and that of the West. The ‘yellow race’ was said to be not much inclined towards the religious ideas, while the ‘whites’ showed real fervour when it came to religion.⁴ This presumed lack of interest, or coolness in the matter of religion, was acknowledged to be an unexamined generalization; but still it led some to claim that the Japanese really had no religion at all – and it was adduced in evidence for this startling view that the coexistence of polytheism, ancestor-worship, Buddhism, Confucianism, Shinto and now

3. See, for example, Higashi, 1896, p. 195.

4. Nakanishi, 1894. Reprinted in Inoue, 1992, Vol. 4., p. 195.

Christianity too, would lead logically to the conclusion that the Japanese were ‘lightweight, so far as religion is concerned’ (Yoshino, 1927, p. 87).

So this presumed influence – feared as something unending – that it was apprehended Christianity would have on Buddhism, the massive unrepressed proselytizing of this foreign religion, might indeed make converts among the Japanese; but it would also perhaps have the very salutary effect of stimulating reformers within Buddhism. Might that religion in fact receive new impetus, in the end, from the activity of these foreigners? (Katō, 1897).

Many of our authors were concerned to scrutinize the Christian faith in detail, and were clearly at pains to prove how poorly adapted it was to Japan’s circumstances. This foreign religion stressed equality: that might be appropriate in some countries, but in the Japanese case it was quite unsuited to the ‘[spiritual] body of the country’. Doi, for example, says that in Christianity what matters is the *ego* (Katō, 1897, p. 101), whereas Buddhism lays great store by ‘equality in diversity’.

Where the Christian religion recommends universal love, Buddhism stresses compassion – a sign (or a version) of concern for others. Now one might regard love and compassion as the likeliest points of rapprochement between the two religions, were it not that the Christians, instead of concerning themselves with the destiny of the soul after death, believe in an all-powerful God: and that notion was regarded as incompatible with the causal status of human actions, a doctrine dear to Buddhism. Again, this Christian god was said to have a ‘relative existence’, while the Buddha, ‘the enlightened one’, was supposed to represent the principle of endless truth: clearly the two concepts were not easy ones to harmonize (Katō, 1897, p. 101).

This idea of Jehovah, as a unique God before whom everyone without exception must bow was central to Christian ethics, but was seriously in danger of running counter to the demand that citizens should recognize a sovereign in this world as their sovereign, and the parents they find in this world as their parents – since, for Christians, God alone is both father and sovereign. Would not such a faith logically imply that any sovereigns who abused their rights and oppressed their people would be sinners in God’s sight? And, accordingly, that if the people were to rise up and seek to overthrow them, that would not be an immoral act? On the contrary, there might be talk of ‘extending the rights of the people’ or even ‘freedom’ – not at all the kind of idea that sat well with the prevailing ideology of the Meiji period.

Others stressed the fundamental difference between monotheism and polytheism. To subscribe to this monotheistic Christianity would amount –

contrary to the whole ideology of loyalty and due filial respect – to turning one's back on Shinto. But since Shinto was connected with the ancestors of the imperial family, to abandon it would consequently mean rejecting the 'spiritual body of the state', with Emperor-worship at its centre. That would, in other words, be an internationalist way of thinking, an unpatriotic religion over against the ideology that revolved around the imperial family. On the other hand, to declare Christianity a 'perverse religion' unsuited to the ideal of the 'spiritual body of the country' would, according to some authors, be a stupid attitude: only look at Confucianism, also 'democratic and marked by a revolutionary character' – just as unsuited, in that case, to the 'spiritual body of the state!'. Indeed, one author quite logically developed this line of thought to the point of wondering whether in that case even Buddhism might not also consort ill with that 'body', since it laid stress on the 'non-permanence of all things'.

Behind the admitted attractions of Christianity to certain strata of Meiji society, owing not least due to its charitable works, it was also seen as a 'marketing' problem, an over-successful 'seller of its wares'. This is expressed in the form of various metaphors: Christianity is the new servant, more assiduous in his work than the old one (Buddhism). Christianity and Buddhism are two shops, one (Buddhism) big and famous, 1,300 years old; the other a makeshift stall selling second-rate, everyday articles (Christianity) – only, of course, in this traditional store the goods are all stacked away in the warehouse while the staff spend their time playing games – an unmistakable allusion to the inertia and sclerosis of the Buddhism of the author's day.

While these images hint at many aspects of self-criticism on the part of Buddhists, there is also no shortage of opinion seeking to prove that Buddhism is superior to Christianity, that everything the Christian religion preaches is already included in Buddhism in a more elevated form: that Christian 'love' is not as good as the Buddhist concept of 'compassion', that the story of the Creation is inferior to the logic of causality; even the idea of the Trinity was said to be prefigured in the concept of the three bodies of the Buddha.

Christianity could, it was argued, claim none of the credit for the development of Western civilization, which was rather due to contacts with the rest of the world: Greece, India, Asia – with countries which 'are not Christian countries at all'. In other words, according to certain authors, Western civilization (Christianity included) owed its existence to countries marked either by Buddhism or by Islam.

The influences unleashed by living together, which these Buddhists presumed would be inauspicious and feared would be dangerous, would not

come from the Christians, or not from them alone, but also from the atheists. How so? Well, Western unbelievers were very different from Japanese ones. In Europe, it was said, the atheists formulated objections to this or that point of doctrine or article of the Christian faith: this showed, say our authors (Nakanishi Gorō, for instance), that they were still preoccupied by religion; whereas Japanese atheists really lacked all thought of such matters as an afterlife, the problem of the universe, and the immortality of the soul: they had no such ideological landmarks.

Many conflicts with Buddhism were foreseen, once Christianity had grown stronger in its mission, built churches, and spread itself far and wide as part of the cohabitation; and these conflicts would not remain religious only, but would have serious consequences. One might perhaps even expect violence, as Kunitomo imagined: churches destroyed, missionaries killed, trouble between the two religions' followers, and so on. This would damage not only the unity of the people but also foreign relations, and would also mean that the 'foreigners, regarding us as enemies of their religion, will look down on us as barbarians' (Kunitomo Sh. 1892, p. 77).

To Japanese eyes, Christianity seemed a danger to the empire: 'I am not worried by the coming of Christianity,' declares one author, 'but the democracy which comes in its train will undermine the grand foundation of our country, and is unacceptable' (Katō 1899, p. 10).

True, not all our authors show wild-eyed hostility to Christianity; some even recommend openly that this religion should be given a Japanese identity (Katō 1899, p. 10),⁵ which would be one way of defusing any conflicts. Where the object was to improve behaviour, neither Buddhism nor Christianity should be rejected. When Buddhism had been first introduced into Japan there had, admittedly, been disputes about the utility of this new religion; but it had in time been adapted to the country, by the establishment of parallels between the Law of the Buddha and the law of the land.

How, in view of that consideration, should one regard the opposition between the universal character of Christianity and the nationalist character of Buddhism? The important thing, according to Tomita, was to compare their respective situations at the time of their admission (Yokoi K. 1898, p. 102). When Buddhism first penetrated to Japan, had it already become national – did it have a Japanese identity? Of course not: it acquired one later, thanks to the contributions of Kōbō-Daishi, Dengyō Daishi, Shinran, Nichiren and others.

5. Uku-kai 1899. Reprinted in Inoue, 1992, Vol. 5, p. 368.

And the Christianity that was now in the course of spreading to Japan could be expected to undergo assimilation likewise.

Simplifying somewhat crudely, our author traces the outlines of what an emerging Japanese identity for Christianity might be. If Nagarjuna were alive once more, he would recognize Christ as a manifestation of Dainichi-nyorai, and the cross as the symbolic expression of the compassion shown by the bodhisattva Kannon in the great Mandala. ‘And if Kōbō-Daishi had been living now,’ Tomita goes on, ‘he would observe that baptism was none other than the consecration ritual [*kaji-kanjō*] of the Shingon’.

This was the attitude with which it was suggested Christianity should be given a Japanese identity. Such a movement towards an ever-increasing independence of Japanese Christianity would in the long run bear fruit, as the number of foreign missionaries dwindled and finally they disappeared altogether.⁶

One corollary of the preparation of Buddhism for the coming cohabitation was the need to reform its clergy, of which Inoue has given a most revealing portrait. This preparation must be done not only with the atheists in mind, nor only the Christians – both adversaries in terms of doctrine – but also in view of the arrival of ‘our friends’ the western Buddhists. It was even more important to prepare against the activity and influence of these ‘friends’ than against one’s enemies – which should, of course, be fought and overcome. Christians and western Buddhists were, then, a single threat. The author explains that if these western Buddhists, ‘realizing the rotten state of Christianity, rejecting its ossified beliefs and now aspiring to a new religious truth’⁷ were to apply themselves to studying the law of the Buddha with their liberal mentality, it was to be feared that they might develop a number of criticisms of Japanese Buddhism and thus stir up doubts among its students.

Since ‘reforming religions is their speciality’, Westerners might therefore be expected to adhere to Buddhist doctrine without accepting ‘our customs, practices and routines’. This made it inevitable that they would advocate a thoroughgoing reformation.

Among the reasons underlying the reservations that the Japanese tended to have about these western Buddhist arrivals, we also find comments that they are ‘complete Buddhists’ who, says the author, want to cooperate with their Japanese co-religionists but belong to no particular sect or institutional structure, and are bound by no particular ritual. Their ideas are free, ambitious, and bold – which means they will want to innovate.

6. Hitomi, 1893. Reprinted in Inoue, 1992, Vol. 2., p. 478.

7. Nakanishi, 1894. Reprinted in Inoue, 1992, Vol. p. 222.

One of the utopian dreams cherished by more than one of these authors is that the West might become fertile ground for the acceptance of Buddhism, a religion assumed to be superior to Christianity. Seeing a growth of interest in Buddhism within Europe (Buddhist societies were already being formed there, and periodicals being published), any mass Christian conversions in Japan would, it was argued, be like importing obsolete weaponry (Nakanishi, 1897, p. 1). The West itself was showing signs of opposition to Christianity – of rejection, even: our author points to ‘Freemasonry, which has for the last hundred years been starting to spread throughout Europe’ (ibid, p. 3).

While some of the more intellectual and cultivated classes in Europe criticized Christianity as a disturbance to civil peace, an obfuscation of morality and a hindrance to the progress of civilization, Buddhism had an ultimate truth that ensured social coherence and peace, had good moral traction, and at the same time furthered civilization.⁸ If, therefore, Christianity was already in decline in the West, why should Japan take up a religion which the Westerners were rejecting as ‘not suited to a civilized society’?⁹ Our authors note moreover that, as Western theologians wrestled in countless disputations to bend their official texts to accommodate the discoveries of science, their only achievement was in fact to make the people’s trust more fragile, and that the discord between science and religion, reason and faith, could be regarded as one of the hallmarks of a progressive civilization.

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Biography

Hartmut O. Rotermund was born in Würzburg (Germany) in 1939; he is currently Dean of Studies at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris, visiting professor at the Josai International University of Chiba, Japan; Otani University in Kyoto; and the University of Latvia. His research concentrates on the social and religious history of medieval and modern Japan. Professor Rotermund’s principal publications include *Ichien Muju: Collection de sable et de pierres* [Ichien Muju: Collection of Sand and Pebbles], Paris, Gallimard, 1979; *Pèlerinage aux neuf sommets* [The Nine Peaks Pilgrimage], Paris, CNRS, 1983; *Hosogami ou la petite vérole aisément* [Hosogami, or Smallpox Without Trouble], Paris, Maisonneuve et Larose, 1991 (Japanese translation. Tokyo, Iwanami shoten, 1995); *La sieste sous l’aile du cormoran et autres poèmes magiques* [Siesta Under the Cormorant’s Wing and other Magic Poems], Paris, L’Harmattan, 1998; *Images des Occidentaux dans le Japon de l’ère Meiji* [Images of Westerners in Meiji Japan], Paris, Maisonneuve et Larose, 2005.

Buddhism and Christianity: an in-depth encounter

Michiko Ishigami

The first contacts between Buddhism and Christianity came very early indeed (Nestorian Christianity, rejected by the Council of Ephesus in AD 431, quickly spread along the Silk Road into Central Asia, Mongolia and China). However, our present story starts with the direct contacts made between Christian friars and Buddhist monks in Asia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, recorded in their own written accounts.

Christianity was reintroduced into Asia following the discovery of the sea routes to Asia from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, and was welcomed in Japan and then in China, but soon driven out again from both by governments wary of the dangers of colonialism. When intercontinental trade took off in the nineteenth century, a few European intellectuals who visited Asia discovered the wealth of philosophical and religious thought in India and the Far East, and studied it in comparison with that of Greece and Rome. And most recently, since the recognition of freedom of conscience in certain Asian countries and the holding of Vatican II in 1962–65, the dialogue between Buddhists and Christians has been taking place worldwide, leading to a real, in-depth encounter between the two ways.

We shall first describe the meetings between Buddhist monks and Friars Minor (Franciscans) in Asia in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and then offer a structural comparative analysis of their practices, some aspects of which they found intriguingly close; indeed, they have been fundamental in the contemporary encounters also.

Thirteenth and fourteenth centuries: meetings of Friars Minor and Buddhist monks in Asia

An extraordinary combination of various historical events contributed to the discovery by some thirteenth-century Franciscans of curious coincidences between their own practices of mendicant poverty and those of Buddhist monks in Asia.

In the first place, Europe and the Far East were simultaneously afflicted by similar political, economic, social and religious crises in the late twelfth century and throughout the thirteenth: declining agricultural production was struggling to feed urban populations swollen with the development of commerce, crafts, guilds and a money economy, in towns busy freeing themselves from feudal overlords; there were civil wars and crusades; recurring disasters and heavy taxes forced peasants further into pauperism; the nobility was in decline, and an increasing marginal population of beggars and the infirm hungrily roamed the streets. Both continents moreover suffered in the thirteenth century from waves of Mongol invasion. The peoples of Europe trembled in the belief that the end of days was at hand, the time of Gog and Magog described in the Revelation of John; those of the Far East at the prospect of the end of the (Buddhist) Law foretold by certain Sanskrit Sutras that had been translated into Chinese, and by other Chinese writings.

A Europe disillusioned with its clergy saw new movements among lay people for a return to evangelical poverty as a road to salvation outside the Church, including the Waldenses and the Cathars. The latter, interdicted and ruthlessly repressed in France, spread into the Balkans and Italy (where they were called Bogomils or Patarenes). In China, the Southern Song dynasty (1127–1279) was about to be overcome by Kublai Khan. In Japan the weakened emperors had been replaced as effective rulers, first by the Minamoto shoguns and then by their executives the Hōjō (Kamakura period 1192–1333). Around the capital, Kyoto, the great Buddhist monasteries of Mount Hiei in the north and Mount Kōya in the south with their dissident temples, the powerful temples of Nara, and the great Shinto temples all fought each other to defend their privileges, mobilizing their soldier-monks or ‘men of the Gods’.

The parallel crises in Europe and the Far East both made reflective contemporaries strongly aware of the need for action to help impoverished people on the edge of starvation, and to entirely rebuild the Christianity or Buddhism of their time on the basis of the acts and teachings of Christ or the Buddha.

Francis of Assisi (1182–1226) obtained authorization from Pope Innocent III in 1209 to found a religious community based on evangelical poverty: this became the Order of Friars Minor (ofm), while the other mendicant order, the Order of Preachers (op.) was founded by St. Dominic de Guzman, authorized by the Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 and subsequently recognized by the Pope.

The young Dōgen (1200–53) left Mount Hiei where he had studied the Buddhist scriptures (1212–17), practised Rinzai-Zen in the Kennin temple

(1217–23), and then left for China to practise (1223–27) under the Zen master Rujing of the Caodong school (Sōtō in Japanese), head of the Jingde-si temple of Mount Tiantong, who taught strict poverty and monastic rule. Dōgen in turn taught these practices, as the earliest and authentic teaching of the Buddha, to his first disciples at the Kōshō temple in Japan, and later (1244–46) founded the Eihei monastery at Echizen, from where his disciples have since diffused his teaching in other continents.

The circumstance that led to the first mission of a Friar Minor to Mongolia was the expansion of the Mongol empire (founded by Genghis Khan, 1206–27) by his third son (Ogödei Khan, 1229–41) and his grandsons, firstly into China and Korea, the Middle East and Tibet, and then into northern and eastern Europe. Between 1236 and 1242, Russia, Poland, Hungary, the Germanic Holy Roman Empire, Serbia and Bulgaria, all Christian lands, were invaded by the armies of Batu, the grandson of Genghis Khan. Among the many victims twelve Friars Minor are recorded (1241), missionaries sent from Poland to Russia. Pope Innocent IV convened the First Council of Lyon and in 1245 dispatched to the Mongol khan Giovanni di Pian del Carpine, ofm, a companion of St. Francis and former Provincial of the Friars Minor in the overrun countries. Later, the French king Saint Louis while on crusade sent Guillaume de Rubrouck, ofm, to Sartaq (Batu's son), whom he believed to be a Christian. At Karakorum on 30 May 1254 this Catholic friar took part in a public debate organized by the Möngke Khan (ruled 1251–59) with a Nestorian, a Muslim and a Buddhist monk summoned from China. It was one of the first such debates ever to take place.

Marco Polo went with his father and uncle to China (1271–95) on a mission from the Pope to Kublai Khan (1260–94), the first Mongol Emperor in Beijing. He observed Buddhist practice across China, and then in Tibet, Siam, Burma, Annam and Ceylon; and he told his European readers about the life of the Buddha, comparing him to Jesus. Giovanni da Montecorvino, ofm, was sent by Pope Nicholas IV in 1289 and became the first (non-Nestorian) Christian missionary and archbishop in China, living there from 1294 to 1328. Odoric of Pordenone, ofm, left Padua in 1318 and arrived in China via Ormuz, India and Ceylon, reaching Beijing in 1328. He returned to Europe through Mongolia and Tibet in 1330, and stayed in Buddhist monasteries during his travels. Lastly, Giovanni dei Marignolli, ofm, from Florence, legate of Pope Benedict XII (1334–42), was sent on mission (1338–53) to the last of the Mongol Emperors in China, accompanied by a number of other Friars Minor. After staying three years in Beijing (1342–45), he returned by sea, via India and Ceylon. He also reported

the curious coincidences in the ascetic practices of the Friars Minor and the Buddhist monks: the daily quest for rice, *keeping none overnight*. ‘They sleep on the bare ground,’ he wrote, ‘walk barefoot, and wear no more than a simple habit such as our own and a folded mantle (*kâsâya* in Sanskrit: a patched and faded cloth, one of the monk’s attributes) on their left shoulder in the manner of the Apostles’. These Buddhist monks faithfully observed the monastic rule (*vinaya* in Pali) established by the Buddha, and the ascetic acts called *dhutânga* in Sanskrit that had originally been practised by Mahâkâsyapa, one of the Buddha’s foremost disciples. The Zen monks of today practise it still.

These Friars Minor all wrote reports or letters to the popes and the king who concerned themselves with their doings. That explains the great detours on their return, by Ceylon, India or Tibet, to visit monasteries and observe the three forms of Buddhism: *Theravâda* (or monastic Way of the Elders, in India and Ceylon), *Mahâyâna* (or Greater Vehicle working for the salvation of the greatest number of beings, in China) and its variant *Vajrayâna* (Tibetan Buddhism).

Comparative structural analysis of the processes of salvation

I shall now investigate the reasons for these concordances in practice, by making a comparative structural analysis of the processes of salvation, chosen by Christ or developed by the Buddha, which Francis of Assisi and Dōgen sought to follow meticulously.

The first common feature in Christ’s teaching and actions and those of the Buddha is the rigorous practice of ‘material poverty’ (giving up all possessions, house, family and goods) and ‘spiritual poverty’ (complete stripping away of the self). For Christians, this is a matter of following Jesus’ famous act of *kenōsis* (Paul, Epistle to the Philippians 2, 6–8: ‘He emptied himself ... even to death’), accepting death to redeem human sin. The Buddha believed in the existence of no personal substance such as a soul, person or self: for him, these are nothing but an illusion. To do away with the ego, Dōgen recommends the exclusive and intensive practice of *zazen* (concentration in the lotus position), *shikantaza*, as performed by the Buddha under the *bodhi* tree (awakening), as an act leading to the stripping away of the ego, discovery of ‘Buddha-nature’ deep within oneself, and enlightenment. This process corresponds to the Christian one of inwardly discovering, once emptied of any ego, the ‘image of God’ restored by the Holy Spirit that has penetrated into this emptiness. In this sense Francis of Assisi and Dōgen are both saying: ‘poverty is the inner way to salvation’.

The second point where the wisdom of the Buddha and the *sapience* of Christ touch is in the ‘symmetrical, cyclical structure of the mendicant lives’ they led. Right from the start (in the sixth or fifth century BC), the Buddha had founded the community of Buddhist monks as a mendicant order, calling the monks *bhikshu* (in Sanskrit; *bikkhu* in Pali, meaning ‘one who begs alms’) and forbidding them to exercise any profession or to eat anything not given by another, since by that act the monk will communicate the Buddhist law to the lay donor.

In following the acts of Christ, who ‘was poor and lived of alms’ and who told the apostles to go and preach unprovided for, saying ‘the labourer is worthy of his keep.’ (Mt. 10, 9–10), Francis discovered the point of mendicancy and its cyclical pattern, quite symmetrical with those of the Buddha. He stressed the ‘noble calling’ and the ‘patrimony’ received from Christ by the Friars Minor who, linking the donor by means of the Holy Spirit to Christ and to God, bring the saving love of God to the donor. In this way the Buddhist pathway from donor to the community of monks (*samgha*) and thus to the Buddha and to the saving Law (*dharma*) and the Christian pathway of salvation form two symmetrical cycles, one almost entirely ‘horizontal’ and human, the other ‘vertical’, involving the Holy Spirit, Christ and God.

The third point of symmetrical relationship between Buddhism and Christianity is the principle of ‘self-sacrifice for another’s salvation’, as exemplified in the path of Christ and the way of the bodhisattva. Christ said: ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me’. The *Jatakas*, dating from between 400 BC and 300 BC, described many acts of self-sacrifice said to have been performed by the Buddha in his previous lives as a bodhisattva (a Sanskrit word meaning ‘a being destined to awakening’). Determined to save all living beings before saving himself, a bodhisattva puts off the attainment to nirvana and unhesitatingly suffers rebirth in this world to save them. This supremely ethical act of self-sacrifice for another’s salvation, practised and made sublime by Nâgârjuna, the first theoretician of Mahâyâna (between 150 AD and 250 AD), is the culminating point of Zen practice. Dōgen recommends this altruistic path to his disciples in his book *Shobo Genzo*, the section entitled *Bodaisatta Shishobo*: The Four Beneficial Ways for a Bodhisattva to Help All Sentient Beings.

The correspondence between the two Ways, in each of their four stages, is striking.

Way of Christ

1. Incarnation of Christ in the poor human condition, as a 'Suffering servant'.

(This also corresponds to 1. Fuse = Gift).

2. Evangelization: bringing to humanity the saving words of the love of God.

3. Charity. Comforting the poor and taking care of the sick and the infirm.

4. Passion. Christ's gift of his own person for the Redemption of humans.

Way of the Bodhisattva

4. Dōji: Identification or Empathy. The Bodhisattva gets himself reincarnated in the same condition as the beings to be saved, and does as they do.

2. Aigo: Speaking Words of Love leads the heart towards the Buddhist way.

3. Rigyō: Acting for the welfare of all beings. Altruistic and disinterested acts of compassion.

1. Fuse: Giving. The gift of the Buddhist Law, as well as of everything one has (life, body, etc.).

The final stage, however, is a contrast: Christ is divine, while a bodhisattva is human.

5. Christ's Resurrection, ascension to God's presence and sending of the Holy Spirit to earth.

5. Putting off one's own attainment to nirvana, to return to earth oneself.

The fourth common feature in Christ's teaching and the wisdom of the Buddha lies in their realization of solidarity with all that makes up the universe, which is expressed in 'acts of love' as the Old and New Testaments describe (as does Dōgen), or 'acts of compassion' according to the Buddhist Sutras.

According to the Buddha, humans, animals and plants are all in perpetual transmigration (*samsāra* in Sanskrit) following the endless cycles of death and rebirth, and pass from one condition to another according to the *karman* (or retribution) of the actions of former lives. 'Awakening' is the realization of the solidarity and unity of everything in nature that is involved in this cycle. Each time one of these beings is reborn or emerges it develops and then decomposes according to the implacable law of Conditioned Production, from which the Buddha has found the means of their deliverance by the suppression of its original cause: that is, by the extinction of desire that is *nirvana*. Hence he wishes to communicate his message of liberation (his truth) to all these beings, and to get them to understand it. Only a human can understand this truth, and any that does understand it becomes a Buddha like him, and works in turn to free others. This is why the awakening of one human concerns every particle of the universe.

The fifth convergent aspiration of Christ and Buddha is to bring peace to this world. The Hebrew word *shalōm* (peace) comes from a root indicating ‘intact’, ‘wholeness’ or the act of putting things back as they were to start with.

According to the New Testament Christ died in the Passion, taking on himself humankind’s original sin of disobedience to God, from whom they had been separated by the Devil. But by his Redemption and Resurrection he has conquered death and opened the path to immortality. Peace, then, is the Messianic gift of God the ‘Prince of Peace’ (Isaiah 9, 5), brought by Christ, a successor of David (Isaiah, 11, 6–8). As for the Buddha, he taught his disciples non-duality and human oneness with everything in nature.

Christ and the Buddha offered humankind five symmetrical processes of salvation that permit a meeting of the two Ways in the heart (the inner depths) of those who practise them, despite the divergence of their ultimate goals, glory in God’s presence and nirvana.

In terms of the practices themselves, then, the routes to be followed to reach these goals can be summarized as follows:

For Christians

For Buddhists

Recognition of our human condition

The image of God disfigured by original sin.

The Buddha-nature hidden by the ego and dualistic thought.

1. Stripping away the ego or self, by the self’s own act

Then, in the depths of this emptied self, comes:

The entry of the Holy Spirit that restores the image of God.

The discovery of the Buddha-nature (the ‘original face’, as Zen puts it).

2. Realization of the solidarity or unity of all beings (awakening)

Love of one’s neighbour

Compassion for everything in the universe

3. Acts of charity

Helping others to rediscover the image of God in their deepest being, and to become one with God again.

3. Acts of compassion

Helping others to discover the Buddha-nature deep within themselves, and their unity with everything in nature.

4. By putting off one’s own salvation.

4. By putting off one’s consummation of nirvana.

5. With a view to resurrection and a return to the original state of immortality, and rediscovering peace with God and taking part in his glory.

5. With a view to returning to nature so as to achieve nirvana (the extinction of desire), and peace with all living beings.

These two paths are in fact two constantly turning wheels in which Christians and Buddhists are similarly engaged in helping others to follow them, as Christ on the one hand and the Buddha on the other encouraged them to do. The Christians' wheel is vertical; that of the Buddhists, almost horizontal, but just slightly tilted upwards in that it is a human wisdom with a transcendental vision because of its will to free itself from the natural law of causation : 'Conditioned Production' and achieve nirvana.

Twentieth to twenty-first centuries: in-depth dialogue and encounter

Following the 'opening' of the Catholic Church after Vatican II (1962–65), and a renewed outbreak of religion-related conflicts and wars around the world, civil states, religious authorities of various faiths (inter-faith prayers for peace at Assisi in 1986 then at Mount Hiei in Japan in (1987) and international societies for religious studies (conferences at Tokyo, 2003, and Los Angeles in 2004) worked to facilitate the mutual understanding of the world religions.

Benedictines, Trappists and Zen Buddhists who have been engaged in spiritual East-West exchanges for over twenty-five years hope that the results of their efforts prove useful to lay persons and contribute to world peace (at En Calcat, October 2005). If the monks and nuns engaged in these exchanges 'to reach God' or *Mu* (a Japanese Zen term, '*nothingness*' in English) are asked about them nowadays, the Christians answer as follows: 'The dialogue concerns the very essence of our lives'; 'The Asian religions make us a gift of stripping away (of the self) to join the Absolute' ; 'Jesus' sacrifice for the salvation of all humans touches the Buddhists deeply. Our own Christian ideal has been given new life ... Buddhism is the closest to Christianity of all religions'. Another makes a silent prayer, which 'fosters readiness to listen to the Other and to other people in their differences and their wealth ... and allows a certain awakening of the depths of being, a contact with the source of life'. Another prays for all humanity.

The surprise comes with the remarks (recalling Giovanni dei Marignolli in the fourteenth century) of some of the Zen masters following their exchanges during the experience of living in a great abbey in Europe.

These masters, all trained in the Eihei temple founded by Dōgen and thoroughly familiar with the practice of Zen and the Chinese Buddhist liturgy introduced by him in the thirteenth century, were struck on attending grand Mass in the abbey by the many similarities in the liturgy, the manual labours,

the utensils, vestments, works of art (Christ's halo in images and statues resembling those of Amitābha, one of Buddhas as future saviour), the protracted liturgical kneeling with a cloth on a shoulder ("in the apostolic manner"), the genuflection with the right knee on the ground, the hands joined like Subhūti saluting the Buddha his master (known in Europe as the 'Chinese genuflection'), the procession behind the candle-bearer when the monks enter, the censer, and the water of purification. They wondered whether there were not exchanges between Europe and China over a millennium ago during the time of the Silk Road. If not, 'they must have taken place at a deeper religious and spiritual level, at the roots of the two religions', they say. For according to 'Buddhist law, the sky and the earth have the same root. All things share one single body'.

'The original truth cannot change ... says a female Zen master and disciple of Dōgen. In appearance, this single thing seems to have come out into very different forms". American astronauts have seen the Earth from the moon, as if they had a 'god's-eye view'. 'Those who are stuck to the surface of the earth have only a view bounded by a horizon', they say. 'Everything everywhere is different: race, nation, culture; but viewed from the cosmos, these superficial differences are unnoticeable: only the essence can be seen, for the differences are mere phenomena. The essence is unity'.

I should like, lastly, to mention the experience of one of the first Christians to take part in the spiritual East-West exchanges, who achieved his awakening at over sixty years of age after having practised Zen in one of Japan's strictest Zen dōjō (of the Rinzai school). He tells us he experienced *Mu* and was 'aware of ... a light that lights us from within and is an active presence there, which helps us to live; ... a love reveals to us a reality that surpasses us and which is there. So we find within ourselves that which can only be one with the divine'.

Buddha and Christ offered people two altruistic paths that would free living beings from their ill-made or mortal condition to lead them towards nirvana or immortality and glory. At the present stage of our understanding, the content and final goals of the salvation offered by Buddha and Christ seem different to us; but in terms of practice, the two paths have cyclical structures that are mutually symmetrical, both being rooted in humans' innate ethical intuition; and their practitioners can learn from each other by exchanging their experiences despite the radical difference of their theories about the Creation, nature, the soul and the 'person'. According to the experience of one such practitioner, who has engaged in both practises with extreme diligence, these two paths may meet in the depths of our being.

From these experiences of mutual human enrichment ranging from the thirteenth century to the twenty-first there opens a prospect of shared progress and peace in various fields around the world, thanks to the respect accorded to difference and to the spirit of dialogue.

Biography

Michiko Ishigami, former student of the Graduate School of Tokyo University, is a Docteur d'Etat ès Lettres from the University of Paris-Sorbonne. From 1966 to 2000 she was a Research Fellow at France's National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) and from 1967 to 1969 a Research Associate at the University of California in Berkeley. She taught Japanese Language and Civilization at the École Polytechnique, France, from 1989 to 1992.

In addition to articles on comparative philosophy, Professor Ishigami has published the following books: *Le Livre et l'imprimerie en Extrême-Orient et en Asie du Sud* [Books and Printing in the Far East and South Asia] (co-editor, with J.-P. Drège and M. Cohen), Bordeaux, France, Société des bibliophiles de Guyenne, 1986; *Les Humanistes et l'antiquité grecque* [The Humanists and Ancient Greece] (editor), Paris, Éditions du CNRS, 1989; *Ryōkan, moine zen* [Ryōkan, Zen monk], Paris, Éditions du CNRS, 1991; *Dialogue interreligieux monastique bouddhistes-chrétiens, au Japon et en Europe* [Buddhist-Christian interreligious monastic dialogue in Japan and Europe], Paris, Sciences et Lettres, 1992; *Ryokan and St. Francis of Assisi, The Way of the Bodhisattva and the Way of Christ* [in Japanese], Niigata, Japan, Kōkodō, 1998; and *Saint François d'Assise et maître Dōgen. L'Esprit franciscain et le Zen* [St. Francis of Assisi and Master, Dogen. Franciscan and Zen Spirit], Paris, L'Harmattan, 2000.

Universalism and transversalism: dialogue and dialogics in a global perspective*

Michael Palencia-Roth

Introduction

The comparative history of civilizations is often little more than a history of exploitation, conquest, colonization and the exercise of power, in which the likelihood of the ‘dialogical’ (Bakhtin, 1981) – a cross-cultural dialogue that neither points towards nor ends in the monologic hegemony of a single voice – is relatively rare.

Extended cross-cultural contacts may begin in dialogue, but more often than not they end in monologue. Rome succeeded Greece by imposing its hegemony on many of the same cultures that Greece had conquered and then extending its own centripetal, absorbing, monologizing and unifying power much farther. Similarly, Spain and Portugal, and later England and France, introjected the cultures of the New World in a process that may have contained dialogues but was profoundly monologizing. These are just some instances of the defeat of the dialogical and the transformation of transversal values into those deemed to be universal. I call this process ‘universalizing the transversal.’

A transversal line is one that intersects a system of lines. The transversal is not altered by the lines it crosses. In axiological terms, transversal values are values that cross two or more cultures and are common to them but they are not transformed into universal values. If a cultural transversal is to remain transversal, it must retain its specificity.

‘Universal’ (or ‘universalized’) values result from a totalizing process. They require an inclusive totality around a central, dominant point or advocate a process leading to this. When civilizations, cultures, nations and institutions exert power over others (through conquest, colonization or evangelization, for example), they tend to replace or subsume the values of the dominated within the dominating value system, which they deem universal. It is the use to which values are put that makes them either transversal or universal.

* Because of space constraints, we have abridged the original address for this publication.

In the following I comment on moments in the history of a particular institution – Christianity – that embody the conflict between the universal and the transversal and either advocate or problematize the installation of the monologic over the dialogical. One of the implications of my commentary is already contained in Christianity’s major premise: no matter how varied its forms might be, Christianity claims to be the one universal and true religion and, as such, to be universally valid for all of humanity: other religions are marginal to its authenticity, authority and centrality. But in the context of cross-cultural contacts, can a spiritual sensibility – as opposed to doctrinal or sectarian – offer the possibility of dialogue that remains dialogical rather than becoming monological? Under what conditions, if any, can transversal values remain transversal? Is cross-cultural human solidarity possible, and can that solidarity be transversal, respecting diversity at the same time as it insists on the universality of the human condition?

Augustine and the universalizing process

St. Augustine defined Christianity in terms of its catholicity, its universal validity. He saw Christianity and catholicity as synonymous, and required the extension of the faith to all people, anywhere and everywhere. Moreover, that geographical extension had a teleological dimension. *The City of God* looks forward to the eventual triumph of Christianity over paganism, the triumph of the Heavenly City over the Earthly City (Augustine, 1998). It puts Christians at the theological centre of the world; pagans and other non-Christians are at the margins, to be viewed and judged in terms of their relationship to Christians.

Inevitably, views from the centre distort what is at the margins and vice-versa. Cartography can demonstrate the effects of periphery-periphery distortion, and can suggest the ideological sources of other kinds of distortions.

Augustine’s ideas are related to the cartographical strategies of Azimuthal projections and T-O maps. Azimuthal projections demonstrate the effects of projecting the meridians and parallels of the globe onto a flat surface. An Azimuthal projection centred on Greenwich, London markedly deforms many countries of the ‘East’. Similar distorting effects may be observed on other maps and documents with regard to how peoples, races, and cultures are depicted: to relegate other cultures to a marginal position in relation to one’s own is to move towards axiological distortions potentially as severe as the cartographical distortion of any Azimuthal equidistant projection.

Augustine relates geography to morality. He infers that the ‘monstrous races’ of the world – pygmies, *acephaloi*, *cynocephaloi* and *skiapodes* (whose existence he did not doubt) – descend from Noah’s son Ham, who in his wickedness saw his father naked (Augustine, 1998, pp. 707–11). While such races are not found in Christian Europe, they remain human because they have been created by God, and so their religious redemption is possible.

Two centuries later, Isidore of Seville explicitly linked monstrosity to geographical marginality and Christianity, resurrecting Greek and Latin conceptions of distant peoples. Isidore’s *Etymologies* ethnologically classifies the world’s peoples through the prism of language, anthropologically and morally marginalizing those far from Rome and Jerusalem (Isidore of Seville, 1472; see also Gasti, 1998). For him, monstrous creatures inhabit the edges of the earth, its dark and unexplored corners. As descendants of Ham, they are condemned forever to be servants to the descendants of Ham’s brothers, Shem and Japheth. Isidore’s ideas became the basis of the tripartite T-O maps that influenced the history of cartography for nearly a thousand years. On the T-O map in Figure 1, the continents of Europe, Asia and Africa are identified with the three sons of Noah, Africa being identified with Ham. The Mediterranean is literally the sea at the centre of the world, a centre from which judgment emanates. This map is both moral (it pronounces judgment on Ham and describes his ‘inferiority’ to his brothers) and Christian (its morality is expressed in Biblical terms).

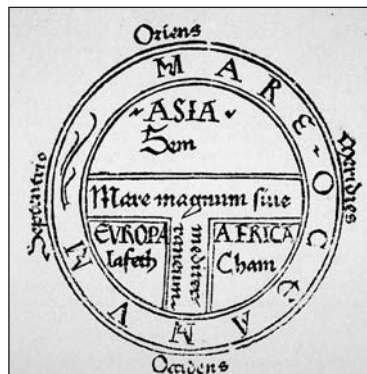


Figure 1: The earliest printed example of a classical T-O map (Isidore, Bishop of Seville, 1472).

Odoric of Pordenone and the Other

From the eighth to the twelfth centuries, ‘the East’ for Europe primarily meant the Islamic East. However, in the twelfth century, Europeans again began to travel the silk routes across central Asia that had been partially traversed by Alexander the Great, by the Romans Pompey and Crassus, by Jews and by Nestorian Christians. To the Islamic East were added the Mongolian, Chinese and Indian ‘Easts’, each occupying the periphery in relation to the European core.

Many of Marco Polo’s observations are comparable to those of travellers motivated to spread Christianity, such as Odoric of Pordenone (d. 1331). Although Polo took the overland routes to the East and Odoric the maritime, they came across some of the same cultures, if one can trust their accounts. However, Odoric evidently borrowed Polo’s language to construct some of his own descriptions of places in ‘the East’. For instance, Polo writes of the Andaman islands:

The inhabitants are idolaters, and are a most brutish and savage race, having heads, eyes and teeth resembling those of the canine species. Their dispositions are very cruel, and every person, not being of their own nation, whom they can lay their hands upon, they kill and eat. (1926, p. 281)

Odoric similarly describes the people of the neighbouring Nicobar islands:

Both the men and the women there have faces like dogs. And these people worship the ox as their god.... And if they hap to take anyone in war who cannot produce money to ransom himself with, they do straightway eat him.

It is clear that both Polo and Odoric are using similes (*come* in the Italian, *similes* in the Latin). But significantly, in the illustrated manuscript versions that circulated widely in the fourteenth century, the simile is made metaphor, and that metaphor is reified. Islander’s heads are shown as not merely *like* dog’s heads; they *are* dog’s heads. Literature is made fact. The margins, the peripheries, the unknown, the distant, become the locations of reified monstrosity.

As a Franciscan friar, Odoric sees everything in terms of his religion: he is critical of Nestorian Christians and of Muslims. The closer he feels to a society, the more he sees in it European ideals of civic order and rational government. He praises the order of Chinese society. The farther Odoric finds himself from Christianity, either spiritually or physically, the more ‘barbarous’ are the cultures in

question and the more distorted their depiction. This is the case with India and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands. An eyewitness account becomes a hearsay account; a here becomes a there; a nearby becomes a faraway; precision yields to vagueness. In sum, margins or peripheries become either vague or distorted or both.

Marco Polo's is a largely secular view of the Other; Odoric's is religious. Both views are judgmental and come from a European centre. Polo's judgmentalism is linked less to Christianity than to perspectival distance and to ignorance of the culture being described. Odoric's judgmentalism is linked to conversion, the path by which the savage can be civilized and the pagan can become Christian. The Ebstorf map of 1235 illustrates the lens through which Polo and Odoric viewed the world – it depicts the entire world as contained in the body of Christ: his head at the top, near the earthly paradise, his feet at the bottom and his hands at either side. On Christ's left-hand side (*sinistra* in Latin, the left side of the body is symbolically associated with evil) are a number of panels of monstrous races, among which can be seen *cynocephaloi*, *skiapodes*, *acephaloi* and cyclops.

The map's ideological purpose is clear, and so are its evangelizing dynamics. At its centre, at Christ's navel, is Jerusalem, while the margins are filled with non-Christians. Travel to the edges of the earth, implicitly for merchants like Polo, explicitly for missionaries like Odoric, aims to connect those edges with the Christian centre. Therefore, most of the reported dialogues in these encounters are not dialogical, but monological. By the mapmaker's design, by theology, by missionary practices and by the long tradition of European contact with non-Europeans, other people and other worldviews are brought under the control of Western ideologies.

Bartolomé de Las Casas, Augustinian and Aristotelian

The discovery and colonization of the New World eventually destroyed the ideological stability of medieval cartography. Yet Europe remained the political and geographical centre of the world and Christianity its ideological centre. The Spanish followed the Roman model of controlling the periphery by tying it to the core both politically and morally, first through subjugation and then through legal and social practices, education and conversion.

Initially, the cultural and religious dynamics evident in the Ebstorf World Map prevailed and even intensified in the New World. Cannibalism, at first only a rumor influenced by medieval thought, was soon discovered to be an actual practice, as were other 'savage' vices such as human sacrifice and grave 'sins' including sodomy and incest. Legal and theological arguments

drew on these practices to justify Spanish activities in the New World. The savage, monstrous and even ‘inhuman’ people of the New World were gradually brought under the control of the Old in what was commonly recognized as a ‘civilizing process’ (Palencia-Roth, 1993, 1996, 1997).

But as the people of the New World became increasingly familiar, Europeans began to question the validity of the traditional dichotomies of human/bestial and human/monstrous, without abandoning core-periphery thinking. They resurrected older dichotomies based on distinctions between the civilized and the barbaric in terms of custom, language and religion to describe intercultural encounters. In a revival of Greek ethnological classifications, the modern discipline of anthropology was born.

Bartolomé de Las Casas represents a shift from the theological to the anthropological in classifying and describing the people of the New World. Although strongly committed to Christianization and to the conversion of the ‘Indians’, Las Casas was tolerant of the non-European Other in ways unfamiliar to medieval monks such as Odoric or William of Rubruck. Las Casas was Augustinian in believing in the complete redemption of New World Indians and Aristotelian in defining many New World Indians as ‘barbarians’. He understands Aristotle through the prism of Christianity and so changes Aristotle’s definition of a barbarian to include non-Christians:

No matter how well a society may be governed, every man in it, however great a thinker he might be, is guilty of the most complete barbarism, that is the barbarism of sin itself, if he is not saturated by the mysteries of Christian philosophy.

Casas, 1988, p. 119.

Las Casas lived in the ‘early modern’ period, but how modern was this modernity? Although knowledge of the physical world and its people had grown, the age-old mindsets of centre and margin, core and periphery, here and there, near and far, we and they, remained entrenched. Europeans remained committed to making the dialogical into the monological and the transversal into the universal, a practice that would seem merely common sense to those who saw themselves at the world’s ideological and religious centre.

We are not as far from the mindset of Bartolomé de Las Casas as we might imagine. In his lifetime, world maps began to resemble those still in use today.

Gerard Mercator’s view of the world is so familiar to Westerners that his map is often taken simply to represent what is ‘true’ and ‘natural’. But on closer inspection the ‘natural’ turns out to be the ‘conventional’, the result of tradition

and ethnocentrism. Three important details show the map's ideological origins and implications: Europe is at the centre of the world; the map is oriented to the north (so that we look *up* to Europe and America and *down* to Africa, South America and India); and the relative sizes of countries and continents are inaccurate – Greenland and Europe, for instance, are presented as larger than they are, South America and Africa as smaller.

As a boy growing up in Colombia, it never dawned on me that looking up at the United States or Europe was a matter of convention and not of physical geography, of reality itself. I did not realize that I was being ideologically conditioned, educated into a view that valued the northern hemisphere over the southern. I unconsciously internalized the core–periphery value structure and was conditioned to place my own country and culture – Colombia – on the periphery. Only as an adult, and then only gradually, did I come to realize that the transversal is not inferior to the universal. It is different, but difference is not necessarily an axiological category.

The transversal path of Thomas Merton

One of the more promising intercultural developments of recent decades has been the frequency and sincerity of 'interfaith dialogues'; gatherings of representatives from different religions that strive towards mutual understanding and respect. Since 9/11, much of the focus has been on the relationship between Islam and Christianity, in an attempt to bridge that civilizational fault line that Samuel Huntington (1996) argued irrevocably separates the East from the West. But before 9/11, a rapprochement between Eastern and Western religions was more often sought, though less urgently perhaps, in interfaith dialogues concerning Zen Buddhism and Christianity. Yet however sincere the attempts at mutual understanding and tolerance might have been, that goal remained elusive.

William Johnston (1970) argues that a rapprochement between Zen and Christianity is possible and desirable, yet he reveals his misunderstanding of Zen in the preface: 'We are still asking if a Christian *satori* is possible, how it will differ from that of Buddhism, and what the specifically Christian means to its attainment are'. Johnston undermines his premise further with an even more revealing admission: 'this book is written by one who believes that salvation is from the Jews – that theirs is the splendor of the divine presence, theirs the covenant, and that from them, in natural descent, sprang the Messiah. Yet this belief does not prevent me from having the highest esteem for the Buddha.' Despite the effort at a dialogical understanding, Johnston 'knows' which religion is superior, which is central and

which is marginal, and which should be followed to achieve salvation. Johnston's tolerance of the Other is not finally tolerance. The interfaith dialogue he describes is not so much a dialogue as a monologue disguised as a dialogue. His unstated agenda is to demonstrate the superiority of Christianity over Zen and thus to advocate the transformation of the transversal into the universal.

In 1974, German historian Arno Peters published a map soon known as the Peters Projection. It purported to correct Mercator's Eurocentric and ideological mistakes. But while the Peters Projection does enlarge the relative size of both Africa and South America, it perpetuates two Eurocentric strategies: Europe remains at its centre and the map is oriented towards the north. Like Johnston, Peters perpetuates the strategy that he claims to correct.

Thomas Merton comes closer than any other figure in this essay to a true dialogical understanding of other cultures, to an openness towards other faiths and other ways of being in the world, to a tolerance that remains genuine. Merton can come into contact with the Other without feeling obliged to convert him or her to Christianity. For Merton, transversal values need not become universal in order to be valid. At the time of his death, Merton's spirituality had evolved to such an extent that he could say that Christianity and other religions such as Zen Buddhism pointed to the same truth, and that any one path to that truth was not necessarily superior to any other. Had he lived a longer life, I believe he would have run into substantial difficulties with the orthodox centre of Catholicism.

Merton's path towards the dialogical, towards openness and tolerance of the transversal was not smooth. He explored different religions as a student in the late 1930s, before converting to Catholicism. It is unclear when Catholicism became too limited a religion for him. Perhaps it came in 1958 in Louisville, in a moment famously rendered in *Conjectures of a Guilty Bystander* (1966), when Merton was overwhelmed by the insight that human solidarity was real; that he and other people were not strangers to each other. He saw that all human beings were part of the same world and that a separate holy existence, 'self-isolation in a special world', was an illusion (p. 141). Paradoxically, he also understood that monasticism, if lived in the right way, could lead to a closer bond with all human beings. He had an insight into the authenticity and validity of transversal values. From that point on, Merton's life began to change, both as a monk and as a traveller on the spiritual path.

In the early 1960s, Merton increasingly withdrew to a cabin on the monastery grounds in pursuit of the eremitical life. He explored Russian mysticism, then Oriental thought and culture. In 1964 he travelled to New York to meet D. T. Suzuki, with whom he had been in correspondence since 1959. Merton indicated

his increasing interest in Zen in his preface to *The Wisdom of the Desert* (1960): ‘In many respects, therefore, these Desert Fathers had much in common with Indian Yogis and with Zen Buddhist monks of China and Japan’. Zen and the Orient became ever more important to him until his death in December 1968 (Lipski, 1983).

Merton’s biographers say that he never abandoned the discipline of Christian prayer for that of Zen meditation; that he always contrasted Zen’s so-called ‘emptiness’ to a Christian ‘fullness’; that he believed Zen to be incapable of the transcendental; and that he considered Zen to be ‘godless’ and therefore, in a way, not a religion at all. Perhaps he spoke of Zen in this manner to avoid his superiors’ censure. Nevertheless, his understanding of Zen is truly remarkable – the fruit of long years of discipline and silence as a Trappist monk. What he found in Zen was not something exotic, but rather something deeply familiar. This sense of a fundamental commonality between the two traditions – shared transversal values – facilitated Merton’s dialogue with the East, a dialogue not only with Zen but with Buddhism and Taoism in general. Merton’s dialogue with the East and with other religions appears not to have had a discernible agenda. That is, he did not desire to know the transversal in order to transform it into the universal. Merton’s dialogue remains, I believe, dialogical.

Merton knew the stakes were high:

If the West continues to underestimate and neglect the spiritual heritage of the East, it may hasten the tragedy that threatens man and his civilizations The horizons of the world are no longer confined to Europe and America. We have to gain new perspectives, and on this our spiritual and even physical survival may depend. (Merton, 1967. Cited in Woodcock, 1978, p. 155.)

And in a letter to the Vatican in the same year:

[As contemplatives], we must, before all else, whatever else we do, speak to modern man as his brothers, as people who are in very much the same difficulties as he is, as people who suffer much what he suffers, though we are immensely privileged to be exempt from so many, so very many, of his responsibilities and sufferings. And we must not arrogate to ourselves the right to talk down to modern man, to dictate to him from a position of supposed eminence, when perhaps he suspects that our cloister walls have not done anything except confirm us in unreality. (Merton and Cunningham, 1992, p. 423.)

In sum, Merton refused to adopt the monological and refused the temptation of a universalizing discourse. He remained, instead, committed to

the dialogical and to shared transversal values. His position, finally, is one of openness, tolerance and humility. Yet he recognized differences in and among traditions, East and West. I believe that he considered these differences to be ones of perspective rather than of substance.

If the Peters Projection illustrates William Johnston's approach to Zen Buddhism, then perhaps a world map with a different centre – for instance, Beijing – may partially illustrate Merton's approach. But for Merton the Eurocentric world map was not to be replaced by a Sinocentric one. Rather, the world could be portrayed better by both maps at once, even by more maps than just two, for the world can only be truly illuminated when light shines on it from many perspectives.

Conclusion

The communion that Merton called for is a dialogue in which no single voice assumes the position of authority and authenticity. Merton experienced such dialogues with D. T. Suzuki in the late 1950s and early 1960s, with the Buddhist monk Thich Nhat Hanh in 1966 (King, 2001) and with the Dalai Lama in 1968.

These are dialogues between individuals already committed to openness and tolerance. Are such dialogues possible on the cultural scale? With civilizations, cultures and nations, issues of power, national identity and cultural pre-eminence mitigate against the dialogical. Nevertheless, Mikhail Bakhtin describes how a cross-cultural dialogue might be possible:

A meaning only reveals its depths once it has encountered and come into contact with another, foreign meaning: they engage in a kind of dialogue We seek answers to our own questions in [the foreign culture]; and [it] responds to us by revealing to us its new aspects and new semantic depths Such a dialogic encounter of two cultures does not result in merging or mixing. Each retains its own unity and *open* totality, but they are mutually enriched. (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 7)

Bakhtin's message is remarkably similar to Merton's. He stresses the importance of maintaining the integrity of the transversal in cross-cultural contact. Absorption of the transversal into the universal would ignore the axiological particularities of the different cultures and lead to a universalizing discourse that would impose the monological.

Universal values are antithetical to transversal values. Throughout history, the imposition of universal values has been destructive at worst and problematic at best. Preserving the transversal offers the best hope for the

continuation of the dialogical, and therefore for a human solidarity based on knowledge, tolerance and a respect for cultural diversity.

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Biography

Michael Palencia-Roth graduated in English and Philosophy at Vanderbilt University, and went on to gain an MA and then a doctorate at Harvard (1976). He has been teaching since 1977 at the University of Illinois, where he was Director of the Program in Comparative Literature from 1988 to 1994 and is currently Trowbridge Scholar in Literary Studies and Full Professor of Comparative and World Literature, Spanish, and Latin American Studies. Professor Palencia-Roth has won many prestigious fellowships (the Newberry Library, the John Carter Brown Library, and the National Endowment for the Humanities). He is a past president of three international learned societies: the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations, the Association of Departments and Programs of Comparative Literature, and the Association of Colombianists. In 1997 he was awarded the title of Distinguished Extramural Professor of Humanities and Literature at the Universidad del Valle (Colombia); he received the Pedro Morales Pino Order of Merit in Art and Culture in June 1998 for his contribution to Colombian letters.

He has published books and papers on Gabriel García Márquez, Thomas Mann, James Joyce, the period of the conquests in Latin America, twentieth-century Latin American literature, the Holocaust, comparative literature as a discipline, and comparative civilizational analysis, in addition to major encyclopaedia articles on Latin American writers and essays on Germanic studies, English literature, Latin American literature, cannibalism as a perceived fact and idea in the colonization of the New World, and theoretical issues in cross-cultural analysis.

2nd Session:

Mediators and Means of Dialogue

Moderated by Katérina Stenou, Director of the Division
of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue, UNESCO

The Silk Roads as routes of dialogue among civilizations

Eiji Hattori

The Silk Roads have been major arteries for the exchange of culture and civilization for at least fifteen hundred years, and have helped shape present-day human civilization accordingly. In 1985 we at UNESCO initiated a project entitled 'Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue', in which more than 2,000 scientists from over thirty countries have now taken part. The project began with these words: 'The Silk Roads, over land or sea, were above all, the routes of dialogue between civilizations'.

In January 1991 I found myself on board the *Fulk Al Salamah*, made available through the generosity of His Majesty the Sultan of Oman, when the Gulf War broke out. Shocked by that event, I gave a special talk (on the very eve of the US attack on Baghdad) on the subject 'The Silk Roads and Peace'. The full text of this talk appears in my book *Letters from the Silk Road* (Hattori, 2000). The Moroccan Mahdi Elmandjra had described this war as the 'first war of civilizations', and Samuel P. Huntington of Harvard, taking his cue from this, published a prophetic article 'Clash of Civilizations?' in 1993, developing it into a book in 1996. Subsequently the President of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Mr Mohammad Khatami, denounced Huntington's idea and adduced the key terms of this UNESCO project in support, suggesting that the United Nations might make 2001 'the International Year for Dialogue among Civilizations'.

It seems today that two ways of thinking are once more at odds in our world, the one asserting that antagonism between civilizations is inevitable (the idea is rooted in historical elitism), and the other arguing for the mutual enrichment that encounters between civilizations can bring. For my part, I say 'civilizations do not clash; it is ignorance that clashes'. If we look at human history carefully, we find that civilizations have constantly encountered one another, and have grown and developed through those encounters. That is what 'dialogue between civilizations' means. Dialogue, in fact, indicates cross-fertilization, not commerce. If we study the history of the Silk Roads closely, we find that three characteristics that are shared by those who travelled these routes:

1. They set off in search of something precious, not with the intention of selling things;
2. Their way of trading was not monopolistic, but involved sharing;
3. They operated in groups that were multi-ethnic and international, not in national groups.

Coexistence and shared prosperity as a sort of symbiosis: that was the trade of the Silk Roads. Those who carried things and ideas along these routes knew how to live together and enrich each other. There was a reciprocal respect among the nations concerned.

Of all centuries, the eighth was the great century of openings and encounters. We find great cultural centres flourishing simultaneously: Cordova, Constantinople, and Baghdad in the west; Singhalese Anudharapura in the south; Java in the east; and in the centre, the Chang'An in China, Nara in Japan, etc.

It is salutary to examine the way historians use the word *pax*. Peace, as signified by that use, does not necessarily involve either understanding or a friendly attitude: it is rather something similar to a sort of 'high pressure' exerted by political power, and means the absence of major conflicts in a particular region during a particular period.

The *pax romana* of the first and second centuries CE was a period when Rome's influence stretched across the whole Mediterranean region as far as the Middle East. The *pax islamica* (from the seventh to the ninth century CE) was the period of the Abbassid caliphate centred in Baghdad.

Each *pax* corresponded with high pressure in the east of Eurasia also: the former during the Han Dynasty (*pax sinica* I), and the latter the Tang (*pax sinica* II). When there are two such high-pressure zones in the east and west of the continent, we find a strong mutual attraction, which opens the gates of trade and other exchanges.

The *pax mongolica* that arose in the thirteenth century also formed a high-pressure zone, following much destruction and many massacres – but it had one difference from the start, in that this had no opposite number in the West. It covered virtually all of Eurasia.

In one sense, Kublai Khan acted as precursor for the Europeans who, after discovering the New World and new routes towards the end of the fifteenth century, turned a page of world history and began the new chapter of conquests and colonization. The centuries that followed saw the rise of this European high-pressure area.

We should note that trade and other exchanges under this new high-pressure zone, exemplified by the practices of the various East India companies, beginning with the Dutch East India Company, had quite opposite characteristics to those observed previously during the 'high' periods of the Silk Roads. The

motives of the conquistadors who went to South America – ‘God, Glory and Gold’ – are a good illustration of this. Unlike the Chinese monks who crossed deserts to seek the authentic Sutras in India, unlike also the great Mongol conquerors of the thirteenth century who absorbed the culture of the countries they conquered, these sixteenth-century colonizers exported their own God and their own culture; they sought to monopolize commerce; the principle of sharing foundered and was lost; and international, multiracial action organized along the lines of a relay was replaced by national ventures where a single national organization spanned a whole route. These were the characteristics of Western and Japanese colonialism; and the outcome could only be warfare. The spirit of the age, the *Zeitgeist*, was none other than a ‘culture of war’.

The hallmark of the culture of war is ignorance of the Other. For instance, al-Andalus (Andalusia) played a great role, along with Alexandria, Constantinople and Sicily, in the twelfth-century renaissance which in turn paved the way for the Italian Renaissance of the fifteenth century. When we recall that Descartes and Kant can be regarded as strictly the antithesis called into being by Thomas Aquinas – who introduced Aristotle from Andalusia to replace the ‘scholastic’ system of thought dating back to St. Augustine, which had dominated the Sorbonne until then – we see that it would be no exaggeration to say that modern Western science would never have come about without the contribution made by this meeting of cultures in the Iberian peninsula.

Consider, for example, mathematics: Descartes and Pascal were both mathematicians. Now algebra came to Europe from the Arabs. The French word ‘chiffre’ (figure) comes from the Arabic word *sifr* which means ‘void’, and in this use dates from the tenth century; the concept came from India, where it was expressed by *sunya* in Sanskrit.

Sifr became *chiffre* in French in the twelfth century, then *cifra* in Italian. But that same Arabic word, more closely allied to its original sense, was transcribed *zehirum* in Latin (or *zefiro*), and ultimately gave the West its word *zero*. I need hardly add that it is this concept of ‘zero’ which made algebra possible, and gave birth to modern mathematics.

So we can see that India, which had since Antiquity carried on much scientific and religious interaction with the Western world and in particular with the lands of the Mediterranean, helped to furnish the West not only with spices but also with fundamental scientific ideas such as the concept of zero, thanks to the mediation of the Islamic world and its mastery of the sea (the Indian Ocean especially) from the eighth century on.

Truly, the image of world civilization has been distorted in our history books, and especially in our school textbooks. When compulsory education of

the young was instituted in Western countries towards the end of the nineteenth century, their children learned that there was only one civilization, that of the West. Worse still, this view of the world was spread around the world by the cultural and educational policies of colonialism, and as a result young people the world over learned that the brilliant civilization of Greece arose alone and of itself, like Venus from the foam of the Mediterranean; and that its successor, Rome, advancing northwards and embracing Christian spirituality, created Civilization. The contribution made by Arab and Muslim civilization was systematically erased from textbooks. People learned about the *Reconquista* of the Iberian peninsula, but nothing of the cohabitation and collaboration among different peoples of different cultures that had preceded it.

Do not the peoples of the Islamic world feel their culture, and the part they played and continue to play in world civilization, have been ignored? What Elmandjra describes as their ‘humiliation’ is a part of this thesis, as is, at bottom, the ‘orientalism’ denounced by Edward Said. What lies behind this talk of a ‘clash of civilizations’, what cultivates the hotbed of terrorism, is not poverty but injustice, disregard for human dignity. The ‘war of civilizations’ will become a reality if the world’s leaders persist in believing that their military superiority betokens a cultural and spiritual superiority, or that it is up to them to illuminate a world of darkness with their peculiar enlightenment – in other words, if they persist in fostering the scorn of others.

The twenty-first century must turn another way; and we have already taken a number of steps towards a different future. The Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity adopted by UNESCO in 2001 and developed into a Convention in 2005, is one instance. This declaration recognizes the importance of cultural diversity, not least in its Article 1: ‘... cultural diversity is as necessary for humankind as biodiversity is for nature’.

Interaction among cultures is vital. This is the first time that the human intellect has recognized that the existence of the Self requires, as a necessary condition, the existence of the Other. Standardization of culture in the name of globalization would be a suicidal act by the human race.

Inaugurating the UNESCO project to study the Silk Roads in 1985, I said ‘We set off now on a journey in search of things past and things lost, of a time when there was mutual respect among cultures’. This respect for others is the very thing that drove the caravans and ships which traced out the Silk Roads over the centuries.

Solidarity is lacking in our present-day world, because there is ignorance. Love is lacking in this world, for to love it is necessary to know. UNESCO’s mission is none other than to fight against ignorance.

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Biography

Eiji Hattori was born in Japan in 1934, and holds an MA from Kyoto University and doctorates from there and from the Sorbonne in Paris. Professor Hattori worked in the service of UNESCO for twenty-one years, from 1973–1994, first as a Senior Administrator for Culture and Public Information, and in 1994 as an adviser to the Director-General.

Professor Hattori is now Deputy Director of the Research Centre for Moral Science, Institute of Moralogy, Japan and Visiting Professor at the Centre for Comparative Studies of Civilizations at Reitaku University, Japan. He is also President of the Franco-Japanese Society of Educational Sciences, Vice-President of the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations (ISCSC), and Chargé de Mission to the Executive Office of the Director-General of UNESCO. In 1995, the French Government made Professor Hattori an officer of the Ordre des Palmes Académiques.

His publications include *Letters from the Silk Roads: Thinking at the Crossroads of Civilization*, New York, University Press of America, 2000; *Dialogue between Science and Culture: Convergence of Intellectualities* (editor), Tokyo, Reitaku University Press, 1999; and *Science and Culture: A Common Path for the Future* (editor), (Final Report, Tokyo symposium, 14 September 1995), Paris, Unesco/UNU, 1996.

Society systems and value systems: nomadic cultures as means and actors of dialogue

Jacques Legrand

The nomads of Eurasia have been noteworthy carriers of technical and cultural diffusion all along the communication and trade routes from one end of the continent to the other. Not only technological and aesthetic transfers, but philosophical and religious ones as well have to varying degrees owed their success to the mediation of nomad cultures and empires – and not only to the conflicts and their after-effects, though these too have at one point or another helped speed up contacts, broaden views and extend mutual understanding in manifold ways, and indeed fostered the sharing of symbols and values among cultures, hard as this may sometimes seem.

These phenomena are sometimes said to be just a by-product of the nomads' presence: inhabiting as they do the vast area of the steppes, they might simply have played a more or less fortuitous historical role as intermediaries.

In fact, however, the essence of their role lies elsewhere. It is in the depths of nomadic/pastoral society and culture themselves that the motives and driving force of this affair came to maturity. Nomad pastoralism aims at enduring mastery of space where resources are irregular, and so builds up a strategy of small population groups living off limited flocks and, in motion back and forth with the seasons, exploiting as vast an extent of pasture as the labour available permits. This dispersion – the analogue and alternative to accumulation in sedentary societies – is the keynote that informs a peculiar culture. This dispersion and the networks by which it is organized are the matrices of the imperial organizations which give coherence to the history of the Steppe, applying specific models of diffusion and exchange. Material goods and the acquisition of techniques play a large part in this, but not the only one. Ideological or religious taboos, confirmations of legitimacy and elements of prestige play just as fundamental a role. They preside over the establishment and manipulation of power relationships, and over the improbable durability of powers whose material strength often passes in almost no time.

Mongolia is a myth. Certainties get established, to such a point that

frequently even the term 'nomadism' is sacrificed, and replaced with 'mobile husbandry'. It is a choice of words which provides some kind of image and meaning; in the belief that it is more precisely identifying 'mobility' as the essence, it turns its back on the real character of nomadism, and instead stresses an appearance forced on those who can only look with eyes blinkered by the routines and constraints of sedentary living.

Our approach suggests that each of the two systems (or families of system), the nomadic and the sedentary, must be understood within its own logic and on its own foundations – but the nomadic pastoral system has, in the history of ideas, more or less been denied any such capacity to exist on particular 'foundations'. Long represented as a primitive or 'barbarian' state, it is widely conceived, analysed and defined by what it *lacks* in comparison with a 'normal' and 'universal' order of human development, whose exemplar is still that of the agrarian, the agro-industrial, the urban industrial, and latterly the 'postindustrial' society, the most advanced of all. The idea that one single pattern of development could legitimately bear some supposed anthropological universality is forced to take into account only its most reductive and mechanistic features.

If I seek to identify a remarkable bundle of correlations, or even symmetries, between the two systems – and I see advantages in dealing with them through a comparative systemic approach – this does not mean I am postulating either an unavoidable overlap or an improbable confluence between them: I am not tracing any such thing in the past, nor forecasting it for the future. But as well as a better understanding of each system, and also perhaps some forms of human activity in general at the broadest level, this approach should have the more immediate aim of making clearer the conditions and features which have moulded and shaped practical neighbourly intercourse between the two systems, both in terms of forms of behaviour and their concrete effects and in the deeper realm of reciprocal representation and imagination, which are as far from a generic and irreducible hostility as they are from the illusions of some imagined orderly complementarity.

Only by following the story of the two systems' beginnings and developments, as they can be seen with hindsight throughout their long anthropological duration, in their structural coherences, and in their existential immediacy, can these roles be brought properly to light. It is no anachronism to go back to the Neolithic revolution, and the ongoing fundamental primacy – still essential today – of a broadened positive energy balance which began with that revolution and which has to be set up and maintained, as a minimal condition of survival; no anachronism, provided we do so without too much

reductive simplification for a lay readership. For the two systems do indeed share this imperative. Their objective – which they must necessarily share – is to maintain human communities from given complex sets of resources, communities that are stable and durable and occupy limited territorial areas.

Human populations were nomadic, it is said, in Palaeolithic times; and it was in the Neolithic age that settlement began. Well, there is some abuse of terminology here, or at the least some verbal sleight that really only expresses sedentary people's commonplace idea of nomadism as generalized mobility, or even aimless wandering. In point of fact, although there is indeed reason to date the emergence of sedentary living (agricultural or pastoral) from Neolithic times, what was brought to an end by that sedentary living was not nomadism but the ability to migrate when migration was needed; for nomadism was still far in the future. This original mobility is unrelated to nomadic forms and to the nomadic model of appropriation of resources solely or mainly by means of production involving pastoral domestication. Husbandry, not migration, is essential to the definition of the Nomad.

Faced with the same imperative, however, sedentary societies and nomad pastoralists call on two radically different driving forces.

The sedentary approach: accumulation

Sedentary societies – agrarian or urban; ancient, medieval or modern – have built their system of material and immaterial development on the idea of accumulation. This idea is central, whether we are dealing with its own direct effects or its implications.

Accumulation is not only a matter, as it first appears, of gathering or heaping up the products of human activity. A prior, deeper aspect is the incorporation, in the product itself indeed, but even more importantly in the very tools and processes of production, of a portion – increasing over time – of the work done in order to satisfy the needs of the individual and the group. It is in fact the measuring of this core of accumulation, the increasing incorporation of labour, which most enables us to identify the sedentary way of life in its essence.

This becomes quite clear if we restrict ourselves to examining strictly industrial models, in which the formation and maintenance of capital in the form of the means of production are nothing but the solidification of labour that was living and is now incorporated within inanimate matter and will one day be restored to movement in the product. And it is in fact the same story in every case of agricultural exploitation (or domestication) prolonged in time over a

finite space. There is the initial stage of clearing the ground, and then the constant investment that may be needed to defend the tamed area from going back to nature (think of the fragility of human gains wrested from the desert, as in the valley of the Nile, or from the sea by dykes and polders, etc.); but then there is also the essential part of the effort made possible by the product obtained, which is reinvested in the strategies and technologies designed to improve productivity as required by the ever-renewed dynamic of the relationship between needs and population growth.

This last aspect is closely associated with accumulation in human life: it is a particularly complex and remarkable manifestation of accumulation, in that it reminds us that accumulation is a characteristic phenomenon of human societies, and that those societies manage it in ways that are by no means uniform.

The sedentary model does not consist of agriculture only, but agriculture is its first foundation and remains the source of its most constant mental and conceptual apparatus. It is naturally on agrarian forms of accumulation and its management, therefore, that the sedentary system builds its peculiar categories in a great range of domains.

It took a long time for accumulation to become conceptualized explicitly. Its place in the mentality of the Neolithic revolution was initially as a response, at the very heart of the material situation, to the necessity of finding, establishing and consolidating a relationship between sustainability and the increasing needs driven by population growth.

Accumulation was a means of setting up a non-perishable form of guarantee, which is what is supplied by the conservation of certain agricultural products, mainly cereals, and the actual techniques for such conservation (granaries, pottery). It was obviously inseparable from technical development, and from an extension of the division of labour; but these founding aspects of the sedentary system must themselves be attended by many other equally essential conditions, which are of more immediate relevance here.

Particular choices stem from the prior demands of accumulation, which is inconceivable unless production provides a surplus, an excess still available after minimal consumption needs have been met. This presupposes both material and mental frameworks and forms of behaviour that make it possible to guarantee that such a surplus will be generated, and its duration and regularity matter even more than the absolute amount of product saved¹ from immediate consumption.

1. It is perhaps no accident that many sedentary cultures have recourse to this notion of 'saving' to designate financial saving.

This need for regularity, the precondition and soon the essential attribute of accumulation, itself generates its own implicit needs: for stability, central organization, intensiveness and joint ownership of undivided inheritances. Stability is a self-explanatory precondition; but each of these features listed is in fact caught up in a network of relationships and understandings whose actual workings provide an inexhaustible wealth of history. Everywhere we look we find manifestations – in varying degrees, of course – of the interactions between these secondary traits and the logic of accumulation. Perhaps we should give Intensification a special mention, for it can be observed over long periods and relates to Accumulation in a quite specific way: despite frequent appearances to the contrary, it consists of the incorporation – tending to increase over time – of labour in the preliminary conditions of production and in production itself.

I should add that marginal and peripheral phenomena are by definition considered hindrances to accumulation and can only be regarded as negative. How these societies view and project their own imbalances shows what immense difficulty they have in analysing the crises they encounter, and with what unanimous emphasis (often full of ambiguity) they condemn all marginal elements in their societies. The same is true of the way the sedentary system treats what lies beyond its own borders: an area to be conquered (not for itself but in order to integrate it into the sedentary system), but at the same time an unconquerable space which sedentary societies call the domain of the ‘Barbarians’ and in doing so are tempted to doubt whether it is properly inhabited – or even habitable – at all.

The nomadic approach: dispersion

A study of the catastrophic episodes in the history of Mongolia, and in particular the repeated *zud* (long droughts) has suggested that we should re-evaluate their place in the basic strategy of the nomadic system² and reconsider that strategy itself. As in the case of the sedentary system, we need to look beyond the most obvious phenomena for the most active and potent drivers in the nomadic one.

2. J. Legrand, ‘The Mongolian “zud”, facts and concepts: from the description of a disaster to the understanding of the nomadic pastoral system’, in *Dialogue among Civilizations: Interaction between Nomadic and other Cultures of Central Asia*, Ulan Bator, IISNC, February–June 2002, pp. 14–31.

Two closely associated parameters form the core of the nomadic system: the low unit yield of its primary resources and, even more important, the irregularity inherent in its ecological circumstances as a whole.³ The region's climate record in the last millennium and the study of modern conditions both show a dissociation between these two variables, their constantly shifting relationship generating many profound and permanent effects.

Margins of reproduction and growth are relatively low, and above all extremely irregular; but this twofold feature is not merely a sign of incapacity to conform to the ideal of an accumulation-based mode of living; it is a precondition for and central symptom of a fundamentally alternative approach.⁴ This is no adaptation of the model described above, but a radically distinct strategy mainly intended to open up for sustainable and self-sufficient human habitation areas where natural conditions are, on the face of it, quite unsuitable. In terms of the sustainable establishment of a human society, this natural pressure and the level of resources have favoured husbandry and imposed pastoralism. Animals, as well as providing products and energy, are also an excellent buffer between humans and the sudden shocks caused by nature's irregularities.

In the case of the nomadic system, the human population is more starkly faced with the need to secure the means of survival and reproduction by tackling two urgent and contradictory imperatives: first, consuming enough, in quantity and nutritional quality,⁵ and second, allowing the regeneration of the primary resources without which the only recourse would be migration. Human pressure on these primary resources, applied through herds and flocks, must be heavy enough to meet present needs and at the same time light enough to keep

3. J. Legrand, 'Nomades et sédentaires', in *Mongolie, le premier empire des steppes* [Mongolia, First Empire of the Steppes], Catalogue of the exhibition of the excavations at the Xiongnu site of Gol mod, Monaco/Paris/Ulan Bator, 12 April to 17 September 2003, Transactions of the South/French archaeological mission in Mongolia, Arles and Paris, 2003, pp. 45–59.

4. J. Legrand, 'Les conquêtes mongoles peuvent-elles être expliquées par la démographie?' ['Can the Mongolian conquests be explained by demography?']. Study Day on the History of Defence and Social Science, Centre d'études sur l'histoire de la défense [History of Defence Study Centre], Paris, November 2003, to be published.

5. Though these play an essential part, which is why we use this formulation, the accounting balance is of course by no means limited to the satisfaction of nutritional needs only; and the dynamic of social needs, in all its complexity, calls for more of the ethnographic, technological and other studies which are already providing much illumination. I am thinking here of the works of X. Njambuu and S. Badamxatan and many other Mongolian colleagues, and also of S. Szykiewicz, *Rodzina pasterska w Mongolii*, Wrocław, 1981.

the territory habitable. The response to this challenge takes some relatively simple forms: the system is based on the dispersion of the human population in small groups which support themselves from flocks that are themselves not too numerous. But while the principle may be simple, the alternating, seasonal application and its various parameters involve a highly complex network of relationships among ecological, technical and social factors.

Dispersion plays a role at the heart of the nomadic system that is not identical to, but just as fundamental as, that played by accumulation in the sedentary system. It makes it possible to reconcile the two imperatives I pointed out earlier (satisfying present needs and limiting the pressure on resources); and it is the social mastery of dispersion which determines its scale and rhythms. This mastery consists of reproducing, in the face of variable conditions, a relatively constant relationship between human needs, primary resources and stock numbers.

Under these conditions, mobility is now seen as subordinate to dispersion, being just one of the ways dispersion is achieved: important, but instrumental. The false impressions that lead us to assimilate or – worse still – reduce nomadism to mobility, are a major obstacle to our understanding of the system. So, of course, are classifications of nomadic peoples according to their degree of mobility, and in particular the geographical scope of their annual movements. Appreciating how changes in these parameters all form part of a single system opens the door to understanding how a herder of the Khangai, making journeys of just a few miles, and that herder's counterpart in the southern Gobi, who will often cover hundreds, belong to the same culture, think the same way, and cope with the same constraints⁶ – and how this affinity provides the basis for a cultural community that extends across a whole continent.

The axis between accumulation and dispersion marks out a huge set of symmetries. The intensive behaviour of the one is matched by the extensive behaviour of the other, which is indeed not exclusively a nomadic trait, but has a special place in nomadism: on the one hand, it might simply be another name for dispersion itself, but on the other the concept may be associated with a

6. This abolishes none of the usefulness of mobility as a symptom; but its comings and goings, when not dictated by the internal economy of the nomadic system, can only result in the last analysis in a falling-away from optimal dispersion and a degradation of the system as a whole. This observation, by making that point clear, confirms the importance of the work that quite properly emphasizes the dangers of restricting or losing mobility, such as the studies by C. Humphrey, D. Sneath and their groups in *The End of Nomadism?*, Cambridge, 1999, and in the two volumes that paved the way for this publication.

measure, a limiting function of the nomadic system's viability. Any intensification – that is, any introduction into the nomadic system of an element closely bound up with the accumulative model – brings with it a more or less serious deterioration in the inter-relationships of resources, consumption and reproduction; to put it another way, its price is a more or less abrupt loss of viability which at the worst can even lead to the irreversible destruction of the very basis of nomadic pastoral production.⁷

For the same reasons, far from tending towards the establishment of a single centre or set of centres in or around which – once society has outgrown a primitive stage of self-sufficient subsistence – accumulative practices can develop, the nomadic system is driven in quite the opposite direction by its marginal functions, its peripheral fringes. One essential illustration of this peripheral driving force is given by succession arrangements; that is, by a model of social reproduction/extension which, quite unlike the joint ownership arrangements of sedentary societies, takes the form of 'hordes' which know no limits but those to which neighbouring (and potentially competing) groups can extend.

Irregularity is not only a trigger or contributory factor; it remains a constant feature of the system, playing a structural rather than a circumstantial role. Nomadism is a system established in order to exploit areas marked by the scale of their irregularities even more than the absolute level of their poverties. Irregularity and the mastery of irregularity are and remain a permanent and central feature of the system.

The heart of the nomadic system is a way of coping with catastrophe, of managing it not just to overcome or survive it but above all to accommodate it as an integral part of the system's sustainability. While accumulation is the necessary mode for exploiting regular, predictable resources (and in this case a 'catastrophe' truly deserves the meaning assigned to it by 'right-thinking' sedentary minds), dispersion is a way of managing chaos. The hardest thing here is precisely this capacity to use concepts of 'catastrophe' or 'chaos' without the depreciatory connotations they have acquired in the thinking of sedentary cultures.

Catastrophic episodes are the formative elements of the nomadic system's sustainability; for imbalances, irregularities and instabilities are in that system not accidents 'in spite of which' nomadic pastoralism can be seen

7. This is what Owen Lattimore admirably stressed in his analysis of the phenomena of 'sedentarization' as regression: O. Lattimore, *Mongols of Manchuria*, London, 1935 (second edition, 1970).

to have survived, but on the contrary central, fundamental and driving factors of the system itself, which is neither a leftover of some primitive state (as indeed archaeology and history are establishing) nor, even more importantly, an adaptation to the absence of the prerequisites for any development that would meet the imperatives of the sedentary model. No, this system is a grand alternative (probably not an exclusive one: we should remember seafaring cultures) to accumulation-centred models, and offers the possibility of and the arrangements for an enduring form of human habitation that is viable and sustainable in more or less severely arid environments.

Another aspect now comes into view, ranging from individual and family behaviours of dispersed groups all the way to the construction of relationship networks designed so that the one can manage access to resources and the other can organize nomadic social space as a whole. The elementary groups show a weakness and almost immediate sensitivity to even small changes in natural or human circumstances. The responses to this situation consist not only in the building of networks, but above all in the fact that dispersion imposes on those networks a predominantly centrifugal orientation. This 'directional' characteristic is indeed another original and defining feature of the nomadic alternative, which contrasts with the strong centripetal pressure exercised by the logic of accumulation.

In the end, it is the entire set of all the elements I have mentioned which leads the nomadic system to form and develop its peculiar social relationships and institutions along a path that is at once technical, social, political and historical. Their study forms the main matter of our activities, especially the empirical investigation of the primary role and practical forms of dispersion (including, that is, the phases in which this ecological and technical optimum is temporarily given up)⁸ in the construction of marriage networks, the formation of power relationships and the emergence of nomadic 'imperial' institutions and a nomadic art of politics,⁹ and in the establishment and development of relations between nomadic and sedentary cultures.

8. J. Legrand, 'Specifically nomadic nature of urban phenomena in the history of Central Asian empires' [L'essence proprement nomade des faits urbains dans l'histoire des empires centre asiatiques], Proceedings of the Conference on Nomadism and Urbanization, IISNC/ Kazakhstan Academy of Science, Almaty, 2003.

9. J. Legrand, 'Compromise as a specifically nomad contribution to the description, understanding and dealing with tensions, conflicts and security threats', in Proceedings of the NATO Advanced Research Workshop, *Towards Social Stability and Democratic Governance in Central Eurasia: Challenges to Regional Security*, Leyde, 8–11 September 2004.

It is in the concrete study of these phenomena that we shall find answers to the most crucial issue, the one which dominates all questions about interaction between cultures: how can an overwhelming and enduring need for dispersion of a population and its resources manage to produce a shared culture among groups which are small in numbers, but which demonstrate over long swathes of time and considerable swathes of territory – in terms of communication, technological solutions to the problems encountered, sharing of value systems, and construction of special institutions – a mastery no less consummate than that of which sedentary peoples and their cultures are so proud? This is a wide open field; and as with any field of research it will acquire its own legitimacy by grasping the particular essence of such extensive phenomena and avoiding all arbitrary, preconceived or prejudiced transpositions from one model to another. It will then have much to contribute to a broader and more penetrating vision of societies in motion.

Biography

Jacques Legrand, professor of Mongolian Language, Literature and Civilization, has been president of the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO) since March 2005. Originally a student of Chinese and Russian at INALCO (then known as l'École Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes), he was recruited to serve in the first French embassy in Mongolia from 1967 to 1968. He returned to France shortly after the Mongolian language was first taught at INALCO and rejoined the institute in 1970. He has worked there ever since. He is Scientific Chairman of the International Institute for the Study of Nomadic Civilizations set up in Ulan Bator under the auspices of UNESCO (1998).

His publications include *Le choix mongol : de la féodalité au socialisme* [Mongols' Choice: from Feudal Society to Socialism], Paris, Éditions sociales, 1975; *L'administration dans la domination sino mandchoue en Mongolie Qalq a, version mongole du Lifan yuan Zeli* [Administration during the Sino-Manchu Domination in Mongolia; *Qalq a*, the Mongolian version of the *Lifan Yuan Zeli*], Paris, Collège de France, 1976; *Mongolia*, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 1976; *Mongol-French Dictionary* (with Ts. Sükhbaatar), Paris, l'Asiathèque, 1992; *Vents d'herbe et de feutre, Écrits et dits de Mongolie* [Wafts of Grass and Felt, Writings and Sayings of Mongolia], Paris, Findakly, 1993; *Parlons Mongol* [Let's Speak Mongolian], Paris, L'Harmattan, 1997.

He has also contributed to many works for academic and lay readers, as well as to Nikita Mikhalkov's film *Urga* (1991).

Views of the world common among various cultures along the Silk Road

Kosei Morimoto

The fine line engraving on the lotus-shaped pedestal of the Great Buddha of Todaiji Temple

I have long been engaged in the study of Islam, and I often have the opportunity to show guests from the Islamic world the Great Buddha Hall of Todaiji Temple (Nara, Japan), where I am serving, and to explain about the statue of Vairocana Buddha, along with the extremely fine line engraving incised on its lotus-shaped pedestal. Although the image of this engraving represents a sort of Buddhist view of the world, I use a method of comparative religion and terms from the Koran to explain the image whenever it seems appropriate. Despite the great difference between Islam and Buddhism, rather than emphasizing the differences, I firmly believe that we should first seek the common ground between the two religions.

Todaiji Temple was erected in Nara, which was then the Japanese capital, during the middle of the eighth century. At that time, cultural exchanges along the Silk Road were at the highest in its long history. The temple was erected to establish a Buddhist centre in Japan. In other words, the temple was designed to play would be considered the role of a state university today.

Much of the present Great Buddha Hall was reconstructed during the early eighteenth century, because the majority of the temple structures were sadly destroyed twice by fire during Japan's civil wars. Fortunately, however, most of the images on the Great Buddha's lotus-shaped pedestal survived the fires. It was possible, therefore, to reproduce the entire image, as shown in the sketch opposite.

Briefly, the image is comprised of an upper and lower section. In the upper section, a large image of a seated Tathagata Buddha is engraved with the halo and mandorla represented as flames. The Tathagata Buddha is flanked on either side by a group of eleven images of bodhisattvas, both groups being arranged

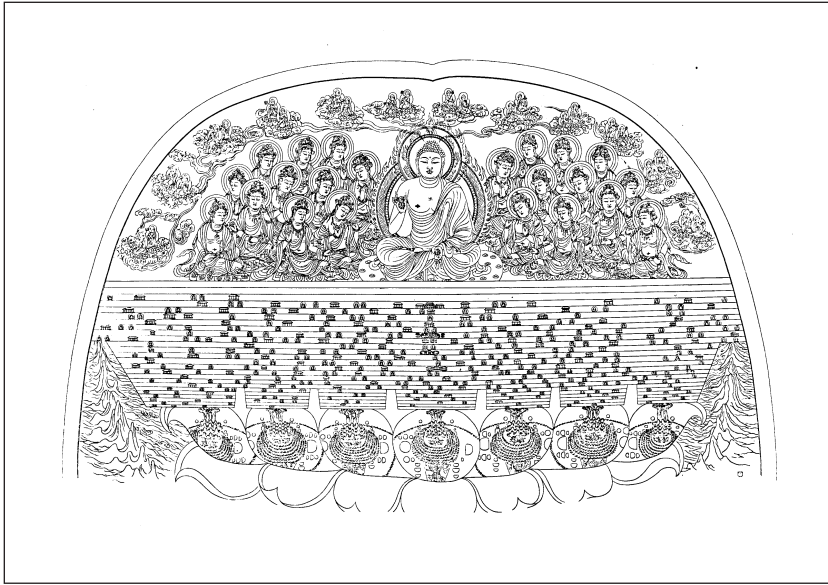


Figure 1: Image of the ‘Lotus Flower Bank World’ (reproduction)

symmetrically. Above Buddha’s head a cloud rises like smoke stretching in both directions, seemingly floating above the two groups of bodhisattvas. A closer look at the cloud would reveal many small images of Buddha’s incarnation, some offering flowers, and others holding incense burners to worship the Tathagata Buddha seated in the centre. The lower section is further divided into upper and lower subsections. In the upper subsection there are twenty-six horizontal lines, with small Buddha images and palace structures arranged between the lines. This subsection represents the many layers of heaven. In the lower subsection a large lotus flower blooms in the ocean. The lotus flower has seven pairs of petals, each consisting of one petal turned upwards and the other facing downwards. The upturned petals are engraved with the same mysterious images, representing the world-system as centred on Mt. Sumeru.

The ‘Billion-World Universe’

Mt. Sumeru is an extremely high mountain that is said to stand at the centre of the earth. As the sun, the moon and stars circulate around the mountain, the world of Mt. Sumeru can be interpreted as a type of solar system. Although early Buddhists conceived only a single world of Mt. Sumeru, seven such worlds are depicted in

the fine line engraving on the lotus-shaped pedestal of the Great Buddha. Here the numerical figure 'seven' represents the infinite number. In other words, the image represents a universe comprised of an immeasurable number of solar systems, or in Buddhist terminology, the 'Billion-World Universe'. This is a view of the world from the perspective of Mahayana Buddhism.

As a result of the development of Buddhist thought, Mahayana Buddhism was established around the year of the birth of Christ. At that time, probably influenced by the advances in the theories of astrology, Buddhists began to consider the possibility of a countless number of solar systems. To explain this view in an easy-to-understand manner, ancient Indian Buddhists used great numbers. According to their explanation, a micro cosmos comprises the one world of Mt Sumeru. One thousand Mt. Sumeru worlds together comprise a 'small-world-system'. One thousand 'small-world-systems' together comprise a 'medium-world-system', and one thousand 'medium-world-systems' further comprise a 'large-world-system'. Since the large-world-system is comprised of the three kinds of world-systems, namely the large-, medium- and small, it is called a 'trichiliocosm'. In English, this is also called the 'Billion-World Universe'.

In short, the trichiliocosm is comprised of Mt. Sumeru worlds to the third power of one thousand, that is, one billion such worlds. Numerical figures, however, are of little relevance; they simply connote the boundless universe in terms of numbers. Accordingly, the universe is comprised of an infinite number of Mt. Sumeru worlds. In the terminology of modern science, the 'Billion-World Universe' refers to the Galaxy.

In relation to this, the composition of the engraving is noteworthy. In the image, the boundless universe of the trichiliocosm is depicted in each of the large lotus petals. Like nested boxes, seven pairs of smaller petals are further engraved on each large petal. In each of the small upturned petals is the image of the world of Mt. Sumeru, a component of the trichiliocosm. This composition implies that the image represents the view of the 'Lotus Flower Bank World' (in Sanskrit, *Padma-garabha-lokadhata*), or the religious view of the world as indicated by the Flower Ornament Scripture (*Avatamsaka-sutra*, compiled in or around the second century AD) of Mahayana Buddhism. The 'Lotus Flower Bank World', or, more precisely, the 'Lotus Flower Bank World Sea', reflects the religious view of the universe depicted in the sutra: the view that there are immeasurable solar systems in one galaxy. In the sutra, the phrase 'world sea' is used instead of the simple word 'world', suggesting the presence of multiple worlds.

‘Worlds in Ten Regional Directions’

The people of India seemed to have a boundless source of imagination. When early Mahayana Buddhists compiled the sutras of Mahayana Buddhism, they conceived the ‘Worlds in Ten Regional Directions’, which are comprised of numerous ‘Billion-World Universes’. The ‘ten regional directions’ refers to the four directions (north, east, south and west) plus four interim directions (northeast, southeast southwest and northwest) plus ‘above’ and ‘below’. The concept of the ‘Worlds in Ten Directions’ implies that there are countless Galaxies. Modern astronomers are well aware of this fact of course, but it is indeed amazing that people in India developed this concept millennia ago. Among the many Buddhist sutras, the Flower Ornament Scripture uses the phrase ‘Worlds in Ten Regional Directions’ most frequently.

View of the World of Mt. Sumeru

Now, let us have a closer look at the Mt. Sumeru world that is engraved on the lotus pedestal. According to ancient Buddhist cosmology, Mt. Sumeru, also known as Mt. Meru, is a high mountain soaring in the centre of a cosmos. The mountain is as high as 80,000 *yojana* above sea level. Some suggest that one *yojana* is equivalent to seven kilometres, others thirteen kilometres. Whichever the case, the mountain is of an unbelievable height. On the mountaintop is the Trayastrimsa Heaven, with the thirty-three palaces of thirty-three deities, including Indra. Halfway up the mountain are the palaces of four celestial kings and their servants and armies. At the foot of the mountain live two dragon kings. Mt. Sumeru is surrounded by freshwater oceans and seven mountain ranges. Serving as barriers, these mountain ranges and oceans prevent any invader from approaching the holy mountain.

There is yet another ocean surrounding the seventh mountain range. In this outermost ocean, there are four continents situated on a concentric circle. Of those, Jambudvīpa, or the southern continent, is the only one inhabited by human beings. In the northern section of the continent there is a crystal lake named Anuta. From the lake, specifically from the mouths of four animals (elephant, ox, horse and lion) situated in the four directions of the lake, flow four large rivers, including the Indus and the Ganges. There, Buddha, flanked by two bodhisattvas, is preaching. Apparently, the shape of this southern continent was derived from that of the Indian Sub-continent. Unlike the inner oceans, the outermost ocean, called the Salt Sea, contains seawater. Around the perimeter of this ocean is the

Cakravala iron wall. Standing along the rim of the Mt. Sumeru world, the Cakravala wall stops the seawater from falling into the empty outer space.

Vasubandhu's view of the Mt. Sumeru world

A typical early Buddhist theorist, Vasubandhu (ca 400 AD–ca 480 AD, he is called Seshin in Japan) described his view of the Mt. Sumeru world in detail. His view, however, differs considerably from that depicted in the image on the pedestal of the Great Buddha in Nara. Although both portrayals agree that Mt. Sumeru is 80,000 *yojana* above sea level, Vasubandhu believed that the mountain was square in shape, as were the surrounding mountain ranges. The height of the mountains halved from the innermost to the second innermost, halving again from the second to the third and so forth. Likewise, the width of the oceans halved from the innermost to the second innermost, halving again from the second to the third and so forth. In this manner, Vasubandhu's view reflects his tendency to adhere to mathematical proportion and consistency.

The Hindu view of the world of Mt. Meru

Since Buddhism originated in India, I wish I could introduce the view of the world as thought of by the ancient inhabitants of India. Regrettably, however, there are no extant images depicting such a viewpoint. A more recent Hindu image of the world, however, does perhaps imply the world-view held by the ancient inhabitants of India. In India, Mt. Sumeru is called Mt. Meru. The summit of Mt. Meru is home to gods and goddesses, as in the Buddhist image of Mt. Sumeru. Whereas in the Buddhist view Indra is the main deity residing atop Mt. Sumeru, Hindus believe Brahma's palace is atop the mountain. Another distinct difference is the location of Jambudvīpa (the southern continent); the only continent inhabited by human beings. In the Buddhist view, the continent is located in the southern section of the outermost ocean, that is, beyond the sacred area around the holy mountain. In contrast, Hindus believe that the continent is at the centre of the world, and that Mt. Meru stands on that continent. Moreover, Hindus believe that circular, rather than square, mountain ranges and oceans surround the continent concentrically. Despite such differences, both Vasubandhu's view and the Hindu view are characterized by their attachment to mathematical proportion and order. If these views of the world are the outcome of an evolution of religious thought that adheres to

mathematical order, I believe that we should be able to trace them back to their origin. Before exploring the origin, or the proto-view of the Mt. Sumeru world, however, it must first be determined whether or not such a view truly originated in India. In actuality, we can recognize traces of the original view in what is now Iran, rather than in India.

An ancient Iranian view of the world of Mt. Harā

As is well known, the common ancestors of the Indo-Iranian people (they called themselves Aryans, which means noble ones) lived in Central Asia and southern Russia, leading a nomadic life. From the twentieth to the fifteenth century BC, groups of Aryans moved into India. Other groups subsequently moved to Iran. *Rig Veda*, the oldest Indian written work, comprised of hymns, and *Avesta*, the Zoroastrian scripture, both have certain elements in common in their oldest versions. The legend of Mt. Harā in *Avesta* corresponds to that of Mt. Meru in the Veda. According to Iranian legend, the world is divided into seven circular *karshvars* (continents). Of those, the largest one is in the centre; it is called Khvaniratha and is home to human beings. Surrounding this continent are six other continents, located on a concentric circle, each separated by water and deep forests. In the centre of Khvaniratha soars a high mountain named Harā, around which the sun and the moon circulate.

We often hear the explanation that the Buddhist concept of Mt. Sumeru was inspired by the Himalayas. The Aryans' homeland, however, is believed to be a vast flatland in Southern Russia. Accordingly, the high mountain must be a conceptual image. The Aryans possibly developed the concept of the mountain around which the sun, the moon and stars circulate in order to interpret the phenomenon of day and night.

The concept of the high mountain, first conceived by the ancient Aryans prior to their major migration, continued to develop. Subsequently, Iranians developed a new concept of paradise, or the world after death, associated with the holy mountain. The term 'paradise' originated in Persia. Zoroaster was born in Persia, now known as Iran, around 600 BC (the year is arguable). Associating faith in Mt. Harā with moral values, Zoroaster illustrated concepts of virtue and evil vertically on the axis of Mt. Harā and suggested the presence of paradise and hell. He also set forth a Day of Judgment, where individuals are judged according to their moral values and deeds. Subsequently, Zoroaster's thoughts were assimilated into Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and the concept of hell was introduced into India.

Ruin of the Mt. Sumeru world

Thus far I have discussed views of the world conceived by various religions. Despite differences in religions, it is possible to recognize various common aspects in their respective views of the world. These views of the world, however, were confronted with a significant challenge when Eratosthenês (ca 276 BC–ca 195 BC) argued that the earth is a sphere. This theory of the earth being a sphere, developed in the Hellenistic world, radically influenced the existing views of the world. The new theory was introduced into India via the Silk Road. In the latter half of the fifth century, a gifted Indian astronomer named Aryabhata I (AD 476) set forth a radical new theory. In AD 499, at the age of only twenty-three, this genius astronomer wrote a book entitled *Āryabhaṭīya*. This book deals with basic astronomical questions.

Aryabhata correctly calculated π , or the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter, as well as the number of days in the solar calendar. Moreover, he argued that the earth is a sphere with a diameter of 1,050 *yojana*, and that it is spinning on an axis. He also argued that a lunar eclipse is caused when the earth casts a shadow on the moon. This indicates that Aryabhata knew well that the earth revolves not only on its own axis but also around the sun.

Having such an advanced knowledge of astronomy, Aryabhata no longer needed Mt. Meru, or any high mountain, to explain the presence of day and night. However, he did not deny the presence of Mt. Meru. Even though he suggested that the mountain's height was one *yojana*, instead of the legendary 80,000 *yojana*, Aryabhata maintained the concept of the holy mountain as something that links this world with the divine world. Buddhists, firmly holding the systematic view of the world of Mt. Sumeru, however, did not give serious consideration to Aryabhata's theory.

Conclusion

Ancient people took holistic approaches to understanding the world. Their views of the world, reflecting their intellectual understanding, inspired them to create a wide variety of myths and countless deities, on whom the ancients projected their own emotions and intentions. Is such an approach of no relevance in the twenty-first century? Considering the magnitude of challenges imposed on the human race today, I cannot but believe how vitally important it is to establish new views of the world, corresponding to the present situation, and to create new myths for this century.

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Biography

Kosei Morimoto was born in 1934 and studied at Cairo University and the University of Kyoto, where he gained his doctorate in 1968. At the Todaiji Temple he has been Chief Librarian, School Director, Education Secretary, Chief Secretary, and Abbot to the Great Buddha Hall and Upper Precinct. His research has concentrated on the social and economic history of the first Islamic period and in particular the history of taxation in Egypt. He was awarded the Nihon Keizai Shimbun prize in 1975 for his works on economics.

His publications include 'Les finances publiques de l'État abbasside' [The Public Finances of the Abbasid State], *Der Islam*, Band 42, Berlin, 1965; 'Land tenure in Egypt during the Early Islamic period', *Orient*, Vol. 11, Tokyo, 1975; 'Muslim controversies regarding the Arab conquest of Egypt', *Orient*, Vol. 13, Tokyo, 1977; *The Fiscal Administration of Egypt in the Early Islamic Period*, Kyoto, Asian Historical Monographs 1, Dohosha 1981; 'The Diwans as registers of the Arab stipendiaries in Early Islamic Egypt', *Res Orientales*, Vol. 6, Paris, 1994; 'What Ibn Khaldun saw: the judiciary of Mamluk Egypt', *Mamluk Studies Review* VI, University of Chicago, Chicago, 2002; and 'The destruction of the Bamiyan Buddhas and 11 September: a historical perspective', *Gaiko Forum* 2002.

Modalities of intercultural dialogue

Fred Dallmayr

My intent today is to discuss the idea of cross-cultural or intercultural dialogue, and to do so by pointing out different types or modalities of dialogical interactions. To be sure, not all relations between societies and cultures are dialogical or communicative. At a minimum, dialogue implies some kind of mutuality or mutual exchange of views. Probably one can arrange intercultural relations along a broad spectrum ranging from complete monologue to genuine dialogue, from radical unilateralism to fully-fledged multilateralism (and perhaps cosmopolitanism). I discussed this spectrum in my 1996 book, *Beyond Orientalism: Essays on Cross-Cultural Encounter*, paying particular attention to the monological side of this scale (pp. 1–37). On the monological or unilateral side, one can find such prominent examples of non-mutuality as military conquest, forced conversion, and ideological indoctrination. I used the Spanish conquest of the Americas as the model case exemplifying the convergence of conquest, conversion, and indoctrination; but the model continued to reverberate in later episodes of Western imperialism and colonialism. In the same study, I also referred to more limited types of unilateralism, such as cultural borrowing, partial assimilation, and the like. The entire overview of the spectrum led up to the high point of genuine mutuality: intercultural dialogue. In that category I took my bearings from Tzvetan Todorov who spoke of a relationship ‘in which no one has the last word’ and where ‘no voice is reduced to the status of a simple object’ or mere victim (1984, pp. 247–51).

Today I want to concentrate my attention on the communicative side of interactions. On this side of the spectrum I shall distinguish between three, or maybe three-and-a-half, different possibilities. I shall take my bearings initially from an essay by Jürgen Habermas titled ‘On the Pragmatic, the Ethical, and the Moral Employments of Practical Reason’, which serves as the opening chapter in his book *Justification and Application* (1995). In this essay, Habermas differentiates between three distinct uses or employments of ‘practical reason’, that is, a reason geared towards practical interaction: the pragmatic, the ethical, and the moral uses. The first type derives from

utilitarianism and finds expression in the confrontation between, and possible accumulation of, individual interests. The second ('ethical') type draws its inspiration from Aristotelian ethics as filtered through Hegel's dialectical philosophy. It was Hegel, Habermas notes, who 'tried to achieve a synthesis of the classical communal and modern individualistic conceptions of freedom with his theory of objective spirit and his 'sublation' (*Aufhebung*) of morality into ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*)'. Those thinkers who emphasize the 'ethical' use appropriate 'the Hegelian legacy in the form of an Aristotelian ethics of the good', while abandoning 'the universalism of rational natural law'. The third ('moral') type, finally, operates 'in a Kantian spirit' and accentuates 'the unavoidable presuppositions' of argumentation and the 'impartiality' required of anyone judging from 'a moral point of view'. For Habermas, adopting a rationalist stance, the third type is 'grounded in the communicative structure of rational discourse as such'. His own moral theory, called 'discourse ethics', in his view 'forces itself intuitively on anyone who is at all open to this reflective form of communicative action'. In this manner, discourse ethics 'situates itself squarely in the Kantian tradition' (see also Banhabib and Dallmayr, 1990).

In the following, I want to dwell a bit longer on the distinctive features of Habermas's three categories of practical reason; subsequently I shall indicate how and for that reasons I diverge from the Habermasian scheme in favour of my own version of the different modalities of intercultural dialogue. For Habermas, the pragmatic use of practical reason revolves around a utility calculus where each party, in communicative negotiation with other parties, seeks to maximize gains and minimize costs. The 'rational thing' to do in this situation, he writes, 'is determined in part by what one wants: it is a matter of making a rational choice of means in the light of fixed purposes or of the rational assessment of goals in the light of existing preferences' (1995, pp. 2–3). Given the emphasis on the means–ends nexus, practical reason here proceeds within the confines of 'purposive' or 'instrumental' rationality, guided by the aim to discover 'appropriate techniques, strategies, or programs'. A dominant form of this pragmatic outlook is the 'theory of rational choice' which today is migrating (or has migrated) from economics to other social sciences. In terms of normative criteria, the outlook permits at best 'conditional imperatives' or a 'relative ought' where the 'ought' is entirely dependent on chosen preferences.

As indicated before, the 'ethical' use of practical reason in Habermas's essay can be traced back to Aristotelian virtue ethics, complemented by, or filtered through, Hegelian *Sittlichkeit*. Practical reason here is said to be governed by 'strong preferences' guiding one's life in concrete social and

historical circumstances and in the context of ‘a particular self-understanding’. Normative standards here are not merely anchored in utilitarian preferences, and yet are situational and hence ‘not absolute’. Habermas states ‘What you “should” or “must” do has here the sense that it is “good” for you to act in this way in the long run, all things considered. Aristotle speaks in this connection of paths to the good and happy life’ (p. 4). To be sure, more is involved here – he concedes – than just individual preferences and the ‘good’ of an individual life. Remembering Aristotle’s concern with the *polis* and Hegel’s reflections on the ‘state’, the text extends the meaning of ethics to public or community life: ‘To that extent the life that is good for me also concerns the forms of life that are common to us. Thus, Aristotle viewed the *ethos* of the individual as embedded in the *polis* comprising the citizen body’ (p. 6).

Finally, the ‘moral’ use of practical reason has its roots in Kantian philosophy, as this philosophy has been continued by neo-Kantians, John Rawls and Habermas himself. As the latter writes: ‘As soon as my actions affect the interests of others and lead to conflicts which should be regulated in an impartial manner’, we employ practical reason ‘from a moral point of view’ (p. 5). The emphasis here is on universal and impartial rules – what Kant called ‘categorical imperatives’ – by which actions are judged to be rational or irrational, just or unjust not merely contextually but in and of themselves. At this point, practical reason is oriented not towards a situated but towards a ‘universally valid from of life’; towards an absolute rule structure whose maxims are just insofar as they can be endorsed by all. Paraphrasing Kant, Habermas states: ‘*Everyone* must be able to will that the maxims of our actions should become a universal law’. By contrast to the pragmatic use, the governing standard here is not a ‘relative ought’ but a ‘categorical or unconditional’ principle claiming universal validity (p. 7).

In what follows I shall partially appropriate, but also significantly modify, Habermas’ tripartite scheme for my own purposes: namely, the task of exploring different modalities of intercultural dialogue. My main departure from Habermas has to do with his portrayal of the ‘ethical’ use of reason. As it seems to me, his portrayal involves a radical misconstrual of both Aristotle and Hegel, a misconstrual which operates on two levels. For one thing, ethics in the Aristotelian and Hegelian sense is reduced to a purely descriptive-empirical fabric of prevailing customs or situated practices (against which absolute standards are then silhouetted). When this is done, one loses sight completely of the inherent ‘ought’ quality of Aristotle’s notion of virtue and of the

Hegelian striving for *Sittlichkeit*. (Differently stated: the Kantian ‘is–ought’, or ‘fact–value’, dichotomy is simply foisted on an entirely different, substantive mode of ethics.) The second problem has to do with a misreading deriving from Cartesian blinders. In both Aristotle and Hegel, Habermas writes, ‘ethical questions by no means call for a complete break with the egocentric perspective; in each instance they take their orientation from the *telos* of one’s own life’ and hence focus on ‘my identity, my life, and my interests’ (p. 6). To impute a modern-style egocentrism on a classical Greek thinker seems more than far-fetched (and Hegel’s struggle with Cartesianism is well known). Moreover, the imputation collides with the acknowledgment (mentioned above) of the concern with virtuous community life.

Adapting, but also modifying the Habermasian scheme, I shall distinguish between three, or perhaps three-and-a-half, main types of intercultural dialogue. I list first the different modalities and then comment briefly on each of them. The three basic modalities are these: (1) pragmatic–strategic communication; (2) moral–universal discourse; and (3) ethical–hermeneutical dialogue. To these one can add a fourth type – but I prefer to treat it as a sub-category under (3): agonial dialogue or contestation.

In pragmatic–strategic communication, each partner seeks to advance his or her own interests in negotiation with the interests of other parties (here I follow completely Habermas’s account). To the extent one can describe such communication as ‘dialogue’, the latter takes the form mainly of mutual bargaining, sometimes involving manipulation and even deception. This kind of communicative exchange is well known in international or inter-societal relations and constitutes the central focus of the so-called ‘realist’ and ‘neo-realist’ schools of international politics. Prominent examples of such communication would be trade or commercial negotiations; negotiations about global warming and ecological standards; disarmament negotiations; settlements of border dispute; peace negotiations, and the like. Much of traditional diplomacy is in fact carried out in this vein.

In moral–universal discourse, partners seek consensus on basic rules or norms of behaviour binding on all partners, potentially on a global level. Here the legacies of modern natural law and of Kantian moral philosophy retain their importance. Basic rules of (potentially) universal significance are the rules of modern international law; the international norms regarding warfare, war crimes and crimes against humanity; the Geneva Conventions; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; and others. One does not need to be a Kantian in a strict sense to recognize the importance and even ‘categorically’ binding

character of these norms (which have been accepted by the great majority of governments and endorsed by the vast majority of humankind). Surely, ours is not the time to disparage or tamper with the mandatory quality of international norms. Thus, the rules of the Geneva Conventions are mandatory, no matter what nomenclature individual governments choose to adopt. Likewise, launching an unprovoked war is a crime against humanity, whether particular leaders choose to acknowledge this fact or not. So is the wanton killing of civilian populations. Here the collective conscience of humanity has reached a certain level below which we do not dare do regress.

In ethical–hermeneutical dialogue, partners seek to understand and appreciate each other’s life stories and cultural backgrounds, including cultural and religious (or spiritual) traditions, storehouses of literary and artistic expressions, and existential agonies and aspirations. It is in this mode that cross-cultural learning most importantly takes place. It is also on this level that one encounters the salience of Aristotle’s teaching about virtues and of the Hegelian practice of *Sittlichkeit*. Ethics here is oriented towards the ‘good life’ – not in the sense of an abstract ‘ought’ but as the pursuit of an aspiration implicit in all life-forms, though able to take very different expressions in different cultures. Since ethics on this level speaks to deeper human motivations, this is really the dimension which is most likely to mould human conduct in the direction of mutual ethical recognition and peace. Hence, there is an urgent need in our time to emphasize and cultivate this kind of ethical pedagogy.¹ On a limited scale, cross-cultural dialogue already is practiced today: examples would be inter-faith dialogues, the Parliament of the World’s Religions, the World Public Forum, the World Social Forum, various centres for the ‘dialogue among civilizations’, exchange programs of scholars and students, and the like.

To the three main modalities mentioned so far one may wish to add as a fourth category that of agonal dialogue or contestation. I prefer to treat it as a sub-category of ethical dialogue, and I shall indicate my reason for doing so. In the agonal situation, partners seek not only to understand and appreciate each other’s life forms, but also to convey to each other experiences of exploitation and persecution, that is, grievances having to do with past or

1. Much of my own recent work is focused on this domain. Compare, for example, ‘Dialogue among civilizations: a hermeneutical perspective’ (Dallmayr, 2002, pp. 17–30), ‘Conversations across boundaries’ (ibid, pp. 31–47), ‘Gandhi and Islam: a heart-and-mind unity’ (2004a pp. 132–51) and ‘Confucianism and the public sphere’ (ibid, pp. 152–71). Compare also ‘The voice of poetry in the conversation of mankind’ (Oakeshott, 1962, pp. 197–245).

persisting injustices and sufferings. In addition to better understanding, agonal dialogue adds the dimension of possible retribution and rectification of grievances. Yet, retribution does not necessarily involve the desire to ‘get even’, to take revenge, and possibly to return injustice for injustice by turning the previous victimizers into victims. When the latter happens, the element of understanding – constitutive of genuine dialogue – is crushed in favour of sheer antagonism and possibly violent conflict. At that point, we re-enter the domain of the ‘clash’ of cultures and societies which is at the margins or outside the confines of intercultural dialogue.

This is why I prefer to list the agonal case as a sub-category within ethical–hermeneutical dialogue. Placed in this context, confrontation and contestation are not ends in themselves but are put in the service of ethical reconciliation and healing. There are prominent examples of such an agonal hermeneutics in our time. I am referring to the great commissions of inquiry established in various parts of the world at the end of ethnic conflicts and/or dictatorships: the so-called ‘Truth and Justice’ or ‘Truth and Reconciliation’ commissions. The point of these commissions is both to establish a record of past criminal actions and injustices and to promote a process of social healing that will prevent the recurrence of victimization. In light of the horrendous forms of oppression and injustice prevailing in the world today, one can only hope that humankind some day will have the wisdom and courage to establish a global Truth and Reconciliation Commission charged both with exposing and rectifying existing abuses and with laying the groundwork for a more just and liveable global future.²

A few additional words on the modalities discussed above. Not all of them are examples of ‘intercultural dialogue’ in a strong sense. Pragmatic communication involves basically an exchange and negotiation of selfish interests – which often are predominantly material and economic in character. If the latter is the case, cultural concerns recede into the background, making room for a considerable sameness of demands. Yet, sometimes interests are advanced in terms of cultural traditions – which justifies the inclusion of the pragmatic mode in the chosen typology. In moral discourse, participants are expected to put aside as much as possible their cultural and historical particularities in order to reach a general consensus on valid norms from a standpoint of impartiality. To this extent, moral discourse is more supra-cultural and universal in character than ‘intercultural’ and ‘transversal’. Still,

2. Regarding truth commissions compare Tutu and Abrams, 2004; Amstutz, 2005; and Phelps, 2004.

cultural particularity can rarely if ever be fully expunged. The most full-bodied intercultural modality is ethical-hermeneutical dialogue. Here particular cultural experiences can enter in a genuine way – while still preserving the openness to the ‘other’ required for dialogue. Hence, universal and particular dimensions here intermingle or are held in balance – which justifies the designation of such dialogue as properly ‘transversal’.

As it seems to me, UNESCO is uniquely destined to cultivate primarily the modality of ethical dialogue in our world. From the time of its establishment, UNESCO has been attentive to the diversity of cultures while simultaneously fostering the prospect of a certain dialogical harmony and peaceful mutuality in the midst of diversity. Today more than ever, the work of UNESCO is needed to insure a peaceful global future. Through conferences and symposia like the present one, as well as its other educational initiatives, UNESCO contributes to better intercultural understanding and appreciation. At the same time, by putting a search light on possible threats to intercultural dialogue – dangers arising from oppression, exploitation and other forms of injustice – UNESCO can pave the way to a redress of grievances and to a possible global healing through truth and reconciliation.

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Biography

Fred Dallmayr is Packey J. Dee Professor in the departments of philosophy and political science at Notre Dame University, Indiana, where he has been teaching since 1978. He holds a law doctorate from the University of Munich and a PhD from Duke University, North Carolina. He has been a visiting professor at the University of Hamburg; at the New School for Social Research, New York; and at Nuffield College, Oxford. In 1991–1992 he spent a year in India on a Fulbright research fellowship.

His publications include *The Other Heidegger*, New York, Cornell University Press, 1993; *Beyond Orientalism: Essays on Cross-Cultural Encounter*, State University of New York Press, 1996 (Japanese translation, Tokyo, Shinhyoron, 2001); *Alternative Visions: Paths in the Global Village*, Boulder, Colorado, Rowman & Littlefield, 1998; (Farsi translation 2005); *Achieving our World: Toward a Global and Plural Democracy*, Boulder, Colorado, Rowman & Littlefield, 2001; *Dialogue Among Civilizations: Some Exemplary Voices*, New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2002; *Peace Talks – Who Will Listen?*, Indiana, University of Notre Dame Press, 2004; and *Small Wonder: Global Power and Its Discontents* Lexington Books, 2005.

Towards a civilization based on beauty, from civilizations based on truth and goodness

Heita Kawakatsu

Truth, goodness and beauty as transversal values

We could list three transversal values: truth, goodness, and beauty. This is not an arbitrary choice, but reflects that delineated by German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, in his three *Critiques*, which have had such a great influence on European philosophy: *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), and *Critique of Judgment* (1790). In writing these books in this order, Kant dealt with ‘truth’, ‘goodness’, and ‘beauty’ respectively.

The increasing acquisition of these values has contributed to enhancing humanity and enriching its intellectual heritage.

The changing relative importance of these three values in the West

It is argued that none of these three should be valued any more highly than the other two. However, today’s modern civilization, which emerged in the West and has spread across the world in the past 400 years, has witnessed a changing pattern of relative importance among them.

During the Enlightenment of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when the ‘Scientific Revolution’ took place and philosophy was influenced by the discoveries of natural science to eliminate irrational superstitious thinking, the value of ‘truth’ had supreme importance. Pursuing scientific ‘truth’ undoubtedly became the basis of Western civilization. Then in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, through the application of scientific knowledge to industrial and military technology, the Industrial Revolution produced immense wealth that was unequally distributed among peoples, and the value of ‘goodness’ became of utmost importance. Marxism’s criticism of capitalist exploitation was based not so much on the value of ‘truth’, but of ‘goodness’. In the past century, too, the development of nuclear physics also made it

possible to use atomic bombs at Hiroshima and Nagasaki – another example that pursuing scientific truth is not enough for human well-being.

There was an aspect of competition in the Cold War between two types of ‘good’: the Western camp believed goodness equated to ‘freedom’, while the Eastern camp understood goodness as ‘equality’. But both camps were commonly engaged in the mass accumulation of economic wealth and military apparatus. In so doing, both revealed an unmistakable character of the modern civilization as a ‘civilization of power’, created on a combination of the values of ‘truth’ and ‘goodness’. At the same time, both also revealed the limitations of development, creating industrial waste on a gigantic scale that the global environment could not sustain.

In retrospect, the Earth Summit – the United Nations’ Conference on Environment and Development, held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 – was a watershed for modern civilization, as it left the power-oriented stage to move towards something new and higher for humanity. The summit, the largest gathering of world leaders in history, with 117 heads of state and representatives of 178 countries, showed a grave concern for the importance of biodiversity, that is to say, the concept that all living creatures on earth matter, whether they are useful or not for economic development. In this it went even further than the landmark 1972 report of the Club of Rome, *Limits of Growth*, whose concern was mainly with the limit of natural resources required for economic growth.¹

So what is the main value that can assure environmental protection and biodiversity on earth? When we claim that the environment should be preserved in a clean state, that nature should not be spoiled, we base our argument on the value of beauty.

What is beauty? The answer will vary greatly from one person to the next, for an aesthetic sense is very much subjective and individual. It is important to note, however, that every human being is endowed with a sense of beauty by nature, so that the value of beauty can be universal.

Where does this value apply? Now, the earth matters, or the global environment matters. When we ask whether the earth is ‘true’ or not, it does not make sense. Neither does the question of whether the earth is good or not. But, the question of whether the earth is beautiful or not, makes sense, and we can answer clearly with confidence that ‘Yes, our planet is beautiful, indeed’.

1. Meadows, D. H., Meadows, D. L., Randers, J., and Behrens, W. W., 1972, *The Limits to Growth*. New York, Universe Books.

The civilization of power has flourished only at the cost of the global environment. A new civilization must emerge, a global civilization based on the value of beauty, which applies to the earth. Certainly, a sense of beauty is culturally diversified, but it is possible to have unity in diversification, as does the earth, to create a 'civilization of beauty'.

A Japanese case: an opposite pattern to the West

For comparison, let us consider the experience of Japan. An overview of the last four hundred years of Japanese history shows also an unmistakable pattern of change in the relative importance of these three values; truth, goodness and beauty.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Japan became integrated into the world. Following the example of the West, Japan aimed at a civilization of power by pursuing scientific truth and applying it to economic and military technology. From the Meiji Restoration, to be strong was 'good' for the country. Before then, however, in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, when Japan had been in seclusion, the case was different, and the dominant value was beauty.

Seclusion meant that there had been no frontier to develop outside the country; natural resources were taken only from within Japan. These resources were not wasted, they were reused and recycled to sustain the economy. Nature was under the utmost care of the people, well kept and under control. Japan's view of nature was no longer one of wilderness, but of gardens.

Turning a wild nature to a garden-like landscape had yielded economic fruit, for Japan's productivity per acre became the highest in the world. In the terminology of economics, the effort towards higher productivity per acre is now called an 'industrious' revolution. Industrious revolution was a capital-saving and labour-intensive type of production revolution. This pattern can be contrast with that of the industrial revolution of the West, which was a capital-intensive and labour-saving type of production revolution. However, both revolutions took place at almost the same time in the eighteenth century. As a result of its industrious revolution, Japan's per acre productivity became the highest in the world, while through its industrial revolution Britain enjoyed the world's highest productivity per head. The Japanese people have been industrious ever since.

As nature became carefully reserved and controlled, the common perception of nature that gradually prevailed among Japanese became understood as 'beauty'. The value of beauty was closely associated with the

keen interest the Japanese had in keeping human life neat and clean. This growing sense of cleanliness was attributed to Zen Buddhism, which became increasingly popular among samurai.

As Zen Buddhism tended to disregard the Buddha image, the surroundings of the monks' lives, inside and outside the temple, instead became more carefully attended to. The garden was one focus, and making a garden became a serious art. Zen was also associated with the tea ceremony. This was also very popular among samurai, for the ceremony brought them spiritual peace. Flower arrangements were indispensable to the tea ceremony, which in turn helped to develop gardening.

When the Japanese nation was united at the beginning of the seventeenth century by the Tokugawa shogunate, and peace returned after the long turbulent age of civil wars, aesthetic elements such as gardens, the tea ceremony, flower arrangements, the minimalist *sukiya-zukuri* architectural style, and so on came into a full bloom. In this way the value of beauty permeated through the Japanese people.

Neo-Confucianism was adopted by the Tokugawa government as the official school of thought. All the samurai were encouraged to study, and soon there were no illiterate men or women at all among the samurai class. This contributed to establishing a moral code known as *Bushido*. Neo Confucianism placed much emphasis on '理' (reason or truth), which in turn opened the way for a new school of thought known as Dutch learning in the eighteenth century. This was associated with the search for truth. Dutch learning began with medical science, and astronomy was popular. Whereas values in Europe, in terms of relative importance, moved from truth, through goodness to beauty over the past 400 years, those in Japan seem to have shifted in the opposite direction, from beauty, through goodness to truth.

But what was Japanese society like when it depended on the value 'beauty'? First of all, there was virtually no war during the Edo period. After adopting Western values in the late nineteenth century, however, Japan became militarily and economically powerful, waging a sequence of wars against foreign countries. In this context, we have to remember that Japan had produced and used more guns than any other nation in the sixteenth century, but had since abandoned the gun and enjoyed the 270 years' lasting peace of 'Pax Tokugawana'.

Valuing beauty might have something to do with realizing peace for a society. Violence is ugly. The opposite of violence is beauty. We must bear in mind the possible contribution of the value of beauty to the goal of peace.

For the future

Having said the above, I do not mean that there is neither absolute truth nor absolute goodness. The almighty God by definition represents absolute truth and goodness. What I mean by ‘truth’ is the search for truth of the modern age, which is very much a value of the physical sciences. ‘Goodness’, however, is a key value for the social sciences.

Now, we know that scientific truth is not absolute. Thomas S. Kuhn in his *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* demolished the prevailing view of science as the acquisition of an objective knowledge of the truth, arguing that science was heavily influenced by non-rational factors. A new theory arose in the twentieth century that a spectator’s actions could influence the physical universe. Similarly in the social sciences, from Adam Smith to the Chicago School, there have been economists who believed in freedom as the key to human well-being, while Marx, Lenin, Mao Zedong and others believed instead that equality is of greater importance.

These suggest that ‘truth’, and even more so, ‘goodness’, are to a great extent dependent on human subjectivity. And ‘beauty’ is subjective indeed! We cannot be free from subjectivity in reflecting on these human values, particularly in the case of beauty. This deepening in terms of subjectivity when moving from ‘truth’ to ‘goodness’ to ‘beauty’ reflects the growing awareness of the fact that all beings on the earth are culturally and biologically diversified.

To conclude

If human society is to embrace beauty as the core value for a new civilization, what can we envisage for the future of international communities?

To answer this, let us again consider the historical predecessor of Japan during the Edo period (1603–1867), when the main social value can be characterized as ‘beauty’.

Quite a few Westerners visited Japan in this period – Kamphel and Seabold are two examples – and have left us their observations. They were all impressed by Japanese gardens. Many more Westerners visited Japan after it had opened its ports to the world; Sir Rutherford Alcock, the first British Ambassador to Japan (appointed in 1905), said that the Japanese landscape was comparable to an English garden, which he boasted were the best in the world. Heinrich Schliemann, an archaeologist famous for having excavated Troy and Mycenae, came to Japan in the 1860s and declared that every Japanese house

had a beautiful garden. A British botanist of the time observed that ‘if love of flowers is taken as a yardstick to measure the level of cultural advancement, Japanese people are higher than the British’.

As you see, the physical appearance of Japan was understood to exemplify beauty. Ukiyo-e woodblock printing, which depicts the everyday life of common folk, fascinated French artists such as the Impressionists, Monet and Renoir. As Japan is an island country, it appeared to many as a series of ‘garden islands’. Taking these ideas as an example, we can envisage a future outlook for the earth.

As two-thirds of the earth’s surface is covered with oceans, from space the earth appears blue. Many islands of various sizes constitute the blue planet; even a great continent is just a big island on earth’s surface. Ideally, our planet should appear as a series of garden islands, on which diversified cultures are integrated and networked into the single unit of the earth. Beauty is a transversal value, but there is not one single, universal beauty: beauty is based on cultural diversity, and on the biological diversification that is the truth of the earth, and is good for the earth. Making the earth into garden islands will be a transversal objective of humankind.

Biography

Heita Kawakatsu was born in Kyoto in 1948 and graduated in 1972 from Waseda University, Tokyo, gaining an MA in 1975 (Tokyo) and a D.Phil. at Oxford in 1985. He was an associate professor at Waseda from 1990 to 1998, and since 1998 has been Research Professor at the International Research Center for Japanese Studies.

Professor Kawakatsu’s publications include *Nihon bunmei to kindai seiyô* [Japanese Civilization and the Modern West], Japan Broadcast Publishing 1991; *Japanese Industrialization and the Asian Economy* (co-edited with A. J. H. Latham), New York, Routledge, 1994; *The Evolving Structure of the East Asian Economic System since 1700*, (co-edited with D.A. Farnie), Bocconi, 1994; *Fukoku yûtoku ron* [A Treatise on Wealth and Virtue], Japan, Kinokuniya Company, 1995, for which he won the Asia-Pacific Special Award in 1996; *Bunkei no kaiyô shi kan* [A Maritime View of History of Civilizations], Japan, Chûô Kôron Shinsha, 1997, which won the Yomiuri Shimbun Award in 1998; ‘The Lancashire cotton industry and its rivals’, in Bruland and O’Brian, *From Family Firms to Corporate Capitalism*, Oxford University Press, 1998; *Bunkei no umi e* [A Treatise on the Maritime Civilization], Japan, Diamond, 1999; *Asia Pacific Dynamism 1550–2000* (co-edited with A. J. H. Latham), New York, Routledge, 2000; *Kaiyô renpô ron* [A Treatise on Maritime Federation], Japan, PHP Interface, 2001; and ‘*Bi no bunmei*’ o tsukuru: *Chikara no bunmei o koete* [Towards a Civilization that Values Beauty: Beyond Civilization Based on Power], Japan, Chikuma Shobô Publishing, 2002.

He has also contributed to many articles, including ‘Japanese civilization: historical periodization, a fresh look at Japan’s economic history’ in *Japan Spotlight*, Japan Economic Foundation, 2004.

3rd Session:

Cultural Diversity and a Plurality of Values

Moderated by Françoise Rivière, Assistant Director-General,
Executive Office of the Director-General, UNESCO

A new view of the present civilization from the universal viewpoint

Takafumi Matsui

What are science and technology?

What do we refer to when we say ‘the modern age’? The answer to this question will vary depending on the timescale concerned. However, the age of scientific and technological civilization would probably be the general answer. Another word, ‘advanced’, might be inserted as a preface. This relates closely to the topic of my paper.

First, I would like to explain how I perceive today’s science, technology and civilization. What is science? And what is it that we understand about it? Can it be truly defined as a global standard?

Science refers to a doctrine of duality and an element of reductionism. In simple terms, it could be said that this doctrine of duality is derived from considering the human being and nature separately. Science’s reductionism considers objects in ever-finer detail, so that the problem that needs to be considered is defined more clearly.

From the doctrine of dualism, for example, one can consider an object without questioning the self who is considering it. Furthermore, science’s element of reductionism makes us seek questions that need to be considered in the form of problem-solving. As a consequence, our understanding of what nature is developed a great deal in the twentieth century.

The most important factor of this understanding is probably our realization that the universe had a beginning. The American astronomer Hubble discovered in 1926 that the universe has been expanding and that space itself is not static, with neither a beginning nor an end. It had a beginning. In other words, it was determined that time moves in one direction. This finding provided an important pointer regarding what nature is, which is the objective of natural science.

To have a beginning means that nature is a product of the universe’s evolution. Consequently, nature amounts to something like an ancient

document in which the history of the universe has been recorded. To understand what nature is requires us to decipher messages recorded in nature; that is, to comprehend its history. The principle that governs the cause-and-effect relationship of phenomena seen in nature is summarized in physics and chemistry. In the case of living beings, the earth, and the universe, impressions of their history are available in, for example, DNA, or earth's geological layers, or in remnants of the Big Bang found in background radiation in the universe.

Our wisdom, and nothing else, is responsible for the study of the history of the universe. As our understanding of it deepens, it can be used in our way of life. But even if the phenomena seen in nature or the principles governing these phenomena are understood, applying this knowledge is not possible given the huge difference in the scales, in time and space, of nature and our society. What makes it available is technology. With the development of technology, the ability to comprehend nature also develops, and information regarding nature that could not be read before becomes legible. This positive feedback results in the further development of technology. Science and technology are the two wheels of the vehicle for the development of civilization today.

Science and technology have reached a crossroad, and it is difficult to say if they will continue to progress after entering the twenty-first century. In the case of science, the limitations of the doctrine of duality are clear, and as regards the element of reductionism, there is an adverse effect in that the problematic is presented in too much detail and the image as a whole becomes invisible. The new understanding of nature as a complex system is deepening, and the limitations of attempting to understand it as a simple system are clear.

Further, the development of technology has progressed to the extent that it may affect other subsystems of the earth system. In order to argue this problem more deeply, it is necessary to reconsider what civilization is.

What is civilization?

At the beginning of this paper, I posed the question, what do we refer to when we say 'the modern age'? Thinking about what civilization is relates to this question. In the twentieth century, humans began to explore the moon's surface by overcoming earth's gravity and marching into space. As a result, we acquired a new viewpoint, that of the universe. The view from the universe is a bird's-eye view, a view that relativizes, a view that pursues universality. I will consider what we refer to when we say 'the modern age' from this viewpoint.

But the universe is too big. Therefore, let us look at the earth from the distance of, let us say, the moon, from which earth looks like a single celestial body. We do not see the atmosphere, the oceans, the continents and the biosphere (a subsystem composed of all living things on earth, including the soil) individually. We see the earth, which is constituted from these subsystems and other components, as one system. The signs of our existence can be seen even in the hemisphere that is in daylight, but they are much more prominent in the hemisphere that is in night, in the form of bright shining strips of light bordering the continents. The fact that our existence can be seen from the universe characterizes what is known as the modern age. The modern age means that our existence is not just perceptible in visible light alone, it can also be observed from other stars as electromagnetic (radio) waves.

The modern age is the era of advanced scientific and technological civilization. This is 'civilization seen from the universe'. As mentioned earlier, the view from the universe is a bird's eye view, in which earth is considered relatively and in a universal way. Therefore, this civilization is interpreted from such a point of view. I mentioned that when looked down upon from the universe, the earth looks like a system. What will it look like when we analyse human existence in the form of a bright shining ocean of light, as an earth subsystem? We in the earth system live by creating a constituent subsystem called the human sphere (or 'homo-sphere'). Our existence is similar to the existence of earth's other constituent subsystems: its atmosphere, its oceans, its continents, its biosphere, and so on.

What is the human sphere?

Let me explain the difference between the biosphere and the human sphere, or homo-sphere, in a little more detail. Though it is obvious, we are one kind of living being. One could think that we too belong to the biosphere. In fact, such an era did exist. This was when our way of life was based on hunting and gathering. The way of life based on hunting and gathering was not exclusive to us alone, as other animals too followed such a lifestyle.

In terms of an earth system, hunting and gathering was a lifestyle that was dependent on the biosphere's flows of energy and material. In moving to agriculture and cattle breeding, we moved to a way of life that was not restricted to the domain of the biosphere. From the viewpoint of the earth system, using earth's materials and energy flows amounted to living by creating a separate constituent subsystem, the human sphere.

However, this is not quite a new event. The addition of a new subsystem (that is, the differentiation of the earth) has occurred several times in earth's history, resulting in changes to its flow of materials and energy, that is, in the 'contamination' of earth. For example, the appearance of the biosphere caused an increase in the oxygen content of the atmosphere, that is, the contamination of the earth's environment by molecular oxygen. Differentiation of the continental crust (granite) from the oceanic crust (basalt) resulted in the contamination of the oceans with eroded continental materials, which caused changes in the pH (hydrogen-ion content) of the oceans.

The fact that a new constituent subsystem called the human sphere was born means the earth system changed. Therefore, the flow of its energy and material also changed. This is what we recognize as a global environmental problem, or an energy problem, or a population problem or a food problem, and so on.

This human sphere came into existence about 10,000 years ago, and this sphere too has undergone various stages of development. Today's human sphere is characterized by the presence of a driving force within it. Earlier – to be more precise, prior to the industrial revolution – the human sphere used the earth system's flow of materials, driven by its internal energy and exterior solar energy. I call today's human sphere a 'stock-dependent' human sphere, and the human sphere prior to the industrial revolution a 'flow-dependent' human sphere.

In the stock-dependent human sphere, we have acquired a driving force in the form of fossil energy, which includes oil, coal, natural gas and so forth. We have driven the flow of the earth system's materials, giving free rein to our desire to realize the expansion and richness of the human sphere.

To put it differently, it amounts to hastening time. For example, let us think about the time scale of the flow of materials on earth. I will use the example of the transportation of iron ore, which Japan imports from Australia. Let us compare this with the drift of the Australian continent. Australia is moving through the forces of plate tectonics, and in time (several tens of millions of years), it will move up to and collide with the Japanese archipelago. This is the earth system's transportation of iron ore. When we compare the time scale of the flow of earth's materials and the time scale of what we are doing, we are probably hastening the flow of materials a hundred-thousand-fold. Considered in terms of the material flow of iron, this is equivalent to shifting the Australian continent to Japan.

This is why environmental problems are very evident. The history of the earth is a series of environmental changes. So what is the magnitude of the

environmental changes on earth? In a period of ten years we have seen a change in the earth's surface temperature that would have taken a million years. In this respect, the change itself is not the problem. We are causing a change, which is our positive legacy, but the problem is that we are hastening time.

Considered in this way, one year, one rotation of the earth around the sun, when converted to earth time – that is, to the earth system – is equivalent to about a hundred thousand years. Similar results are obtained when the population increase of the twentieth century and the time required for the formation of the earth are compared. It can be said that we are trying to gain richness by shortening our lifespan.

Under normal circumstances, changes to the earth's environment take place only with the slow passing of earth time. However, we are able to observe it because we have shortened time. The problem of hastening time is also seen in biotechnology. For example, the principle behind genetic manipulation is basically the same as that of biological evolution, in terms of gene-level change. The essence of the problem lies in the difference in the time-spans of genetic manipulation and of evolution.

Why did we create the human sphere?

In what direction, then, will our present civilization move? To answer this we must consider why we created the human sphere? In the history of humanity, which stretches over a period of more than 7 million years, why did only contemporary people (that is, *Homo sapiens*) create the human sphere? I think there are probably two reasons.

The first relates to our increased longevity, and the second to our language ability. The most important factor in the survival strategy of living beings is to leave behind descendants. Among most animals, the female dies a few years after passing reproductive age. But contemporary people are an exception. Our increased longevity led to an ever-increasing population, and to the phenomenon of the exodus of contemporary people from Africa, spreading all over the world. As our language ability grew, it promoted our capacity to communicate – and it is believed that it probably brought about the networking of neurons of the cerebral cortex as a change inside the brain.

Our increasing population is at the root of our concept of continually increasing, and the networking of neurons of the cerebral cortex results in our intelligent activity that constructs an inner model in which the outside world is projected inside the brain. Consequently, these are the important characteristics

that will govern the future of the today's civilization. The theme of this symposium deals particularly with the latter characteristic. I believe the essence of the discussion revolves around what type of internal model will we continue to construct in the brain. I believe it is important to correctly understand the current status of the problems we face and then to discuss them on the basis of the history of the universe. Though for lack of space it could not be introduced here, the problems of relativization and universalism are also important.

Biography

Takafumi Matsui was born in Shizuoka prefecture in Japan in 1946. He obtained his a doctorate in science from the University of Tokyo, where he has since worked as research associate, associate professor and, currently, professor of comparative planetology at the Graduate School of Frontier Sciences. He has also been an active member of numerous committees for the Japanese government.

Professor Matsui caught the attention of the academic world in 1986 with his article 'Evolution of an impact-induced atmosphere and magma ocean on the accreting earth', (*Nature*, Vol. 319), which presented his theory of earth's origins and its evolution. His other works include 'Accretion, atmosphere formation and thermal history', 1993, in *Primitive Solar Nebula and Origin of Planets*, H. Oya (ed.), Tokyo, Terra Scientific; 'Evolutionary tracks of the terrestrial planets', 1987, in *Earth Moon and Planets*, Vol. 39; and 'Generation and propagation of a tsunami from the Cretaceous-Tertiary impact event', 2002, *Catastrophic Events and Mass Extinctions: Impacts and Beyond*, Geological Society of America.

Science's conception of human beings as a basis for moral theory

Henry Stapp

Part 1: Human freedom

*In the great drama of existence we ourselves
are both actors and spectators*

Niels Bohr proclaimed this several times, and it was reiterated by Werner Heisenberg. It is an assertion that might well seem neither profound nor surprising. For even a mechanical robot that moves and also senses light signals is both actor and spectator.

However, Bohr's meaning is both profound and surprising. It refers to what is, from the standpoint of philosophy, the most radical innovation wrought by the replacement of classical mechanics with quantum mechanics. It concerns an important change in the role of the human being as 'actor' that goes far beyond anything that classical mechanics can allow.

The huge disparity between classical mechanics and quantum mechanics is heralded by the fact that classical dynamics is specified by one single physical process, which never acknowledges the existence of our psychologically described thoughts and feelings, whereas quantum dynamics involves four processes, which are described in a combination of the languages of mathematics and psychology. These four processes impact in different ways upon the human being. To understand the nature and role of human beings in a world governed by quantum laws one must understand the nature of these four processes.

John von Neumann, in his rigorous formulation of quantum mechanics, gave the names 'Process 1' and 'Process 2' to two of these processes. Process 2 is the quantum mechanical counterpart of the single dynamical process of classical mechanics. Like its classical counterpart, Process 2 is strictly deterministic. In relativistic quantum field theory, Process 2 is also local – it

involves mathematical properties assigned to points in space at instants of time – and the causal rules are microscopic: they connect localized properties to *neighbouring* localized properties.

However, Process 2 incorporates Heisenberg uncertainties. Consequently, it generates, in the brain of each person, a physical state that corresponds *not* to one single stream of consciousness – of the kind each of us actually experiences – but to a continuous ‘smear’ of *possible* streams of conscious experiences. The central interpretational problem in quantum theory is therefore this: How are these continuous smears of possible streams of consciousness reduced to the streams of consciousness that we actually experience?

Orthodox quantum theory achieves this reduction by introducing into the physically described Process 2 evolution three other kinds of processes. Von Neumann calls the first of these a ‘Process 1 intervention’. Each actually occurring Process 1 intervention is a probing action described in purely physical terms. However, and this is the key point, orthodox quantum theory gives *neither a physical cause nor a statistical probability* for the occurrence of a Process 1 intervention. In particular, these interventions are *not* determined by the deterministic, physically described Process 2. According to Bohr and Heisenberg, and in actual scientific practice, the choice of which Process 1 action occurs, and when it occurs, is specified by a ‘free choice on the part of the experimenter’. I shall call this ‘Process 4’.

Finally, there is the kind of process that Dirac calls ‘a choice on the part of nature’. This is a selection of some particular outcome of the freely chosen Process 1 probing action. This choice is called ‘Process 3’, and it is a random choice.

Random choice and free choice

The two adjectives ‘random’ and ‘free’ are highly significant. A random choice is a choice that is constrained by statistical conditions. This entry of randomness into quantum mechanics has been extensively discussed by physicists and philosophers. But the word ‘free’ signifies something altogether different. Within the mathematical machinery of orthodox quantum theory, the choice of which Process 1 probing action will actually occur is constrained by no conditions whatever, statistical or otherwise. Moreover, this is treated in actual scientific practice as a conscious choice on the part of a human being, the famous ‘free choice on the part of the experimenter’.

Thus in orthodox theory these Process 4 choices – of which probing action will actually occur – are *free* in the double sense that they are *not* specified by the physically described aspects of the situation, but they *are* specified, in actual scientific practice, by ‘a free choice on the part of the experimenter’. It is, of course, conceivable that these Process 4 choices will eventually be explained in purely physical terms. However, any such explanation must go substantially beyond the presently understood deterministic physical Process 2. On the other hand, there is no hint or suggestion, within orthodox quantum mechanics that a purely physical explanation of Process 4 is possible, and no rational reason why such a reversion to nineteenth century concepts is either demanded or warranted.

Conclusion to Part 1

A major advance in physics has presented us with a science-based conception of nature in which our physical actions are influenced by our thoughts and feelings in ways *not* ultimately controlled by mindless mechanical processes. This shattering of the shackles of nineteenth century materialist physics opens the way to the construction of science-based ethical theories of a kind incompatible with the mechanistic conception of nature that dominated science from the time of Isaac Newton until the dawn of the twentieth century.

Part 2: Quantum wholeness and spiritual-secular dynamics

In 1935, Albert Einstein, together with two young colleagues, Boris Podolsky and Nathan Rosen, published a paper that focused attention on a paradoxical feature of quantum theory. The theory appears to require that what is experienced by one person must depend, in certain situations, upon what a faraway and seemingly disconnected person freely decides to do. An intense scrutiny of this puzzling situation by physicists has made clear the fact that the structure of quantum mechanics is profoundly compatible with the idea that Process 4 choices can be consistently regarded as *free* choices. But this element of freedom entails a deep level of interconnectedness of the conscious experiences of persons situated in far-apart regions.

This non-local connectedness has been endlessly discussed by physicists and philosophers and is known to be strictly incompatible with any ordinary – that is, ‘local mechanical – idea of how the world operates.

The subtle connectivity – revealed by these purely secular scientific studies – between the experiences associated with physically separated persons seems to demand the existence of a reality that can provide the needed connections. But these connections go far beyond anything that classical materialism can accommodate. What seems to be called for is a pervading immaterial global reality that is informed by our thoughts, and that can subtly act back upon far-away other persons.

This general idea of a global immaterial – say spiritual – presence is probably the core intuitive idea of all religions, both Eastern and Western. But then, purely secular studies of certain paradoxical features of empirical phenomena have led to conclusions about the nature of reality that, on the one hand, seem incompatible with the materialist conception of nature, and, on the other hand, are suggestive of the existence of a pervading ‘spiritual’ presence of the kind that lies at the heart of all religions.

Part 3: Rational science-based moral theory

Deterministic materialism is inhospitable to rational moral theory.

In the first place, a materialist striving to maintain high moral standards is placed in the irrational position of acting as if one’s conscious choices can make a difference in the course of physical events, while believing that they cannot possibly do so, because the entire course of physical events is mechanically fixed at the birth of the universe.

In the second place, any belief in one’s own intrinsic deep connectedness to the community of human beings, and to nature herself – which might provide a basis for values extending beyond one’s own bodily and psychological self – must be dismissed as a delusion by the rational classical materialist.

But rationality and respect for science does not entail accepting local deterministic materialism, or even materialism with only random interventions. For orthodox contemporary physics includes not only *deterministic* features, and *random* features, but also causally efficacious human *free* choices. Moreover, it yields a conception nature that must accommodate certain subtle immaterial connections between various physically disconnected parts.

This conception of nature, and of our place within it, arises from the *orthodox* interpretation of quantum mechanics. There are other interpretations, but the orthodox interpretation is the one that is directly supported by empirical evidence, and the one that all others must in the end sustain, insofar as its

predictions continue to be validated in the ever-more-refined conditions under which they are being tested.

This orthodox-science-based conception of human beings as actors that are free to act efficaciously upon the physical world, and that are linked together by an immaterial presence, is in line with the inner core of all religions, and it buttresses, from a secular perspective, the communal values that religions spawn. But the valued community includes all human beings, not merely co-religionists.

Acceptance of this science-based conception of nature, and of ourselves, allows the construction of a moral theory that captures the positive aspects of religious ethical teaching while evading both the negativities directed at non-co-religionists, and the destitution of mechanistic materialism. The sense of separateness, isolation and powerlessness that issues from the nineteenth-century image of humans as automatons is replaced by a conception of efficacious creative human selves imbedded in an encompassing community endeavour and adventure. This conception of nature, and of ourselves, provides a rational foundation for exercising our mind-based freedom of action in accord with values that give weight to the good of the whole.

Biography

Henry P. Stapp is a mathematician and physicist. He has written almost 300 technical articles on mathematics and the philosophical foundations of quantum mechanics, in addition to two books, *Mind, Matter and Quantum Mechanics* (Berlin, Springer Verlag, 1993) and 'The mindful universe' (www-physics.lbl.gov/~stapp/MUI.pdf).

His recent work has been on the active role played by the human brain in quantum-mechanical descriptions of nature and on the impact of progress in this field on philosophical and moral issues in orthodox contemporary physics, and the active part played by the human brain compared with that attributed to it by the materialist physics of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries – in essence, the role of the onlooker.

Concepts of time: cyclical or linear?

Odon Vallet

I intend to tackle – very briefly – the concepts of time in five languages and civilizations: Latin, Greek, Biblical Hebrew, and those of India and China.

The Latin word for ‘time’ is *tempus*, time as experience. Like the French *temps*, the word covers what in English is *weather* as well as *time*: it means ‘the prevailing circumstances’ as well as the ‘time’ that passes. Greek *chronos*, on the other hand, is measured time, chronology: it is time divisible into the years of a reign or into dynasties, the time that is to be found on reviewing a sequence of events. *Tempus* therefore refers to meteorology while *chronos* refers to historical science. It is no surprise, moreover, that world’s first historian, Herodotus, was Greek. *Chronos* also refers to genealogical time, the history of a given family. Here it is joined by Biblical ‘time’.

The Hebrew word for ‘time’ is *olam*. This is a personal and family time; for the Hebrews were more sensitive to cultural events than to natural phenomena, to the time of a people or a country, the time of a family. In all these cases – Latin, Greek or Hebrew – we are dealing with a linear, not a cyclical concept of time. Judaism, Christianity, Islam and indeed the Zoroastrianism of Iran only know of one resurrection, an extension of life not a sequence of rebirths. But this ‘line’ of linear time is uncertain, interrupted by the roadblocks of sin or the hairpin bends of conversion.

Very different is the time of India, often but wrongly called ‘cyclical’: it is, rather, a helix. The *samsahara*, the round of existences, is a ‘Darwinian ladder’. A person is reborn higher or lower, as woman, man or god, animal, vegetable or even mineral, depending on good or evil deeds. As human beings ascend or descend species time, the universe itself will descend before re-ascending. World time is divided into *kalpas*, cosmic periods of 4,320 million years each; each one is a single day of the god Brahma the Creator, and is followed by a night of non-creation. The *kalpa* itself is divided into *yugah*, Ages, of decreasing length and deteriorating merit. There was a Golden Age, then a Silver, a Copper and lastly an Iron Age. Our own hard times, our sombre black age, the *kali yugah*, began in 3102 BCE and will come to an end before a new Golden Age is reborn.

Nevertheless, there is this point at which Biblical time and Indian time come close, which shows an Iranian influence also: this is the Apocalypse, a thorough break, a revelation of the end of the world, a completion and a supersession, a catastrophe and a Parousia, found in Iranian and Indian thinking as well as Biblical. This can be illustrated by a quotation from Shakespeare: 'So foul a sky clears not without a storm'.¹

Chinese time seems very different, not even really comparable: for in China, time and space are not abstract concepts, nor are they separated. Time is a circle, possibly a cycle. Space is a square, decidedly an empire: the Chinese empire. Time is a revolution, space a dimension. Time is mobile, space immobile; and around its centre lives China, Zhōngguó, the Land of the Middle. Time is threat, or promise. Space is the tomb or the light, *ying* or *yang*, the north or south slope of a mountain. Each emperor's reign is also under the sign of *ying* or *yang*. The Emperor gives order to time and space, while he obeys them within the circumstances of his age. Giving order to the time which devours him: that is the destiny of mortal humans.

Biography

Odon Vallet is a lecturer at the University of Paris, Sorbonne, and holds doctorates in Law and in the Sciences of Religions.

Principal publications *Une autre histoire des religions* [Another history of religions], Gallimard, Paris, 2000; *Petit Lexique des idées fausses sur la religion* [Little Lexicon of False Ideas on Religion], Livre de poche Hachette, Paris, 2004; *les religions dans le monde* [Religions in the World], Flammarion, Paris, 1995; *L'évangile des païens* [The Gospel of the Pagans], Albin Michel, Paris, 2003; *Femmes et Religions* [Women and Religions], Gallimard, Paris, 1994; and *Qu'est-ce qu'une Religion?* [What is a Religion], Albin Michel, Paris, 1999.

1. William Shakespeare, *King John*, Act 4, scene 2, lines 108–9.

Sustainability as viewed from an ethos of rice cultivation and fishing

Yoshinori Yasuda

Another mode of civilization

In the past, the term ‘civilization’ has generally been associated with people who consume bread, milk and meat. However, studies on the Yangtze River civilization in China have revealed the existence of a completely different mode of human civilization, that of the rice-cultivating fishing civilization.

The people of this civilization placed high value on the lives of all living things in their environment. They took great pleasure in their hard-working lifestyle in the midst of natural surroundings ablaze with life. It was a civilization that directed benevolence and compassion towards all living things, unlike previously acknowledged civilizations that set out to rule the surface of the earth through force and warfare, giving consideration to humans alone among living things.

Now, at the start of the twenty-first century, humanity is facing serious global environmental issues. We must find ways of dealing with this crisis between humans and nature. It is time to part with values of civilizations that thrived by subjugating other nations through force, destroying forests, plundering nature and transforming fertile land into barren desert. It is common knowledge that our earth is heading towards destruction, and yet it seems that no one can find a way to avoid this. This is because the new civilization that could change the traditions of the old has yet to be created. But one world-view that could form the cornerstone for the creation of this new civilization is that of the rice-cultivating fishing people.

The preservation of forests and waters

The food available to traditional societies depends on the climate of the land in which they live. For example, in Monsoon Asia, rainfall is concentrated in the summer season, with the annual mean precipitation exceeding 2,000 mm. The grain crop suited to such climate is rice. The abundant rain also means that there is a rich population of fish in the rivers, providing the main source of

protein for the people in the region. Thus, the people of Monsoon Asia have come to adopt a lifestyle of eating rice and fish.

The people of Western Asia, due to a low annual rainfall that is concentrated mainly in the winter months, are unable, however, to pursue such a lifestyle. In this climate, wheat is the main grain crop. Furthermore, the lack of fish in the rivers forces the people to adopt a lifestyle of raising livestock such as sheep and goats as a source of protein.

Humans have continuously strived to lead a plentiful life on this beautiful planet by maximizing the harvest of crops suited to their climate. Yet this endeavour has produced sharply contrasting outcomes among different civilizations, with certain civilizations causing irreversible destruction to forests, while others have successfully preserved the forests and the water cycle for continued prosperity.

The destruction of forests

The belt from Israel to Mesopotamia is believed to be the birthplace of human civilization. This civilization was wheat-cultivating and pastoral. It sustained itself on wheat and sheep or goats. Although thick forests covered this region until 10,000 BP, these had all but disappeared by 5,000 BP (Yasuda et al., 2000, Yasuda, 2001). The sheep and goats had literally eaten the forests away.

During the height of Ancient Greek civilization, Greece was also covered with deep forests. The famous Temple of Delphi was located in dense forest at the time of its construction (Okuda et al., 2001). The destruction of these forests caused a depletion of nutrients flowing into the sea from the rivers. The resulting drop in the plankton population deprived fish of their food, and the Mediterranean Sea became a 'dead sea'.

After the twelfth century, the centre of civilization shifted to Western Europe. With the expansion of settlement and cultivation during the medieval period, many forests were swiftly converted into farmland. By the seventeenth century, the destruction of forests in England, Germany and Switzerland had reached more than 70 per cent (Perlin, 1988). The forests seen in Europe today are mostly products of afforestation projects carried out after the eighteenth century. In addition to this destruction, a period of climatic cooling known as the Little Ice Age occurred in the seventeenth century, which, together with an outbreak of a major pest epidemic, caused a food shortage crisis in Europe. People were forced to emigrate to America, where 80 per cent of the forests were destroyed within the next 300 years (Goudie, 1990). Similarly, Europeans arrived in New Zealand in the 1840s, and the forests

there also quickly disappeared. In the short period of only twenty years from 1880 to 1900, 40 per cent of New Zealand's forests were destroyed.

Similar situations occurred in parts of northeast China (on the Manchurian Plain) inhabited by sheep and goat farmers. During the Ming Dynasty (1368–1644), the Manchurian Plain was partially covered by forest; however, these disappeared completely with the explosive development of the northeast China plains at the beginning of the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912) (Makohonienko et al., 2004).

The circulation of life

Compared to these civilizations, history shows that rice-cultivating fishing civilizations have been successful in preserving their forests and their water cycle. It had previously been thought that rice-cultivation first began 5,000 years ago, in the Yunnan Province in China, much later than wheat cultivation, which began around 12,000 BP. However, it now appears that rice-cultivation may possibly date back to 14,000 BP (Yasuda, 2003).

Whereas wheat-cultivating pastoral lifestyles generally transform the earth into barren land after 10,000 years, fertile land is preserved by a rice-cultivating fishing lifestyle, even after the same length of time. This is crucial proof of the sustainability of a rice-cultivating fishing society.

The world of the rice-cultivating fishing people is, at the same time, the world of the forest people. In the forests, the trees sprout fresh leaves in the spring that flourish during the summer, they bear nuts and fruits in autumn and wither in winter, only to bloom again the following spring. This cycle most likely contributes to the world-view of the people living in the forests, who see all living things as circulating within this universe.

The Yangtze River civilization collapsed some 4,000 years ago, when a major and abrupt climatic cooling event triggered a southward migration of the wheat-cultivating pastoral people of the Yellow River basin and drove out the rice-cultivating fishing people from the Yangtze River basin (Yasuda, et al., 2004). Some of these people fled to the mountains of Yunnan and Guizhou provinces, others fled to the Japanese archipelago as boat people. Thus, the ethnic minorities presently living in Yunnan province in China share a common ancestor with the Japanese in the rice-cultivating fishing people of the Yangtze River civilization.

The Miao are one of the ethnic minorities living in the mountainous regions of the Yunnan and Guizhou provinces in China. Miao culture considers the sun, pillars, mountains and birds to be sacred, as they also are in the Japanese Shinto religion. At Ise Shrine, the pillar Shin-no-mihashira, which is the symbol of the combination of Heaven and Earth, is erected anew every twenty years.

As in ancient Japan, the Miao people live in a matriarchal society headed by women. But the most persuasive point in support of the view that the Miao and the Japanese have common ancestors is that the supreme deity worshipped in the two societies is female. The supreme deity in Shinto is Amatersu, the sun goddess enshrined at Ise. In contrast, the leaders of the 'axial civilization', a term conceived by Karl Jaspers, are all male – Confucius, Buddha, Jesus Christ, Socrates and Mohammed.

Saving the earth through benevolence and compassion

In a certain sense, the concept of 'civilization' is a product of illusion, or to put it differently, of ideals. Communism, for example, was also an illusion. Illusions are fated to collapse. From such a viewpoint, 'freedom' and 'democracy' are also simply ideals, and will someday collapse. However, a giant tree standing in front of your eyes will remain there for 1,000 years if that is the remainder of its life span. The rice-cultivating fishing people place the maximum trust in that solid existence. Which is the wiser view? The rice-cultivating fishing people find joy in transfusing the energy of their bodies into the steep barren wasteland, and transforming it into fertile terraced rice paddies. Such a mindset will be most important in this century we are entering.

In *Limits to Growth: The 30-Year Global Update*, Meadows et al. (2004) present a new model of the global environment using new data and developments that have been made in the thirty years since the release of the original version in 1972. They write that the key to saving the global environment and averting a crisis of civilization lies in the spirit of benevolence. The rice-cultivating fishing people have always had that spirit of benevolence. They have shown compassion for the lives all living things and benevolence towards their neighbour. I, too, believe that the spirit of benevolence is what will save the earth in the future. More recently, Jared Diamond (2005) has also recognized the significance of Japanese forest culture based on a rice-cultivating fishing civilization for the sustainability of humans. It maybe that leading scholars around the world are gradually beginning to realize that the answer to saving the earth and humanity may lie in the lifestyles of the rice-cultivating fishing civilization.

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Biography

Yoshinori Yasuda, born in 1946 in the Mie prefecture of Japan, is one of the world's greatest exponents of environmental archaeology. He has been teaching at the renowned International Research Center for Japanese Studies of Kyoto since 1994, and in that year received the Chunichi Cultural Prize. He was a visiting professor at Berlin's Humboldt University in 1996 and 2002. In 1997 he was appointed professor at Kyoto University. He directed the Yangtze River Civilization Project from 1997 to 2001, when he was awarded the Crafoords Prize and invited to take part in a conference at the Royal Swedish Academy of Science. He took part in many workshops of the international symposium on Integrated History and Future of People on Earth (IHOPE) held at the Max Planck Institute in Berlin in June 2005 on the occasion of the Albert Einstein centenary.

His publications include *Forest and Civilizations*, New Delhi, Lustre Press / Roli Books, 2001; *Origins of Pottery and Agriculture*, New Delhi, Lustre Press / Roli Books, 2002; and *Monsoon and Civilization*, New Delhi, Lustre Press / Roli Books, 2003.

Woods and sanctuaries in Japan

François Macé

I was invited to Kyoto in 1990 to address a conference organized by Nichibunken, the International Centre for Research into Japanese Culture. The conference was entitled *Sekai no naka Nihon*, 'Japan in the World'; I had been asked to speak on the conception of Nature in Japanese mythology, *Nihonshinwa ni okeru shizenkan*. In the course of the discussion, a Japanese participant complained that I was using a Western concept, 'Nature' when speaking of ancient Japan which, as everyone knew, had no such concept. I confess I cannot remember what reply I made to this; no doubt a somewhat clumsy one.

Since then I have often thought about that comment. Can one speak of another civilization, and even another age, using contemporary and, in my case, Western concepts? As my particular field of research concerns the gods of Japan, I continued to wonder about the relationships of these gods with what a Westerner would call 'nature'. I have been encouraged to do so, not only by the widespread usage in contemporary Japanese of the word *shizen* in the sense of 'nature', but more particularly by the fact that very many published works about Shinto represent it as a religion of nature, a form of nature-worship, if not a natural religion.

In other words, some at least of those who claim to uphold authentic Japanese tradition do not hesitate to use Western concepts to support their claim. I see no drawback in this: all cultures have borrowed from their neighbours, and frequently the better to resist them. There remains the question, admittedly put using a Western concept but one that has become as Japanese as the Buddhist concepts that were imported in ancient times: What might there be in a relationship with nature that is specifically Japanese?

I should prefer to leave off speeches and proclamations, and start with some real material which is quite often referred to: wood (remembering that 'wood', for French or English speakers, can be a construction material or a group of trees). To stay within the realm of what is specifically Japanese, I shall try to restrict my observations to the world of the Shinto sanctuaries, which claim to be the guardians of the original essence of Japan – however much it has been argued that this is largely a fabrication.

It is often said that wood is Japan's favourite building material in the same way that stone is in the West (though the Scandinavian countries have some very fine wooden churches). Wood is implicitly presented in Japan as more natural than stone, less worked by human hands. That is the message of the celestial grandson's choice of Konohanasakuyahime, the princess lovely as a tree in blossom, as more natural than Iwanagahime, her older sister who was cast aside as 'long and ugly as a rock';¹ and also of the view that the *iwakura*, the stony heaps that provided the seats of the gods,² were less natural than the *mori*, the sacred woods. To give another little illustration of the illusory nature of this assertion, we should note that frequently the 'bodies of the gods' embedded in the sanctuaries are natural stones; and also that the sanctuaries' boundaries were often eventually built as stone palisades: even the gateways or *torii* through which one approaches the sacred area can perfectly well be in stone.

As we shall see, the wood/stone duality recurs many times; but to study this pair concurrently would take us too far; I shall therefore content myself with tackling just some aspects of wood in these sanctuaries.

Woods and mountains

Usually *mori* is translated 'wood', 'forest'; but it is also an old term for the groves which are sanctuaries devoted to the *kami*, or gods. The characters used today to write *jinja*, 'sanctuary', could also be read *kami no mori*, 'the grove of the god'. Thus an eighth-century poem could say, a little irreverently: 'As I pass / this sacred wood (*ihafu kono mori*) where votive bands/ are dedicated, / I am lost in my thinking / so gripped am I by love's desire',³ while another poem speaks of the 'god of the wood of Mikasa'.⁴ Clearly, then, *mori* can mean a wood inhabited by one or more gods.

Anyone who has visited sanctuaries in Japan is well aware that there are venerable trees within their precincts, and often whole groves. In the urban

1. These two princesses were the daughters of the god of the mountain, Ōyamatsumi. In choosing the one and dismissing the other, the celestial grandson was responsible, though unwittingly, for the shortness of life.

2. The term refers to the myths of the beginnings of the land, where the celestial divinities live on such seats.

3. *Man'yōshū*, Book VII, poem 1378. In René Sieffert (trans.), *Man'yōshū Books VII to IX*, POF/UNESCO Publishing, 2001, p. 135.

4. *Man'yōshū*, Book IV, poem 561. *Mikasa no mori no kami shi shirasamu* – 'May the wood of Mikasa, sacred to Ōno the god, be pleased to give judgement' In René Sieffert (trans.), *Man'yōshū Books IV to VI*, POF/UNESCO Publishing, 1998, p. 55.

landscape these make very convenient landmarks; in the countryside, the grove of a sanctuary springs abruptly upwards from the horizontal scenery of the rice fields. These sanctuary woods, which have become a sort of ecological reserve, are not nature in the wild, however. They are circumscribed; the god's territory is clearly delimited – which is fortunate, because an unlucky incursion, even unawares, could bring immediate punishment, *tatari*, in the form of sickness or death. No one would dream of cutting the trees of these sacred woods, yet their surroundings are very carefully tended: fallen leaves or needles are swept up.

Among the places of worship most frequented in early times were wood-covered mountains. The sanctuary of Miwa is one example that is often mentioned. At the start of the road which leads from the ordinary highway to the building where the god lives, we find a gateway opening onto the mountain and the trees. The wooded mountain is both the place of residence and at the same time the body of the god (*shintai*). The sanctuary of Miwa is said to present the Japanese tradition of worshipping the gods in its most ancient and therefore most authentic form. These gods are obviously nature gods, and their rites are performed in a natural setting. And yet the god of Miwa had close links from very early times with the family which eventually became the imperial family; he was indeed the maternal ancestor of the human emperors' line. He cannot therefore be reduced to a simple expression of nature as divinity; his field of action is a great deal wider. He is also the patron of the brewers of *sake*, a drink that is divine but by no means natural.

It is true that there are many sacred mountains in Japan, but most of them have been 'opened' by Buddhist monks, beginning with Mount Fuji, or the site of Kumano, recently recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Site. Mount Miwa itself was 'opened' to welcome the Yamabushi ascetics.

Most important of all, though, the earliest texts written in Japan speak quite unambiguously of constructed sanctuaries whose wooden piles went down to bedrock and whose roofbeams rise to the high plane of the heavens (*Miya hashira shitatsu iha no ne ni futoshiki tate, takama no hara ni chigi takashirite*) and this expression is regularly used to describe habitations built for the gods, and also for the sovereign.

Moreover, sanctuaries without a building to house the gods are very few in number. The one at Isonokami, at the foot of the mountain to the east of Tenri, even had a *shinden*, or pavilion of the god, added in the 1920s; for a sanctuary without a *shinden* had not for very many years matched the conventional idea of the *jinja*, which had plenty of buildings in attendance on the main one housing the god. These buildings are of course wooden; trees are cut down to construct them: indeed, if possible, very fine trees.

Posts and buildings

Before I talk about the architecture of these sanctuaries, I should like to mention an intermediate stage, so far as classification goes, between the wooded mountain and the building. Every year of the Monkey or the Tiger – i.e. once every six years – at the time of the *Onbashira matsuri* or Festival of Honourable Posts at the sanctuaries of Suwa (Nagano), woodcutters go into the sanctuary's forests to cut down mature trees, strip the trunks of bark and erect them at the precincts' four corners. These posts, *hashira*, can readily be interpreted as objects that enable the gods to descend, and that bring them closer by means of the special numeral (also *hashira*) used to count the gods. The posts of Suwa are something more than the natural trees: they have been cut, moved and re-erected to welcome a divinity which comes to live near humans.

The renewal of the posts of Suwa recalls another renewal, much better known: that of the sanctuaries of Ise. The entire set of constructions at Ise is rebuilt, exactly the same, every twenty years, 'because they are wooden', we are told. If they were in stone, the question would not arise. But the buildings are not only made of wood; their posts are stuck directly in the ground, and rot at the bottom; the roofs are in thatch, a notoriously fragile material. When the twenty-year reconstruction cycle was being established at Ise, towards the end of the seventh century, Japan was already familiar with Buddhist architecture and public structures of the continental type. The Hōryūji of Nara, which date from the second half of the seventh century, show that a wooden building can endure for centuries without being rebuilt every twenty years: a tile roof and proper stone bases for the posts are all it takes to guarantee such a building long life, barring fires. So it was a deliberate choice, in the seventh century, to use an old-fashioned building technique for the sanctuary that was to house the goddess Amaterasu, ancestor of the family which had just proclaimed its right to the imperial title, *tennō*. So many innovations became fixed at just that time that it is hard to believe that the choice of a perishable building design, and therefore of periodic reconstruction, was made out of simple respect for tradition, even if the symbolism of the sanctuary as an intermediary between the sky and the bedrock underground must have played an important part. No, it was another form of permanence that was aimed at.

We are given further reason to think so by yet another post: second only to the mirror of the goddess Amaterasu, the most sacred object at Ise is the *shin no mihashira* (literally the Honourable Post of the Heart/Centre). The mirror is made of bronze, and at first sight unchangeable; moreover, it never leaves its case, which is moved every twenty years into the new building. But directly under the mirror, in the centre of the building, under the floor, there is a post

driven into the ground, the *shin no mihashira*. When the old sanctuary is destroyed, this post alone is kept, protected by a small hut in the middle of the empty space. One of the first rites in the rebuilding is the changing of this post: the old one, which has by now been there for forty years, is withdrawn and finally buried, ‘as one would bury a corpse’, say the officiants. It is clear that the changing of the *shin no mihashira* is not a technical matter: a stone post would have guaranteed permanence, but change was the deliberate choice. Like this central post, the sanctuaries of Ise are not built to last. They are designed to last for ever, but their lasting is not that of the material as in one part of the Western tradition: in the case of these sanctuaries, permanence actually depends on periodic reconstruction, on repeated human intervention that is taken for granted. Other sanctuaries were periodically rebuilt as well, but rebuilding gradually came to cost more and more, fine trees became rarer (nowadays they have to be sought outside Japan), and it is only Ise that can afford this luxury today.

Other sanctuaries are indeed maintained or rebuilt exactly the same when they have the misfortune to be destroyed by fire or a typhoon. A number of them, at Kamo (Kyoto) or Usa (Kyūshū) for instance, have buildings to accommodate the god while his main sanctuary is being repaired or rebuilt. The ideal would seem to be sanctuary buildings that are perennially new. The struggle against the natural passage of time involves imitating nature, where destruction always comes before rebirth. This imitation is an artificial process: those who make the renewal happen are the carpenters and craftspeople.

We might well ask whether the difference between these sanctuaries and cathedrals of stone is really so great: for stones wear away and must be regularly replaced, making the buildings remarkably alive from this point of view. The only difference – though it is an important one – is that in the case of Ise, this permanent rebuilding is ritualized and goes beyond the simple desire to preserve what has been handed down.

Nature made sacred?

It is not easy, on the basis of such facts as these, to conclude simply that the oldest and therefore most essential part of Japanese tradition lies in the veneration of natural forces by interfering with the environment as little as possible. If that were so, only living trees would have been cult objects. True, there are very many of these, decked with their rice-straw bands to mark dedicated sites, but these trees are not the main object of worship, but rather the landmarks of a divine presence. They may be compared to the fairy trees in parts of the French countryside, invested with beliefs which are only seldom made explicit.

The Japanese trees share this function with the natural heaps of stone I mentioned earlier: the rocky seats of the gods, known as *iwakura*. These also are often circled with dedicatory bands, *shimenawa*. But here again it is quite rare for an *iwakura* to become the centre of a sanctuary. The case of Oki No Shima, the inhabited island off Kyūshū, is an exception. Archaeological investigations on the island have unearthed deposits of offerings going back at least as far as the fifth century, and continuing until the tenth. They were placed initially on great heaps of stone, then later at the foot of such heaps, without any trace of construction. These offerings were from embassies leaving for Korea or China. The divinities worshipped, such as Munakata, were certainly ones that governed the oceans, but against a very important political background of diplomatic relations.

The comparatively minor role accorded to the divine trees, *shinboku*, may be explained as the last vestige of an original tree-worshipping culture (or a form of nature worship) which, the theory goes, had survived all tempests and incoming ideologies from abroad. The argument may seem weighty, but it hides an interpretive error of perspective. The holy springs of Breton chapels may well be connected with pre-Christian beliefs, but they are nevertheless inseparable from the Christian beliefs that surround them today. The sacred trees of Japan certainly have a very long history, but their meaning and functions have evolved in every age. They have not been at the centre of people's beliefs for a long time now.

Furthermore, these trees or rocks with their dedicatory bands are seldom located in wholly natural surroundings, but rather, like the sanctuaries, in the border areas between the world of humans and truly wild country. Such wilderness used to be domain of the untamed and uncontrollable divinities, the *araburu kami* of the ancient texts. Ordinary mortals had no business there, and kept well away. Before such spirits could be paid any form of cult they had to be tamed by a hero such as the first Emperor, Jinmu, or the redoubtable Yamato Takeru. So where does this recurrent talk of nature worship or symbiosis with nature come from?

One easy way to approach the question would be to take at face value the commonplaces of the extensive literature studying Japanese uniqueness (*nihonjinron*). According to these, the Japanese tradition takes particular care of the environment, and has kept this fundamental attitude since the long-ago time of the Jōmon culture (10,000–6,000 BCE). This is put down to nature worship, expressed in a civilization of wood. It is true that the age of Jōmon may be described as a forest culture; the forest provided the hunter/gatherer food base. Moreover, at sites such as Sannai Maruyama (Aomori) traces of enormous erected tree trunks have been found. If we disregard the intervening millennia, the introduction of rice-growing and metal-working, we can relate these sites to today's numinous trees venerated with rice-straw bands. It is only a short step

from that to seeing in those ancient sites the first instances of a still-living nature-worship; a step readily taken by the advocates of a new animism, *animizumu*.⁵ This term, ‘animism’, comes from Western science, from the history of religions where it is used of so-called ‘primitive’ religious systems, ones which had not yet reached the stage of monotheism. Curiously enough, it has hardly ever been applied to the religion of the ancient Romans (which incidentally exhibits many similarities to the Japanese tradition, not least its sacred groves). Its recent use in Japan refers to claims for what is natural, primitive and Japanese as opposed to what is Western and artificial. I have my doubts about such claims.

One need not be a specialist in social anthropology to appreciate that all civilizations are artificial. What matters is not that they are artificial, but how their artificiality is constructed.

The resistance of wood

I do not think we have to follow the path of head-on, all-in confrontation or comparison between the West and Japan. What matters more is to develop the idea started during this symposium by Dr Rotermund: the question of resistance in confrontations with what is strange or foreign. These sanctuaries have served on at least two occasions as sites of resistance.

When Buddhism arrived, encompassing everything, explaining everything, surpassing all other forms of religion in its wealth of ritual and scripture, the sanctuaries remained: the gods resisted. Some, like Ise, quite deliberately chose rusticity as a way of organizing the distinction. Buddhist terms were proscribed within the sanctuary precincts. With the passage of time, of course, the local deities or *kami* eventually became the monasteries’ protectors; in the case of great gods, they were enriched by monasteries twinned with or next door to their sanctuaries.⁶ But in this symbiosis between the gods and the Buddhas, there was almost always a concern to preserve the distinction, even when it might seem artificial to us.

Drawing on works by Edo scholars who had striven to delineate the Japanese soul, *yamatodamashii*, against the omnipresence of the Chinese spirit or *karagokoro*, the Meiji government was at pains to stress the peculiarity of Shinto as a pledge of the Japanese culture’s authenticity since its beginnings. Faced with

5. This term has recently been championed by Japanese essayists on the same grounds as polytheism, in opposition to the overweening supremacy of Western monotheism.

6. Most of these sanctuary-neighbouring monasteries, *jingūji*, were destroyed during the violent movement to separate Buddhism and Shinto at the start of the Meiji restoration. The site of the monastery ‘belonging’ to the sanctuary of Kamigamo in Kyoto currently serves as a car park.

the peril of Westernization, Shinto was conscripted for the defence of the fatherland, though at times by assimilating certain aspects of the dangerous rival's civilization. To match the Christian marriage rite, for instance, a Shinto wedding was invented in 1900 for the heir apparent, the future Emperor Taishō – and before long that rite became traditional! At other times, on the contrary, it was the specifically Japanese that had to be asserted: thus at the start of the twentieth century some wondered whether it might not be better to build the Ise sanctuaries in concrete, once and for all. Happily this was not the option chosen; but the suggestion was by no means thought absurd at other times, for sanctuaries had indeed been constructed on the pattern of monastic buildings, the *gongenzukuri*. This time, though, the authenticity of tradition was successfully advanced against the artificial, industrial character of the West. When a sanctuary was built in 1920 for the Emperor Meiji, the sovereign who had seen Japan through its great leap into modernity, the material used was wood; but, more importantly, a magnificent planned forest was planted in the very centre of the capital. Shinto was on the way to becoming natural. This latent potential of the Japanese tradition would not, I am sure, have been activated so strongly had it not been for the shock of contact with a culture – the West – which was perceived above all as redoubtable for its technology. This image of the technological West became the one retained in contemporary Japan, which defends itself from it by secreting, as an antidote, a new approach of 'fusion' with nature which claims the Shinto inheritance.

Biography

François Macé teaches History of Japanese Thought and Religions at the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales in Paris. His special areas of research are Shinto, the concept of time, and funerary rites.

His publications include *La mort et les funérailles dans le Japon ancien* [Death and Funerals in Ancient Japan], Presses Universitaires de France, 1986; *Kojiki shinwa no kôzô* [The Structure of the *Kojiki* Myths], Tokyo, Chûôkôron, 1989; 'Fondation et refondation, histoire et commencements, l'écriture de la tradition au Japon' [Founding and Refounding, History and Beginnings, the Writing Down of Tradition in Japan], in M. Détienné, *Transcrire les mythologies* [Transcribing Mythologies], Paris, Albin Michel, 1994; 'Le cortège fantôme, Les funérailles et la déification de Toyotomi Hideyoshi' [The Phantom Cortège, Funeral Rites and the Deification of Toyotomi Hideyoshi], in *Cahiers d'Extrême-Asie* n° 9, Kyoto, 1997; 'Human Rhythm and Divine Rhythm in Ainu Epics', in *Diogenes*, No. 181, 1998; 'De l'inscription de l'histoire nationale dans le sol : à la recherche des tombes impériales à partir de la seconde moitié d'Edo' [National History in the Ground: in Search of the Imperial Tombs from the Second Half of the Edo Period Onward], in *Japon pluriel* 3, Arles, France, Éditions Philippe Picquier, 1999; and 'Le shintô désenchanté' [Shinto as exorcist], in *Cipango*, special edition on changes of consciousness in modern Japan, 2002.

Perspectives of language: cultural differences and universality in Japanese

Mizue Sasaki

Introduction

I will address the subject of the individuality and universality of language using the Japanese language by way of example.

Japanese makes frequent use of the expression *okagesama de*:

Goshujin wa ogenki desu ka ('Is your husband well?') *Okagesama de, genki desu.* ('He's fine, thank you.') – *Musukosan, gokekkon da soo desu ne.* ('I hear your son is going to be married.') *Okagesama de, yoi kata to kekkon dekisoo desu.* ('Yes, thank you for mentioning it, he seems to have found a fine partner.')

It is difficult to find appropriate substitutions for these greetings in other languages. *Okagesama de* conveys the meaning of thanks when someone has offered assistance or kindness. *Kage* from *okagesama de* refers to a sense of protection or shelter that we receive from great Shintoist and Buddhist deities. When people use this expression to talk about marriage or how they are, it is an expression of thanks to God – in this case, to the many different gods and deities found in animism.

In reference to the rediscovery of animism deep within various civilizations of the world, Eiji Hattori maintains that fertile delta regions of the western Pacific Ocean share the 'ethos of the rice-producing civilizations'. The expression *okagesama de* has its very foundation in animism. The sense of gratitude it incorporates, despite being difficult to translate into English, is a universal expression of greeting we find throughout the world. The basis of the expression includes a feeling of gratitude for all things in nature and of co-existence with nature. Hideki Yukawa proposed the explanation 'nature creates curved lines, humans create straight lines'. *Okagesama de* is an expression of Japanese origin that has come down to us from ancient times and suggests the feeling of a 'curved line'.

In Japanese, words of Japanese (*wago*), Chinese (*kango*) and foreign origins (*gairaigo*) co-exist. *Kango* words are associated with men's language,

while *wago* are typically recognized as women's language. In the term *okagesama de*, a phrase of Japanese origin, notably feminine, expressing thanks to the gods of nature, we cannot help but feel the strong sense of 'women's principles' that are deep-rooted in the Japanese language today, more surprising when you consider that it is 'men's principles' that have supposedly advanced civilization.

Languages – civilized and uncivilized

Almost 3,000 different languages are used on earth today, and an equal number of peoples or ethnic groups speak these languages. However, official languages of United Nations Member States number only about two hundred. With the number of newly independent states increasing, so too is the number of official state languages. At this symposium, French, English and Japanese fulfil the function of common languages. However, I feel we should bear in mind that, in the name of the 'unity of civilization', the people of countries that use the 'major languages' are in a favoured position, while those that use so-called 'minority languages' have to continually adapt.

The mistaken ideology of the development model for language, whereby major languages are 'civilized languages' and minority languages are 'uncivilized' ones, was passed on to Marxism after the French Revolution. The Japanese language has experienced a similar history. There have been proposals to replace Japanese script with the Roman alphabet or to replace the language itself with French or English. This might be perceived as a desire to replace an 'uncivilized language' with a 'civilized' one; a 'mother-tongue pessimism' reflecting the climate of the time.

Japan's national language in a period of turmoil

From the final days of the Tokugawa Shogunate into the Meiji Era, Japan entered a period of civilization and enlightenment, along with enhanced national prosperity and defence. It was proposed that the use of Chinese characters in written Japanese should be totally abolished, to improve the efficiency of education. The first person to officially address this question (in 1866), was Hisoka Maejima, who established Japan's postal service.

In 1872, Yoshikazu Nambu submitted a written petition arguing that 'since it is possible in Western scholarship to read with only twenty-six letters,

the national language should be developed using an alphabet that is easy to learn.’ The thinker Amane Nishi also supported the proposal to use the Roman alphabet. There were also those, including the diplomat and educator, Mori Arinori, who believed that the Japanese language should be completely replaced by English. Mori had studied in the United States and Britain, and from 1886 to 1889 was Minister of Education in the first Ito Cabinet of the Meiji Era. If Mori had not been assassinated in 1889, one wonders whether Japan would have had English as its national language, just as several other Asian countries do.

In 1946, prominent writer Shiga Naoya, announced in an article entitled *Kokugo Mondai* (‘The National Language Question’) in the magazine *Kaizoo* (‘Transformation’) that the Japanese language should be replaced by French:

I feel that Japan should boldly take the best language – the most beautiful language in the world – and adopt it, as it is, as the national language. The reason that I am considering French is that France is a country with an advanced culture; when you read French novels, you have the feeling that there is something that can be understood by Japanese people and when you look at French poetry, it is said that it has a style which is common to Japanese poetry, such as *waka* and *haiku* and in this sense, I think that the French language would be most appropriate.

That the so-called ‘patron saint of Japanese novelists’ could propose replacing the national language of Japan with French suggests that Shiga, at that time, felt no pride in the ‘beauty of the Japanese language’. From a present-day Japanese outlook, this desire to change the language that constitutes the very nucleus of its civilization suggests an almost inconceivable sense of loss of self-confidence; an inferiority complex concerned about lagging behind civilized nations, or merely a desire to catch up with ‘civilized’ countries.

Characteristics of the Japanese language

The sound of Japanese

There are certain characteristics of Japanese that are peculiar to it. When Japanese people hear the ring of a telephone, they would most probably translate it as *rin-rin*, where English speakers would say ‘ring, ring’ and French speakers ‘dring, dring’. This is an example of onomatopoeia that differs from language to language. It is not that Japanese ears are anatomically different, it is that there

are differences in the ways various languages verbalize distinctive sounds. Japanese is rich in onomatopoeia and mimesis, with established aural rules.

Characters, *Hiragana*, *Katakana* and Romanized letters

Japanese is unique in its use of both vertical and horizontal writing formats and in the fact that it is a language in which ideographic characters (*kanji* or Chinese characters) and phonetic symbols (the *hiragana* and *katakana* syllabaries) co-exist. Foreign borrowings are written in *katakana* script and in many cases fill a linguistic gap when a word is lacking in Japanese. This feature of the language is easily recognized on the covers of Japanese magazines, where often, for example.

- vertical and horizontal styles of writing intermingle
- four different kinds of script are used – *kanji* (Chinese characters), *hiragana*, *katakana* and the Roman alphabet.
- words of Japanese, Chinese and foreign origin are used for different purposes

In European cultures, the reader's line of sight moves from left to right. With Japanese, the reader assesses the magazine cover as if quickly glancing at an illustration, moving from top to bottom, left to right. The Western approach to reading is linear, while the Japanese approach could be described as trying to comprehend the whole surface at once – a spatial style of reading, if you wish. One might say that the covers of Japanese magazines have the ability to impart understanding at a glance through the association of various kinds of information.

Kress (2003) states that modern pluralistic societies use visual literacy to derive meaning from language as a form of 'linguistic design'. But while English and French, for example, can be written with a flair for the visual impact, and so can be read from the perspective of 'visual literacy', I would go further to suggest that, in Japanese society, without the 'visual literacy' perspective it would not be possible to read signs, magazine covers or newspapers. One could say that when Japanese read text, they unconsciously adopt a 'visual literacy' standpoint. Kress explains this difference by asserting that in Western culture, when you divide a plane into four, there is a consensus that in the top left quadrant you have the given/ideal; in the top right, the new/ideal, in the bottom left, the given/real and in the bottom right quadrant, the new/real. In the case of Japanese, however, there is a consensus regarding height when the writing is arranged vertically (high or low); regarding the use of *kanji* (Chinese characters), *hiragana*, *katakana* and Roman script for

different purposes; and regarding the use of words of Japanese, Chinese and foreign origins.

One important thing to note is that ‘spatial meaning’, engendering mutual understanding, is created in the cultures of various societies. Magazine covers and the like could be said to represent a new style of grammar, restructured through the interaction of the writers (creators) and the readers. Just as in Hong Kong, where both Chinese and English are common languages, in Japanese you have the co-existence of vertical writing and horizontal writing. Kress (2003) introduces photographs of road signs taken before and after Britain returned Hong Kong to China in 1997, on which the positions of the English and Chinese writing had been reversed. While this illustrates the transfer of authority, we can especially appreciate the importance of the viewpoint of ‘visual literacy’. Although Kress merely touches on the difference in ranking order, it is my feeling that it is possible to feel the sense of authority and the consciousness of the people from the positions of the Chinese being written vertically and the English horizontally.

Japanese Vocabulary

The Challenge of Translation

The Japanese language presents a challenge to those wishing to translate it into English, French or other languages. One can only imagine the trouble Seidensticker had in translating Yasunari Kawabata’s 1948 novel, *Yukiguni* (in English, *Snow Country*), from Japanese – a language that does not express the subject. Here is a quote from the novel – the well-known opening sentence:

Kokkyoo no nagai tonneru o nukeru to, yukiguni de atta. (‘The train came out of the long tunnel into the snow country.’)

The subject is absent in the Japanese. The reader understands that the subject is ‘the train’, without it having to be stated: leaving things unsaid is one of the characteristics of Japanese writing. However, when it comes to translating it into English, without the subject ‘the train’, the structure of the sentence breaks down. This is only the opening sentence of the novel, yet when you carefully examine *Snow Country*, you come across any number of instances where Seidensticker has provided subject words. It is often suggested that Japanese do not mention the subjects because they do not like to bring themselves to the forefront. However, I feel it is more to the point that Japanese is a guessing

culture, one in which things are left unsaid, allowing the person addressed to fill in the gaps him- or herself.

When you wish to decline a person's invitation in Japan, you only need to say *Kyoo wa yakusoku ga atte...* ('Well, actually, I have a previous appointment today...'). You do not actually say 'I can't make it'; the person being spoken to presumes that part. I have given this kind of usage, where the person addressed to has to guess some details, the name *sasshi yoohoo* ('the usage of conjecture or guessing'). When tackling a translation, it can be necessary to fill in details that in Japanese demand this 'usage of conjecture'.

Osewasama desu wa ('Thank you for all of your help!')

The heroine of *Snow Country*, Komako, uses this expression in the novel. The *wa* at the end of the sentence is a sentence-final particle used by women, and in *Snow Country*, these sentence-final particles appear frequently. While the different usages of Japanese, depending upon the gender of the speaker, is an interesting aspect of the language, recently there has been a convergence of male and female speech, with a decreasing frequency of sentence-final particles used by men such as *zo* and *ze* and those used by women, such as *wa*. Nevertheless, sentence-final particles characteristic of women's speech are still used in Japanese subtitles. When subtitles translate a modern American female astronaut, for example, as using the sentence-final particles you would associate with the speech of a much older woman, it never fails to draw a wry smile.

Translated Japanese, from the point of view of language and gender, makes for an interesting research topic. One reason for this is that you do not have sentence-final particles in English, French or Korean. Unable to translate the sentence-final particle *wa*, Seidensticker adds 'she said' after Komako speaks. Even when a conversation between two people continues for some time, Japanese people are able to ascertain whether something was being said by the man or the woman, however, when translated into English, if it is not specified who is speaking at a particular time, the reader is unable to differentiate one speaker from the other.

Kawabata was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature for *Snow Country*, however, if it were up to me, I would have awarded Seidensticker a Nobel Prize for the English translation. Such is the significance of this translation.

Japanese as a lingua franca – the example of mottainai

Many words in Japanese cannot be translated into other languages and so are used as they are. Besides the typical examples of *sukiyaki* and *sushi*, I would like to introduce to you today the expression *mottainai* ('What a waste!'). This

was introduced as a slogan for environmental protection by Wangari Maathai, a recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize and the Kenyan Vice-Minister of the Environment, at a session of the United Nations.

Dr Maathai, born in 1940, is a Kenyan environmental activist. She was the first woman from East Africa to be awarded a doctorate and the first woman to become a professor at the University of Nairobi. On a visit to Japan, Dr Maathai was deeply impressed by the expression *mottainai*, and became determined to publicize it to the world. At the United Nation session, Dr Maathai, brandishing a t-shirt emblazoned with the term MOTTAINAI, explained that the meaning of the term *mottainai* encompasses the four Rs of reduce, reuse, recycle and repair. She appealed to those in attendance – representatives of government and non-governmental organizations – to shout it out in chorus: ‘Come on everybody, repeat after me – MOTTAINAI!’ Doctor Maathai made the case that we should all use limited resources effectively and share them fairly if we are to avert wars arising from disputes over natural resources.

Japanese society has been inundated with throwaway goods since the 1960s. Things that can still be of use – personal computers, washing machines and air conditioners – models that may have become slightly outmoded, are discarded almost every day in garbage collection areas outside apartment buildings. Dr Maathai’s focusing on the expression *mottainai* was truly a wonderful discovery on her part. The term expresses the sense of regret felt when a valuable person or thing is not handled with due respect, or when something has not been effectively made use of. This meaning covers ‘sacred’ or ‘important’ things and the context for this is the Japanese polytheistic way of thinking.

Japan was a polytheistic nation before Buddhism appeared on the scene. *Kami* or deities are to be found everywhere – in the mountains, the rivers, the trees and the rocks. The Japanese expression *mottainai*, I feel, includes a sense of respect for the favour of the many deities. There is a belief in Japan that within all things in nature, there dwells a deity, as well as in all manner of everyday things – from the cooking stove in the kitchen to the clothes on one’s back. A great number of expressions of greeting in Japanese remind us of these deities. The expression of gratitude *arigatoo* (‘thank you’) originally implied a sense of ‘rarity’ – something ‘curious’ and ‘precious’. In the Middle Ages, the expression took on the meaning of a sense of religious gratitude for the mercy of Buddha – something one has received which is precious and not easily obtained. In early-modern times, the term *arigatoo* assumed the more general meaning of ‘gratitude’ or ‘thanks’. We can gain a clearer perception of the mentality of Japanese people from the etymology of Japanese greetings.

Towards a multi-cultural society

The Japanese language, with its characteristic phonological and writing systems and spoken language has survived into the twenty-first century and has even produced expressions that are shared throughout the world. Nowadays, large numbers of foreigners live in Japan. In 2005, the number of officially registered foreign residents stood at 1,780,000. In large train stations in Tokyo, directions are posted in Japanese, English, Chinese and Korean, and it is not unusual to come across information in municipal offices written in various foreign languages.

Florian Coulmas has described Japan as journeying towards becoming a multi-cultural society. With the numbers of foreigners living in Japan on the rise, Japan will have to tackle the problem of the nation's future language policy, while simultaneously addressing the question of minority groups.

I would like to consider, once again, the statement 'the nucleus of civilization is the ethos and at its centre we have language'. What will become of Japan's 'language regime' in the future? As Japan comes to accept its multilingual society, with the society becoming steadily more multilingual, I feel that there will be improvement in the teaching of Japanese to foreigners, while the Japanese language-focused linguistic regime continues to develop.

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Biography

Mizue Sasaki teaches courses in Japanese language and the theory of cross-cultural communication at Musashino University. She is an expert in the teaching of Japanese, and specializes in sociolinguistics.

Professor Sasaki is the 44th holder of the Cultural Award from Sankei Children's Publications, and is currently President of the Society for Gender Studies in Japanese. She has published many works on Japanese language and culture, including *Gaikokugo To Shite no Nihongo* [Japanese as a Foreign Language], Tokyo, Koodansha 1994, now in its eighteenth edition, and *The Complete Japanese Expression Guide*, Tokyo, Tuttle Press, 1993.

4th Session:

The Impact of Modernity on the Transfer of Cultures

Moderated by Moufida Goucha, Chief of the Section of
Philosophy and Human Sciences, UNESCO

Confucian values: a catalyst for modern Europe

Danielle Elisseeff

That China influenced the development of the Enlightenment in pre-modern Europe has not been in doubt for many years; but the many causes of this well-known influence make it legitimate to continue analysing one of the factors which played a crucial role in the process: the teaching of Confucius. For Confucius, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, became a sort of emblematic figure in Europe, the doorkeeper to a condition of which Western intellectuals dreamed, and which they despaired of ever achieving. Whether or not they properly understood this extremely foreign way of thinking matters little, nor whether they perhaps idealized the actual social conditions in China at the time. The ‘media’ success of Confucianism in Europe is still an extraordinary case study: for we see there how one society (or set of societies) can find in another the elements they need at a particular moment in their history.

The Confucian wave began in the West as early as the last quarter of the sixteenth century, when a Spanish monk, Juan González de Mendoza, published in Rome in 1585 a *History of the Great Kingdom of China*, the fruits of his travels in China in 1577, 1579 and 1581. The book caused a sensation, and was immediately translated into many languages to an unprecedented reception: it became an international best-seller. No thinker of the time failed to find matter in it for reflection, and even for revision of all that had been taken for granted previously: Michel de Montaigne (1533–92) for example, was a great reader of this book and expresses his wonderment at discovering through it ‘a world [China] vaster and more various’ than that of the West; one which, he said, ‘surpasses us in many areas of excellence’ and even surpassed the Ancients (the Greeks and Romans); a world where, among others marvels, the printed book – the very archetype of modern knowledge in the Europe of his time – had already been in existence for many centuries.

The shock was repeated in the following generation, when works based on those of the Italian Jesuit Matteo Ricci (1552–1610) revealed the stature of a philosopher immediately recognized as the contemporary and *alter ego* of Socrates: Confucius. His teaching, said Fr. Ricci and his popular interpreters, was wholly directed to the study of humans and right conduct. But what they found most surprising of all was that he had over many generations inspired the

organization of the Chinese state, the idealized view of which held Europe spellbound at the time: to make society work in accordance with the natural order, or *tianli*¹, the state recruited the best of its servants (some of its officials) by assessing their skills and knowledge through a system of literary and philosophical examinations. In this way the Chinese elites renewed themselves using criteria of knowledge, not solely according to birth as was generally the case in Europe.

This widely-known point – swiftly exploited by this group and that for purposes of polemic – is highly important, because it immediately made the Chinese state in European eyes an utterly different intellectual context from that of the Western monarchies of the day: it was a state which made and respected (in principle, admittedly; there might sometimes be some gap between principles and reality!) laws established to resolve real, practical, human problems with a view to the welfare of the greatest number, without reference to any such divine revelation as was omnipresent in the European political thought of the day – though beginning just then to be challenged.

European readers believed, as did their Jesuit informers, that the Chinese state therefore functioned not on the basis of a system of authority linking the sovereign to God, but by bringing a rational mechanism to bear; and they began to hold up as an example this Chinese state that respected rules chosen for their effectiveness and the logicity of their organization, one of the very definitions of modernity. From the mid-seventeenth century, this modern logicity was clearly associated with Confucius, as Alvaro Semedo's book, published in Lisbon in 1642², clearly shows.

It is not surprising, therefore, that some four decades later, while Europe itself was reconsidering the meaning of the fundamental terms used by its intellectuals to express religious or philosophical concepts, a translation of the principal Confucian texts under the direction of Fr. Philippe Couplet³ (Paris, 1687) also proved a publishing triumph throughout the continent.

This was an important moment in the history of the West: for the first time, a Chinese classic (in the sense of a work taught and examined on) was introduced to Westerners so vastly removed from its context. It shook the Greek and Latin authors' monopoly of prestige in Europe: for while it was just as

1. See for example the French adaptation of the works of Fr. Ricci: Nicolas Trigault, *Histoire de l'expédition chrétienne au royaume de la Chine*, [History of the Christian expedition to the Kingdom of China], Lyon, Horace Cardon, 1616, p. 165–88.

2. *Breve recopilação dos principios, continuação et estado da christandade da China*, [Brief account of the beginnings, continuation and present state of Christianity in China], Lisbon, Paulo Craesbeeck, 1642.

3. *Confucius Sinarum philosophus*, [Confucius, the philosopher of the Chinese], Paris, Daniel Horthemels, 1687.

ancient, it had never suffered the partial neglect of which European medieval learning could be accused. This uninterrupted longevity gave it a stronger cachet, all the more so because the Jesuit translators had done as much as they could to suppress news of the debates which in China itself had, at least since the sixteenth century under the Ming dynasty, seen opposition between the partisans of the ancient Confucian traditions and those of the philosophical constructions organized under the Song from the eleventh century to the thirteenth.

The other great merit of Fr. Couplet's *Confucius* is that it was a translation into Latin; for the use of that language (normal at the time) gave the Chinese terms their full ideological and practical force (the term 'virtus', for example, whose Latin connotations are reasonably close to the Chinese), while at the same time using a learned language, and as such the European equivalent of the Chinese *wenyan*.

From then on, European intellectuals strove to fill their work with Confucianism; like their Korean or Japanese counterparts, they did not try to assimilate whatever seemed to them barely comprehensible, but – and this is the necessary condition of assimilation – they chose from the available texts the elements of Confucius that spoke most to them. The most important concept for them was this very one of 'virtue', which philosophers such as, for example, La Mothe Le Vayer in France (1588–1672) were trying to purge of revealed religion.⁴ Through the issue of virtue, then, these people perceived China as an advanced country where everything was in theory conducive to social peace, where religion had become a private matter and the public sphere was concerned only with behaviour.

It is not important here whether these European readers' perceptions were accurate or Utopian. What matters is that these attitudes helped introduce a form of Confucianism into the European world; and that through such discussions a certain form of Chinese rationality began to rival the authority of Greek rationality in Europe. European intellectuals of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries strove to draw lessons from China because China represented a *terra incognita*, something entirely new, a great Fact which no amount of reasoning could dismiss; and this made it the emblem of an all-questioning modernity that had to be assimilated as a matter of urgency.

Another important thing should also be stressed: these initial European reactions to some aspects of Confucian thought – reactions well prior to the politically combative attitudes of later thinkers such as Voltaire – may be polemical at times, but they are often also free from preconceived ideas. They belong to a process very much older than the Orientalism defined by Edward Said,⁵ and to

4. *De la vertu des payens*, [On the virtue of the heathens], Paris, Francois Targa, 1642.

5. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism*, New York, Collins, 1979.

historians they counsel prudence. The processes of meeting or opposing other cultures need to be examined above all in the light of detailed historical study: only this will ultimately allow the development of more general and coherent patterns; for in history as in any other science, a theory that seeks to cover too much is in danger of explaining nothing.

It is in this spirit that we should view, for example, the first studies of the Chinese language undertaken around 1710 by two members of the French Academy, Nicolas Fréret (1688–1749) and Étienne Fourmont (1683–1745). They tried – without leaving Paris, but profiting from the presence of a young Chinese man, Arcade Hoang (1679–1716), in Paris under the patronage of the French Foreign Missions Society and King Louis XIV’s librarian – to develop a new way of thinking about how to approach a totally unknown language system. In tightly focused conversations these three men worked from deduction to deduction in an effort to delineate linguistic categories that would suit three languages at once, Latin, French and Chinese. Between 1730 and 1740, Fourmont continued the work that had begun at the start of the century by arranging for a set of 40,000 Chinese typographical characters to be engraved, precisely because this non-standard language – which Leibniz predicted would one day become the universal language just because of the peculiar nature of its writing – forced him to go beyond his established frames of reference, and to question what he had taken for granted.

This is perhaps why China and Confucian values seemed then so modern to Western intellectuals, and therefore so attractive: they encouraged them to shatter frameworks, to look for the lowest, but most solid, common denominator between people and civilizations.

Biography

Danielle Elisseeff was born in 1938 and is an archivist and palaeographer at the École Nationale des Chartes in Paris. She graduated from the Sorbonne’s École Pratique des Hautes Études, and has a doctorate from its Centre de Recherche sur l’Extrême-Orient. She is a reader emeritus at the Centre for Modern and Contemporary Chinese Studies of the EHSS (Advanced School of Social Science) in Paris, and teaches at the École du Louvre.

Her publications include *Nicolas Fréret, Fréret, Réflexions d’un humaniste du XVIII^e siècle sur la Chine* [an Eighteenth-Century Humanist’s Reflections on China], Paris, Collège de France, Institut des Hautes Études Chinoises, 1978; *Moi, Arcade, interprète chinois du Roi Soleil* [I, Arcade, the Sun King’s Chinese Interpreter], Arthaud, Paris, 1985; ‘Chinese Influence in France, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries’ in Thomas H.C. Lee (ed.), *China and Europe, Images and Influences in the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*, Hongkong, The Chinese University Press, 1991; *Histoire de Chine : les racines du présent* [History of China: the Roots of the Present], Paris, Éditions du Rocher, 1997; *Histoire du Japon : entre Chine et Pacifique* [History of Japan: Between China and the Pacific], Paris, Éditions du Rocher, 2001; *Les arts de l’Extrême-Orient* [The Arts of the Far East], second revised edition, Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2003; and *Confucius, Words in Action*, Paris, Gallimard, 2003.

East Asia and the evolution of common values

Yersu Kim

A culture, if it is to survive and prosper, must constantly adapt its ideas, values and practices to changing and changed circumstances. Cultures and civilizations of every time and place strive to forge an optimal synthesis of ideas and values that best enable them to deal with the tasks of survival and prospering. At some point in time and place, this synthesis would be perceived, by those inside as well as outside, to have reached an optimal point, a reflective equilibrium in the process of the interaction and interchange of ideas and values on the one hand and a recalcitrant but changing reality on the other.

I see East Asia from the fourteenth to the nineteenth century to have achieved such a synthesis. It was a universalistic cultural order based to a great extent part on a Confucianism that venerated the past. It propounded a distinct view of humanity and the moral significance of every aspect of human, natural and societal life. This civilizational order gave East Asia many centuries of political stability and cultural achievements. Even as a young civilization was in the making, progressively strengthening its universalistic claims through a dizzy succession of transformations subsequently known as the Renaissance, the Reformation, the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution and Colonialism, East Asia was supremely confident of its cultural superiority, and largely oblivious of the challenge posed by the new historical reality.

Not nearly as spectacular, but certainly more far-reaching in its consequences, was the 'clash of civilizations' that took place two centuries before the attacks of September 11, 2001. In 1793, Emperor Ch'ien-lung of the Ching dynasty granted an audience to Lord Macartney, an emissary of the of King George in search of expanded trade with China. In the eyes of the Chinese, Great Britain was merely one of the distant tributaries within the sphere of its civilization, and they demanded that Lord Macartney perform kowtow, the ritualistic essence of East Asian cultural universalism, consisting of three genuflections, each accompanied by three prostrations.

The encounter ended in an inconclusive compromise. The British emissary finally performed three genuflections, without the prostrations required of tributary emissaries. But we must remember that, by this time, Britain was in

the early stages of the Industrial Revolution, and the visit took place some four years after the French Revolution. In many ways, events that epitomize European modernity. Barely fifty years later, the British had grown strong and audacious enough to resort to military means to advance its trade interest. With the Opium Wars of the nineteenth century, China began a progressive but rapid descent into a semi-colonial state. East Asian civilization was clearly facing challenge to its universalistic claims and a grave threat to its survivability as a viable civilization.

Suddenly confronted with vitality of European civilization and its challenge to their viability, countries in East Asia attempted to deal with the situation each in its own way. Although there were important differences in speed and modality, there was a distinct pattern in the responses made by East Asian countries. They tried first to mobilize national resources under the banner 'Rich Nation and Strong Military'. They then set out to achieving this goal by learning the technological ways of the West, while remaining faithful to the spiritual and moral values of the East. Finally there emerged a gradual realization that the path of 'Eastern Ethics and Western Technology' was more easily said than done. There was a sense that the Confucian cultural synthesis was no longer adequate, indeed was detrimental, in dealing with the historical realities of the modern world created on the foundation of the Western synthesis.

By the end of nineteenth century it was clear that the Western synthesis was enabling humanity to lead a material existence at a level never before imagined possible and a societal existence in which democracy, social justice and the rights of human beings were increasingly becoming norms. The persuasiveness of this world was such that many peoples and societies willingly abandoned their customary truths and ways of life. Although there were differences in speed and modality, this meant the adoption and internalization of many of the values and practices of the Western cultural synthesis. East Asian civilization, abandoning its traditional role as the teaching civilization, became a willing pupil of Western civilization. In moments of doubt and uncertainty, one needed simply to turn to the ready-made cultural model provided by the Western synthesis.

Today, in the early years of the twenty-first century, East Asia, a region in which 1.6 billion people live, has once again become one of the major poles of the world economy, together with Europe and North America. It is also becoming increasingly clear that modernization in the sense of Westernization is drawing to a close. As the process of modernization nears completion in terms of material wealth in many countries of East Asia, the validity and persuasiveness of the Western synthesis is coming under scrutiny. A growing sense of uncertainty and crisis has been evident now for a number of years, a sense that the ideas and values underlying the Western synthesis that had served humanity so well in its

tasks of survival and prospering seem now to be increasingly irrelevant and even counter-productive. The ideas and assumptions on which modern society had been founded are no longer adequate to deal with many of the central problems facing humanity, such as environmental catastrophes, inequalities among individuals as well as among nations, and the dehumanization of work and consequent deprivation of purpose and meaning of life.

By the time East Asia embarked on this modernization process, the material and institutional achievements of Western civilization were in full bloom. Today, even as it has become clear that the Western synthesis is no longer able to offer a sure guide to human survival and prospering, East Asia is nowhere near forging a clear conception of where it wishes to go from here. Efforts have not been lacking in proffering 'East Asian' solutions to the problems facing humanity. One such effort was the 'Asian values' debate of the 1990s, which focussed on values that emphasised education, consensus-building, harmony, responsibility and leadership.

This symposium has the objective of identifying those 'transversal values' shared between Europe and East Asia. It will make an important contribution to the task of bringing to life those spiritual and cultural values that could be resources with which to forge a new cultural synthesis, perhaps just an expansion and revision of a partly flawed cultural synthesis. I believe the starting point of such an effort at cultural synthesis is to see these values in clear relation to the tasks and problems that afflict humanity and to try to come to grips with them. In a sense I am proposing that we reverse the conceptual process that seems to be at the methodological basis of this symposium. I am proposing that we look first at the fundamental problems that afflict Europe and East Asia, and indeed humanity as a whole, and then try to see what values are needed to deal with these problems. The required values may turn out to be European, East Asian or of some other provenance. We understand these values because they are connected closely, in an existential way, with the problems we know first-hand. People from different cultures can communicate in intelligible way about these values because the problems from which they spring are common to these different cultures.

We would do well to keep in mind the origin of the notion of transversality, which comes from geometry. The values of different cultures and civilizations intersect at points where there is a perception of the commonality of the problems that they face. To be sure, the idea of transversality is not an easy notion, and it may in the end prove not to be possible to free it from the metaphysical and epistemological baggage that burden the notion of universality. It seems, however, to be more 'user-friendly' than universality, since the latter is bound up with the difficulties of communicability and translatability, as well as with the charge of hegemonism.

What is clear is that both Europe and East Asia have a common task at hand of forging a cultural synthesis that can serve humanity as it faces the realities of the twenty-first century and beyond. A radical cultural synthesis is clearly called for, but there is no dominant voice that can claim with certainty and authority the form and direction this transformation should take. But whatever form and direction it may eventually come to take, one can identify a number of recurring issues.

There is, first and foremost, the task of constructing an appropriate revision of the aggressive individualistic ethics that form the backbone of Western civilization. Can this be tempered or even replaced by a greater concern for the common good? Can we make the ethos and institutions of traditional communalist societies relevant for the societies of tomorrow? Can familism, which is often pointed out as an essential element in traditional East Asian culture, be sublimated into a normative standard for more inclusive and cooperative human relationships?

Most controversial perhaps is the problem of a fundamental readjustment of the human relationship to nature. In place of the conception of humans as a being separate from nature, obliged to conquer it, a less exploitative outlook must take root, which sees humans as one species among others embedded in the intricate web of natural processes that contain and sustain all forms of life. Such an outlook must be supported by the knowledge that there are limits to our natural resources and that human intervention in these processes is bound to have far-reaching consequences. The human relationship to nature must be one that is able to deal with the still unsolved problem of poverty and underdevelopment in much of the world. In short, it must enable us to manage the complexity and stability of nature to sustain our economy. The task ahead is not simply to control nature but to control ourselves so that economics can fit appropriately within natural ecology. Can traditional East Asian ecological thinking offer helpful intellectual and spiritual resources in dealing with the problems of the twenty-first century?

Just as crucial is the problem of social justice, both at national and international levels. The forces of a globalizing economy are creating great wealth for humanity, even as they widen the gap between the haves and have-nots within and among societies and nations. Are received conceptions of justice adequate to deal with these problems? Is there some way that a fundamentally different idea of justice can be incorporated into the received, widening its applicability without sacrificing the purpose for which the idea of justice stands?

Finally, the issue of the meaning of life figures importantly in these debates. This is connected to the attitude that sees human flourishing primarily in terms of an accumulation of material wealth. Such an attitude must be replaced

by a more holistic sense of perspective, which knows how to balance and coordinate human satisfaction among many different dimensions of human existence. This new perspective would be one that places the inner satisfaction of the mind on the same or even on a higher level than material satisfactions. Art, music, poetry and rituals would temper and enrich barren rationalism, regaining their commensurate places in the lives of men and women. It would be a perspective in which reason and emotion, quality and quantity, future and past have their own appropriate and respected places. Is the idea of self-cultivation that stands at the core of the traditional East Asian ethical and cultural tradition relevant and adequate to the realities of the twenty-first century?

These are all open questions. It would be cultural arrogance in the extreme to think that any one of the world's cultures alone had answers to these problems. Because we live in an age more sceptical about universal ideas and values and more receptive toward plurality and diversity, I believe it is primarily in the way our cultures or civilizations come to grips with the fundamental problems we face that we must seek the commonality that binds different peoples and societies. The task of cultural transformation in terms of common values is a task that challenges all our cultures. Cultural interaction will have to be a 'conversation of humankind', and the cultural synthesis hoped for will be neither European nor East Asian, but transversal, one 'whose centre is everywhere and its circumference nowhere'.¹

Biography

Yersu Kim graduated from Harvard (USA) and holds a PhD from the University of Bonn (Germany). He is Dean of the Graduate School of NGO Studies at Kyung Hee University, Korea. He was Director of the Division of Philosophy and Ethics at UNESCO, Paris, from 1995 to 2000, and Secretary-General of the Korean National Commission for UNESCO from 2000 to 2004. He was also Professor of Philosophy at the National University of Seoul from 1977 to 1998.

Dr Kim has been particularly active in Korean as well as in international academic circles: he has been President of the Korean Philosophical Association, Secretary-General of the Afro-Asian Philosophy Association, and Vice-President of the International Federation of Philosophical Associations. He sits on the organizing committee for the 22nd World Congress of Philosophy which is to be held in Seoul (Republic of Korea) in 2008.

He has published a great many works in Korean and English, dealing with matters concerning the philosophy of language, the philosophy of culture, universal ethics, and aspects of Korean culture.

1. Empedocles, Greek philosopher, fifth century BC. Quoted by Ralph Waldo Emerson in *Progress of Culture*. Phi Beta Kappa Address, July 18, 1867. [Emerson, R. W., and Emerson E. W. (ed.). 2006. *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, Vol. 8, Ann Arbor, Michigan, University of Michigan Library, <http://www.hti.umich.edu>.]

From Watsuji's concept of 'human' to beyond the limits of modern ontological *topos*

Augustin Berque

Ningen: the twofold structure of human-ness

Watsuji Tetsuro (1889–1960), one of the major Japanese philosophers of the twentieth century, is known primarily for his *Ethics*. He conceived this whole work as a study of human-ness, *ningen no gaku*.¹ The term *ningen* (human) in fact symbolizes his central idea, in which 'humanity' has a twofold structure, at once individual and social. The written word is a composite of two Chinese ideograms which (when on their own) are pronounced *hito* and *aida* in Japanese, meaning 'man' and 'between' respectively: one can therefore understand the two in combination as 'human relationship'. Thus the very concept of *ningen* contains, according to Watsuji, the idea of an ethical relationship between individuals that makes them human in the full sense of the term. Removed from this relationship, by contrast, the individual becomes no more than an abstraction, and it is impossible to base ethics on such an abstraction.

Ningen comes from the Chinese (where it is pronounced *renjian*), but its meaning in the original language is not the same as in Japanese. *Renjian* means rather 'people, the world'. In this sense, Japanese pronounces the ideogram *ningen* 'jinkan'. It was in Japan that that initial sense gave way to that of 'human' or 'human-ness', with the pronunciation 'ningen'.

Quite apart from the etymology of the term *ningen*, Watsuji's *Ethics* gives preponderant weight to the second of its component ideograms, which has the general meaning of 'relational space', between people, between things,

1. On this point see Watsuji Tetsurô, 'The significance of ethics as the study of the human being', translated (into French) by Bernard Stevens, *Philosophy*, No. 79, September 2003, pp. 5–24. This text is the first section of the Introduction to *Ethics*, whose original edition *Rinrigaku* was published in three volumes from 1934 to 1949 by Iwanami in Tokyo.

English readers can consult *Rinrigaku: Ethics in Japan*, translated by Yamamoto Seisaku and Robert E. Carter, Albany, State University of New York Press, 1996.

or between people and things. Between people, *aida* appears in the term *aidagara*, which analytically means the affiliation among (*aida*) the members of a family, tribe or nation to which one belongs by birth, all instances of a group (*kara*). *Aidagara* is usually translated by ‘relationship’ (of one person with another). Watsuji uses it in a sense that could perhaps be rendered ‘social organicity’, or even ‘social body’.²

In his 1935 essay *Fūdo* (‘Human Environments’), Watsuji shows that it is through this social body that human beings relate to the things around them. This relationship is essentially different from that established by the dualistic paradigm of modern Western thought, which directly opposes subject (individual) and object. For Watsuji that kind of view was just an abstraction. It is not only the *hito* (the individual) only who is involved, nor is the individual to be contrasted with surroundings that consist of objects. In the practical reality of human environments, there is a ‘between-link’, an *aida*, between people and things, that same *aida* that is the second half of *ningen*, and constitutes the common background against which (or basis on which) the *hito*’s individuality is established.

Thus, in the human situation, the environment is not a simple object, but somehow imprinted with the subjective quality of the human who engages with it; it is a peculiarly human environment, or *fūdo*. Watsuji makes a categorical distinction between this *fūdo* and the ordinary word for ‘surroundings’, *kankyō*, which is indeed a ‘mere’ object, the object of the natural sciences.

The background to Watsuji’s conception is a Heidegger-type hermeneutics, so it uses concepts such as *Ausser-sich-sein* or the quality of ‘being outside oneself’: this becomes in Japanese *soto ni dete iru*, also known as ‘ex-sistence’. However, while Heidegger’s *dasein* is essentially time-structured (hence the title of his 1927 thesis, *Sein und Zeit* – ‘Being and Time’), Watsuji shows in *Fūdo* that human existence is just as much structured by space. There must therefore be a counterpart to history, an environment which is the concrete incarnation of human existence, without which its time-structured aspect would only be an abstraction. Put in the most concrete terms, the part of the [human] being which is ‘outside itself’ is a certain environment; and that environment being the *aida* of the *ningen*, it is necessarily social.

Humans are accordingly twofold: a combination of an individual ‘half’, the *hito*, and a social one, the *fūdo*.

2. ‘*Gara*’ can indeed mean ‘body’, for example in the expression ‘*gara ga ookii*’, ‘to have a great *gara*’, that is, to be tall.

Animal body and environmental body

Watsuji's conception of the human being has to some extent been corroborated by the clinically based phenomenology of bodily sensation in the work of Merleau-Ponty (*Phenomenology of Perception*, 1945), who does speak of a 'behaviour environment' in this area. That environment only partially corresponds, however, with Watsuji's idea of the *fūdo*, even though we can find in his text the idea that the environment is indeed the flesh (*nikutai*) of human-ness. This idea is not developed, though, and does not really relate to Merleau-Ponty's clinical approach: Watsuji remains within the framework of hermeneutic phenomenology. Moreover the scale and the ontological structure are both different: the 'behaviour environment' envisaged by Merleau-Ponty is directly connected with movements of the individual body, while Watsuji's *fūdo*, being social, extends over areas without precise boundaries, which can indeed be a whole country (Japan, for instance), or even a continent (Europe).

Watsuji's twofold structure of the human according to Watsuji has on the other hand been directly corroborated by the anthropologist Leroi-Gourhan (see *Gesture and Speech*, Cambridge, Ma., MIT University Press, 1993). He argues that the human race emerged by externalizing certain functions of the animal body in the form of a social body composed of the technical and symbolic systems peculiar to humanity. When we reflect that this (techno-symbolic) social body of Leroi-Gourhan is necessarily incorporated in the surrounding ecosystems – 'anthropizing' them through technology and humanizing them through symbols – it might be better to speak of an (eco-techno-symbolic) 'environmental body', which would be another expression for the environment, as necessary complement to the animal body in the case of humans. An evident parallel then emerges between the two structural dualities, animal body/environmental body and *hito/fūdo*; and this parallel is all the more cogent since it was established, so to speak, in a double-blind experiment: the positivist paleoanthropologist Leroi-Gourhan knew absolutely nothing of Heidegger's hermeneutic phenomenology, and a *fortiori* nothing of Watsuji's.

Mediance and 'trajection'

Watsuji named this structural duality of which the human being consists *fūdosei*, and defined the concept (in the first sentence of *Fūdo*) as 'the

structural moment of human existence' (*ningen sonzai no kōzō keiki*).³ I have translated this concept as 'mediance', a word derived from the Latin *medietas*, or 'half'. From this point of view, the human is made of two halves, one its animal body (individual), the other its environmental body (collective).

As mediance is inherent in our very humanity, it is only by abstraction that one can extract the one half which is the animal body – yet it is precisely such an abstraction on which the modern conception of a human being (the individual, or subject) rests: one limited to this half alone, while the second (the environment) is regarded as something essentially separate from that individual (the individual's surroundings, objects). Watsuji insists on the need to avoid confusing the environment (*fūdo*), which is full of our subjective quality, with such objective surroundings (*kankyō*).

But it is necessary to go beyond the idea that the environment is 'only' subjective, while the surroundings are objective. That way of looking at it would only be a translation of modern dualism, and would abstract humans from their environmental reality.⁴ Watsuji, for his part, only speaks of the subjective quality⁵ of the environment. Now the environmental body cannot, of course, be called 'subjective' in the same way as the individual; that would be to confuse it with a mere representation when actually it has a physical reality, that of our surroundings, which it constitutes at the same time as being our environment. This ambivalence had been foreshadowed as early as the fifth century by the first theoretician of landscape, Zong Bing (375–443), who wrote at the very start of his *Introduction to Landscape Painting* (*Huan shanshui xu*) that 'as for landscape, though it has substance, it still tends towards [the] spirit'.⁶ This ambivalence must be related to that of the environment, which is not only ecological, but at the same time symbolic and technical; in other words, both material and immaterial.

Now techniques and symbols are both systems which develop the functions of our animal body, extending them in a world which is properly human; one which, combined with the surrounding ecosystems, constitutes the environment of our life. Nevertheless, their role in this respect is the other way around (and therefore necessarily complementary): while techniques deploy our body in a world, symbols redeploy that world in our body, and make it

3. Here the term 'moment' (*keiki*) has as in mechanics the sense of kinetic force, such as torque (here that of the animal body/medial body).

4. 'Medial': pertaining to a 'milieu' (environment), or pertaining to mediance.

5. More accurately 'subjecthood' *shutaisei*, not 'subjectivity', *shukansei*.

6. *Zhi yu shanshui, zhi you er qu ling*.

present there – not, of course, as substance, but as representation, i.e. in spirit (*ling*).⁷ This back-and-forth intercourse between body and world is ‘trajection’ and, because of it, our environment is neither strictly objective nor strictly subjective; it is ‘trajective’.

Topos and chōra

This modern abstraction has multiple origins. It owes a great deal to Christianity, which made the individual conscience the seat of the absolute (*manes in memoria mea, Domine*).⁸ However, the thinking that restricts the individual’s identity to an animal body goes back to the Aristotelian conception of place (*topos*), and correspondingly to the logic, also referred to as ‘Aristotelian’ of subjective identity. In his *Physics*, Aristotle defines *topos* as ‘the limit within which a body is, a limit considered as immobile’.⁹ The identity of a thing is limited to its *topos* as to an unmoving vase (*aggeion ametakinêton*, pp. 212–15). It cannot go beyond it, or it would have another shape and would therefore be something else. On the other hand, it keeps its identity even when changing place; for that identity is attached to its substance, not to its place.

This conception is a remote intimation of the modern ‘object’, which keeps its identity regardless of the places it occupies. More particularly, it prefigures the modern ontological *topos* ‘individual body: individual person’. Throughout the history of European thought, in fact, this conception of ‘place’, or rather of ‘environment’ has prevailed over another, the one which Plato sets out in the *Timaeus* and calls ‘*chōra*?’. Unlike the Aristotelian *topos*, the *chōra* has no precise contours, nor any definable identity. Plato only indicates its nature through metaphors, some of which appear to contradict others: it is, for instance, both the impressed wax of a mould (*ekmageion*, 50 c1) and the matrix (mother, *mêtêr*, 50 d 2; nurse, *tithênê*, 52 d 4) of whatever thing is in it. That ‘thing’ in turn has no established identity; it is a *genesis* that is only the reflection of a paradigm, the absolute being, which transcends time and space,

7. With the physiological involvement of the flesh, naturally. On this, see George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Philosophy in the Flesh. The Embodied Mind and its Challenge to Western Thought*, New York, Basic Books, 1999.

8. ‘[But where in my memory dost thou abide, O Lord?...] Assuredly Thou dwellest in it’. Saint Augustine, *Confessions*, X, 25,36. By ‘*memoria*’ Augustine means what later came to be called ‘consciousness’.

9. *To tou periechontos peras akinêton prôton*, 212–20. One standard English translation – but not necessarily the most useful for the present purpose – is ‘the first unchangeable limit of that which surrounds’ (Edward Hussey, Oxford, 1983).

whereas the *genesis* is necessarily located in (and participant in) its own *chōra*. The *genesis* (the relative being) and its *chōra* (environment) are inseparable.

To relate these ideas to those above, we may posit that the human's true place is both the *topos* of that human's animal body and the *chōra* of his/her environmental body. In other words, a human being lives in the structural moment *topos/chōra*: what we have called 'mediance'.

In human history, 'Modernity' will turn out to have been an epoch when thinkers only took account of the first term of this ontological moment through which we have our existence. It is our task now to restore it in all its fullness.

'Being-towards-life'

Why do we need to restore its environment to the human being? Because the modern ontological *topos*, in abstracting the human from its earthly surroundings, leads in the end to an unsustainable world that is doomed, sooner or later. Our way of life cannot be prolonged indefinitely: its ecological footprint is too large by one third for the capacities of the biosphere, and this excess is worsening. If we all lived like Californians, we would already need four or five planets for such a mode of life to be sustainable in the long term.

These issues can be quantified in ecological terms; but their root cause lies in the dualism which has detached humans from their environment. It is impossible to found an environmental ethic within such a framework, since the modern ontological *topos* cannot, of its very nature, take into account any other than individual interests: it rules out in advance the environmental part of the human being, making it no more than an object. Ecological reductionism, for its part, diminishes humans to obeying only the laws of such an object; it is accordingly a wild goose chase, for ecosystems in themselves are utterly foreign to ethical considerations. Those considerations are a human business; and if that human business is to be properly engaged with the biosphere, human-ness must have restored to it the *chōra* of which it has been deprived by dualism. A real ethics of the environment necessarily presupposes our mediance?¹⁰

One of the most important things which cannot be taken into account within the framework of the modern ontological *topos* is the interest of future generations. Curiously enough, it was Heidegger who expressed this

10. I have argued for this point of view in *Êtres humains sur la Terre. Principes d'éthique de l'écoumène* [Humans on the Earth. Principles of an Ethics of the Ecosphere], Paris, Gallimard, 1996.

impossibility most clearly, in defining *dasein* as a ‘being-toward-death’ (*Sein zum Tode*); and there is here a startling contradiction with what Heidegger says elsewhere of this same *dasein* as ‘being-outside-oneself’ (*Ausser-sich-sein*): how can the *dasein* be outside itself – that is, go beyond the boundary of the modern ontological *topos* – and at the same time be essentially circumscribed by the horizon of its own death? And how, given this, could the lot of future generations possibly concern the existence of such a ‘being-towards-death’?

Watsuji saw the source of this contradiction immediately: it is that the *dasein* is ultimately nothing other than the modern individual. This is only the existence of the *hito*: that is, an abstraction deprived of its environment, the environment of truly human existence (*ningen sonzai*) in its essential mediance. Now the concrete situation is that while the individual dies, society endures; in other words, the environmental body survives the animal body. For this reason the real human is not a ‘being-towards-death’, but a ‘being-towards-life’ (*sei e no sonzai*).

This existential survival of the human being leads naturally, then, to an ethics that takes care of the environment for future generations; and does so not in spite of its concern for humanity, but precisely because of that concern, in the fullness of its mediance.¹¹

Biography

Augustin Berque was born in 1942. He is Director of Studies at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales in Paris, where he teaches cultural geography. He has for many years been Director of the school’s Centre for Research on Japan, and has published many works on the relationship between human societies and their surroundings.

His publications include *Le Sauvage et l’artifice : les Japonais devant la nature* [The Wild and the Made: How the Japanese Face Nature], Paris, Gallimard, 1986; *Du Geste à la cité : formes urbaines et lien social au Japon* [From Gesture to City: Urban Form and Social Connection in Japan], Paris, Gallimard, 1993; *Écoumène, introduction à l’étude des milieux humains* [Ecumenean Introduction to the Study of Human Environments], Paris, Belin, 2000; and *Le Sens de l’espace au Japon : vivre, penser, bâtir* [The Sense of Space in Japan: Life, Thought, Building], (co-written with architect Maurice Sauzet), Paris, Arguments, 2004. His most recent work was the joint editing of *La Ville insoutenable: Les trois sources du mythe de la ville-campagne* [The Unsustainable City: Three Sources of the Urban/Rural Myth], Paris, Belin, 2005.

11. The questions I touch on briefly in this article have been developed in my book *Écoumène. Introduction à l’étude des milieux humains*, [Introduction to the Study of Human Environments], Paris, Belin, 2000.

The impact of modernization on the conservation of historical heritage in China

An Jiayao

Introduction

China is a unified country of many ethnic groups; it is a vast country with a long history and an unbroken cultural tradition. The large number of surviving heritage sites affords a vivid record of the formation and development of Chinese civilization. They provide a testimony to China's history and a basis upon which to strengthen national unity and to promote the sustainable development of China's national culture.

China is also a developing country. Since 1978, when it adopted an open-door policy, China's economic development has been extremely rapid. The country has seen massive construction and burgeoning industrial capacity and population mobility, on a scale that was previously inconceivable. Along with these changes has been an increasing call for access to historic and natural sites. The impact these changes, which have taken place in the space of little more than twenty years, have had on the face of China has been profound. As the great and ancient wealth of China's archaeological and historical legacy comes under new pressures, cultural heritage authorities at national, provincial and local levels are hard-pressed to meet these challenges effectively.

The impact of modernization on the conservation of cultural heritage in China mainly results from increasing population density and population mobility, massive construction and greatly increased industrial capacity, huge modern water resources management projects, and a rapidly growing tourism industry. Our colleagues must confront the consequences of these transformations.

Although the Chinese government has tried hard to meet these challenges, they represent a widespread problem. Tremendous construction has occurred throughout the country – it is very difficult to preserve cultural heritage in a changing townscape. In addition, more and more of China's rural population has moved to the suburbs of large cities, where many historical sites are located.

High population density and population mobility lead to great difficulties in protecting cultural heritage. For example, the site of an Altar of Heaven from the Sui and Tang dynasties (AD 581–907) is located in a southern suburb of Xi'an. More than twenty-one emperors worshipped at this altar a thousand years ago. I excavated the site in 1999; the platforms measured fifty-four metres across at the first level, forty metres at the second level and twenty-nine metres at the third level, with the uppermost platform twenty metres across. Twelve equally spaced staircases ascended from the ground to the highest platform. The Altar of Heaven was a rammed earth construction, its surfaces covered with a layer of yellow clay that was coated with a layer of white paste made from seed husks and straw, giving the altar its white colour. Today, farm buildings are being constructed ever closer to the site. Ignoring the conservation of cultural heritage has had regrettable consequences in China. Ximing temple was one of the most famous Buddhist temples in the Tang dynasty. I excavated the Ximing temple site in 1985 and 1992, which furnished many important findings. However, at that time we did not have enough money to purchase the land. Today, the site has gone, covered by an electricity station and apartment buildings.

China is large country. Floods are common in the south of the country, but there are serious water shortages in the north. In recent years, a great number of water resources management projects have been initiated. One of the most famous is the largest hydroelectric dam in the world, the Three Gorges Dam project on the upper Yangtze river. Although our colleagues tried their best to save the historical sites threatened by the dam, only 20 per cent of the historical sites were excavated, the rest now lie underwater.

Another water resources project that is currently underway will transfer water from the Yangtze River to Beijing, the capital. Expected to be completed in 2008, this huge project involves digging two enormous canals that could destroy many historical sites. Last March, I wrote to President Hu Jintao to discuss how to protect cultural heritage threatened by this water project. Chairman Hu has paid attention to the problem, and a great deal of archaeological work has already begun.

Tourism has begun to flourish in China. It is good for the economy, but its rapid and uncontrolled expansion, along with an increase in commercial ventures, has damaged our historical and natural heritage. For example, in 2000, the old town of Lijiang, a World Heritage site in China's Yunnan Province, received some 2.4 million domestic tourists and 100,000 international tourists, figures that are estimated to be increasing at a rate of 30 per cent annually. Sightseeing cableways also damage our natural and

cultural heritage. Examples are the cableways that have been installed on Mount Taishan and Mount Huangshan, which are both on the UNESCO World Heritage List.

Conservation theories and guidelines

China has effectively conserved many heritage sites that were in danger of being completely lost, and has developed conservation theories and guidelines that accord with its national situation.

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress passed the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Protection of Cultural Relics in 1982, laying a legal foundation for the protection of cultural heritage. A series of laws and regulations have since been established, through which 1,271 cultural heritage sites have been put under national protection, nearly 7,000 under provincial protection and more than 60,000 under city or county protection. The State Council has listed 101 cities, including Beijing, Xi'an and Luoyang, as Famous Cities of Historical and Cultural Value. Over 6,000 restoration projects have been carried out across the country, with fundamental results that have safeguarded major monuments and sites under national protection.

Archaeological surveys, excavations and research have been well organized, with much importance attached to their scientific management. The government has strengthened its work on the protection of archaeological sites, and steady progress has been made in archaeology. Field archaeology (particularly in remote frontier areas), underwater archaeology and other archaeology projects are being systematically carried out according to clear guidelines, and in cooperation with infrastructural construction. A series of important academic results have been achieved. Chinese archaeology has entered a new phase.

To achieve its conservation goals, China has also promoted professional training, community education and public awareness projects.

International organizations and cooperation projects

These ruins represent an integral part in the cultural heritage not only of China, but of the world. China is a signatory country to four important international cultural heritage protection conventions. International organizations and cooperation projects act as a bridge between China and the world community of cultural heritage conservation.

UNESCO plays an important role in conservation of cultural heritage. For example, I was engaged in the archaeological excavation of the site of Hanyuan Hall, the main hall of the Daming palace in Xi'an, which dates from the Tang Dynasty (AD 618–907). The hall is much larger and higher than Taihe Hall in Beijing's Forbidden City. It was a project organized by a Japan-China cooperation committee, in collaboration with UNESCO. Experts from China, Japan and UNESCO held many meetings to discuss how to protect this important archaeological site.

The conservation work on the elevated earthen base of the hall was carried out according to plan, preserving the remaining earthen mass from further deterioration. The original remains were covered with a protective layer of additional soil and then the ancient base terrace was restored, as intended, by examining the results of archaeological surveys, ancient documents and surviving records. Construction techniques from the Tang Dynasty were employed in the actual restoration work, and to the greatest degree possible, so were building materials used during that time.

The site of Hanyuan Hall, which has been exposed for over a thousand years, has been effectively protected and permanently preserved for later generations. Now a site museum that provides a direct experience of ancient culture, it is set to become a major resource for history educators, as well as an important tourist attraction.

The cooperation was highly successful and has great significance in the search for ways to preserve cultural heritage sites in future. The city of Xi'an has developed a conservation strategy, and small buildings in front of the site have been pulled down. My team is currently in the process of excavating the main gate of this palace.

Since 1996, the World Monuments Fund (WMF) has worked with China and its citizens to raise world visibility of China's cultural heritage. WMF has offered financial support to protect and restore internationally recognized cultural heritage sites in China, and has committed almost three million dollars (\$US) for cultural conservation projects. The Chinese cultural heritage sites in the WMF portfolio range in date from the fifth century BC to the twentieth century, and have included imperial sites, historic market places, vernacular architecture used by local citizens, archaeological sites and magnificent spiritual places reflecting the wide range of beliefs that have found a home in China over its long history.

The fifteenth General Assembly of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) was held in Xi'an, China, from 17 to 21

October 2005. More than 1,600 people from 80 countries participated at the meeting, during which the mayor of Xi'an gave Mr. Michael Petzet, president of ICOMOS, the key to the city. At the close of the meeting, the assembly adopted the Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas.¹

The negative impact of modernization on historical heritage in China remains serious, but I believe it is improving and will be much better in the near future.

Biography

An Jiayao was born in 1947. She is Director of the Han and Tang Period Department at the Institute of Archaeology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in Beijing. Her research concerns ancient glass and the history of East-West trade; she specializes in the archaeology of the Han and Tang dynasties.

Professor An is a vice-president of the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (ICPHS), and of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS) in China, and a corresponding member of the German Archaeological Institute.

Her publications include 'Early Glass Vessels of China', *Kaogu Xuebao* 4, 1984, (in Chinese); *Early Glassware*, (trans. M. Henderson), Hong Kong and London, The Oriental Ceramic Society, 1987; 'Dated Islamic Glasses in China', *Bulletin of Asia Institute* 5, 1991; *Glass Eye Beads in China. Land Routes of the Silk Roads and Cultural Exchanges Between the East and West Before the 10th Century*, New World Press, Beijing, 1996; and 'Excavation of the Ruined Round Altar at Tang Chang'an City in Xi'an', *Shaanxi, Kaogu* 7, 2000 (in Chinese).

1. The full text of the Declaration on the Conservation of the Setting of Heritage Structures, Sites and Areas is available at: <http://www.icomoschina.org.cn/ggfb/24850.aspx> (accessed 22 August 2006).

The mundialization of lifeworlds in the age of globalization

In-Suk Cha

Today from every corner of the planet we hear resonating cries for justice and fairness, for individual freedom and human rights. And while we must lament that they are pleas and demands and not celebrations of attainment of universal justice, we must also take heart and courage, for the cries for freedom are stronger than ever and those who hear them are growing in number. We are seeing about us the possibility of introducing measures for democracy and an understanding of human rights into every culture, and every lifeworld.¹ History has led us to this place and our understanding of how these notions have gained such momentum will lead us to nurture their growth in the lifeworld of every world citizen.

The 'lifeworld' is the world in which a person's daily life takes place. In the lifeworld to which each of us is born, we learn social and cultural meanings and behaviours that enable us to negotiate intersubjective understandings with others in the community. It is a world of things and an ambiance so familiar and intimate that we regard them as natural and expected, a matter of course. Our individual lifeworld is social and communal, and it is the world in which we feel at home. It can aptly be also called our 'homeworld'.

When we go out from the homeworld to new worlds, we are stepping into new horizons. Almost all individuals begin life in a family and start out from that family to the neighbourhood beyond. We venture even further to new surroundings, and then, home again. Sometimes, we embark on journeys to entirely unknown and strange worlds. It is through such repetitions of leaving our home and returning again that the different worlds we visit become more familiar and intimate, ever more like our home. In such ways, the boundaries of our earliest lifeworld are expanded, and with increasing knowledge of the world, that is to say, of globalization, by way of travel, trade and high-tech communication, the boundaries of the homeworld ever become widened thus transforming it by turning what is, at first, strange and alien into the familiar and

1. Edmund Husserl introduced the concept of 'lifeworld' in *Cartesian Meditations* (1931) to describe the world as immediately or directly experienced in the subjectivity of everyday life.

the intimate. This process is called the mundialization of the lifeworld. Whereas globalization refers to movement from one locality on the globe to another, or others, mundialization involves an absorption of values, norms, ideas and customs from other worlds into our own, resulting in the formation of a wider world-view, one that is tolerant of differences. This in turn forms the basis for those elements of mutual understanding that allow peoples with seemingly disparate cultural traditions to connect to one another through empathy.

What is it in our human nature that allows us to so absorb the strange and unfamiliar cultures into our lifeworlds? The answer is simple. We possess a faculty for pre-understanding that gives access to every kind of alien cultural pattern of the world. This we have acquired through co-existing with other human beings. As social beings, we are born into five modes of co-existence: love, hate, work, play and death. Through the social relationships that are formed and enacted in these modes, complex meanings are developed upon which an understanding of the very essence of self, society and nature are founded. This understanding allows us to recognize the essentials of selves, societies and nature even when we see seemingly alien expressions of them. It forms a pre-understanding of all manifestations of these essentials. The modes of existence are expressed in the myriad of ways that human beings are capable of creating, but the modes themselves are not made by any human being. The modes are what we are all born into and what we all live in and through.

In love, humans can learn the meaning of oneness with others, but through hatred comes the knowledge of destruction and severance. Learning to survive in our environments imparts the knowledge that the earth can be altered and controlled and transformed even as we learn the limitations and controls the earth has upon us. Work reveals the power of survival we possess, while playfulness is fuelled by another side of the human imagination and allows us to create a world of appearance out of raw reality. In play, we can escape into the realm of fantasy and shed the burden of labour in shared song and dance. As children, we might bask in the comfort and peace generated by a parental caress. Yet, in childhood too, we learn the pains of conflict and rivalry with siblings or other family members. Moreover, knowledge of our mortality comes to all of us as we grow. It is our nature to be shocked to discover that we are finite. These are lessons we all experience.

Hatred, the universal capability that many fear will spell the doom of our species, is all in the mind. It is not perceivable. Yet it destroys tangible things. It leads us to quarrels and to the separations of winners from those defeated. It festers into generations of domination and subordination. Hatred finds seemingly infinite ways to divide us: it creates notions of superiority and inferiority among us. Intolerance annihilates those selected as inferior in the name of a better civilization.

Human history has witnessed innumerable cases of this kind, and it continues to do so. All religions are supposed to bring peace to all peoples, but most religions have marched in the name of war. Cultural diversity is a dazzling and profound proof of human ingenuity. Nevertheless, it turns out to cause ethnic antagonism. Humans have failed time and again to free themselves from the idolatry of self that creates prejudice against others. However, those who listen with empathy to the victims of prejudice, in any society, come to understand deep in their hearts that only in unity and peace can they/we/all of us posit our existence and realize the transformational potentialities that a free, creative imagination affords.

Trying to come to terms with the meaning of unity and that of destruction and nothingness inevitably motivates us to reflect upon the necessity of our living together in peace and harmony, whereas the meaning of creative action requires us to value the freedom of self-realization in work and play. It is also by virtue of these meanings, constructed through the five modes of co-existence, that the practical reasoning of both individual and community develops and grows. These meanings, which permeate the mundialization process, comprise the fundamental structure of pre-understanding of cultures other than our own.

Mortality defines what it is to be human. I know that I shall one day pass away from this earth. I know this with certainty. I have seen this happen to those I loved so much. I know they will never return. I become certain of my own eventual demise through watching the deaths of others. In the face of the imminent nullification of my own existence, I fight back as a way to affirm myself as living. But death-awareness accompanies all human beings. It is a common theme of all religions and myths. It illuminates the distinction between eternity and annihilation. Perhaps philosophy derives its inner driving force from the certainty of human mortality, and our moral consciousness attains its strength from a gnawing anxiety about what becomes of us after death. And so, we yearn for eternal life and seek a place where there will be no more hate, quarrels, fights and destruction, a place where we can live with one another in eternal peace and we can fulfil our best potential without hindrance.

Work is always communal, and manifests itself in the division of labour. The product of work is always shared or traded. One never works alone. In the division of labour lies a powerful motive for our being with one another. Every individual must find a collective solidarity in the products of work. The division of labour implies part-taking, that is, partaking in communal life. In the name of survival, most human societies in the past have found ways to co-operate. The path to co-operation has been a bloody one and still is. Genocide existed long before it had a name, but naming it has proven to be a way to begin to negotiate for its end.

Today, when we hear those resonating cries for the promotion of democratic ideas as essential to humanity's survival – individual freedom, human rights, equality and social justice – we recognize them as ramifications of the meaning complex constituted through the five categories of social relationships – love, hate, work, play and death – which our lifeworlds share in common. Essential though they are, democratic ideals are still by no means universally accepted, and not yet fully accepted even in those parts of the world where they originated. However, transculturation of these democratic values is gaining ground among peoples of various nations. It is our task as philosophers and thinkers to recognize the swell of transculturation of democratic ideals that has taken place especially, it would seem, with the sophistication of communication technology, and to work to accelerate that swell. It is worth noting that these ideals were first articulated and developed by philosophers and thinkers long ago, and that there will always be need for continual examination and articulation of their development and a need to find ways to develop them.

By continually defining and refining democratic ideals and the need for them, by describing their appearances and attributes as they are found in diverse cultural settings, we are able to develop more and more projects by which to promote their mundialization through education, dialogue and interaction in the sciences and humanities. Over the five decades since its inception, UNESCO's program on philosophical research and philosophy education has focused, and continues to focus, on exploring ways to build a firm theoretical foundation upon which to disseminate democratic ideas, and has had an enormous impact on international intellectual and civic communities. Let us now reaffirm and reinforce UNESCO's most seminal legacy, for we have, through that legacy, a strong network of NGOs and civic society groups who hear the cries for democratic ideals and understand the powerful potentiality of positive mundialization for building peace in the hearts and minds of all humanity.

Biography

In-Suk Cha is Emeritus Professor of Social Philosophy at Seoul University, where he occupies the UNESCO Chair of Philosophy. Professor Cha is also currently President of the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (ICPHS).

His publications include 'The Ideology of New Industrial Societies in the Cyberage', *Science and Human Values in Asia Today*, Asia Pacific Philosophy Education Network, 2000; and 'The mundialization of home: towards an ethics of the Great Society', *Diogenes*, 2006.

Christian values and modernity: in praise of the conscience

Francesco Follo

We are now in the presence of a quite unprecedented ethical crisis: so much is clear from the fractures and imbalances between faith, personal morality and social morality. The challenge posed by Nietzsche, that tragic emblem of the transition to postmodernity, is more acutely relevant now than ever: 'I should be ready to believe the Christians if they gave a little more impression of being resuscitated'. That challenge cannot be calmly disregarded, at least by Christians. How is one to account for this crisis?

The crisis of morality in the contemporary context

To tackle the causes of this crisis directly, I think it would be useful to refer to what could be called the two main thrusts of modernity: relativism, and the dichotomy between the private and public spheres of ethics.

Nihilism, 'feebleness of thinking' and moral relativism

Moral relativism, which consists of asserting that, as a matter both of theory and of practice, there is no universal morality valid at all times and for all people, or that such a morality is unknowable by humans (a sort of moral agnosticism), is very widespread nowadays. Under it, the moral conscience (the organ of knowledge of moral good and evil, and hence of moral judgement), becomes the source of good and evil.¹ It is in such positions that we find the root of today's absolute exalting of the conscience and, as a result, today's doctrinal conflicts with the authority of the Church.

'Feebleness of thinking' argues the ultimate incapacity of reason, and asserts the impossibility of any consistent relationship with reality. Life becomes 'swift as a shadow, short as any dream' (Shakespeare), and humans a

1. *Veritatis Splendor*, pp. 54–64.

‘useless passion’ (Sartre).² If being and nothingness are one, then reason has nothing to say about reality. It is not hard, therefore, to discover the deep linkages that join feebleness of thinking to nihilism.³ And in such a situation, of course, truth, which the tradition of classical realism has defined at an elementary level as ‘the matching of one’s intellect with reality’, does not exist.⁴

There is another aspect of relativism which should be mentioned. This is the connection between freedom and truth.⁵ If human reason is man’s capacity to recognize the truth, freedom consists of keeping to it. Nowadays everything is carried on as if freedom was ‘suspended in mid-air’ in its relationship with reality, since according to Nihilism, reality as the individual self perceives it (reason and freedom) has no real consistency. The consequence of this is tragic: if freedom becomes detached from reality/truth, it becomes sheer wilfulness and for that very reason self-destructs. Freedom, which exists so that what is real can be asserted and adhered to, is in the end transformed into one factor of human solitude; a lesser adherence, fewer links: these must lead to greater loneliness.

In such a philosophical position, humans remain defenceless in the face of reality: this is the end result of that Reason which was to be the measure of all things. There is a danger of dissatisfaction on two counts: for, having claimed too much for reason in the modern age (by completely identifying the obvious truths of an absolute, dissociated and abstract reason with all possible truths), we have finally required too little of it, regarding it as powerless and frail in the face of reality.

I ought to make it clear that this ‘relativism’ has nothing to do with the Church’s passionate defence of freedom of conscience, as amply demonstrated

2. J.-P. Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay in Phenomenological Ontology*, Hazel Barnes (trans.), Routledge, 1956.

3. T. Gadacz, ‘La provocazione del nichilismo’ [Provoked by nihilism], in *Il Nuovo Aeropago* 3 (1995), pp. 5–17; S. Grygial, ‘Socrate et les malheurs de la pensée faible’ [Socrates and ill effects of feeble thinking], in *Catholica* N°23 (1990); A. Molinaro (ed.), *Interpretazione del nichilismo* [Interpretation of Nihilism], Rome 1986.

4. Aquinas essentially defined ‘truth’ thus, as ‘*adaequatio intellectus et rei*’. I say ‘essentially’ to take account of the reservations of personalism:

As we know, Thomas Aquinas defined ‘truth’ as the matching of one’s mind to reality. Interwar and immediate postwar personalism has most forcefully pointed out the inadequacy of this definition. True, the formulation does not say it all; but it gives the decisive point: seeing the truth is a phenomenon by which a person comes into conformity with what is so. It is a ‘making no more than one’ of me and the world; it is an agreement, a consonance, it is being-given and being-purified’ (J. Ratzinger, *Natura e compito della teologia* [Nature and the Task of Theology], Milan, 1993, pp. 39–40).

5. *Veritatis Splendor*, pp. 35–53.

by its assertions of religious freedom as the culmination of all human rights and freedoms. For the Church, this aspect is non-negotiable: freedom of conscience must be respected in all situations. To speak of freedom of conscience therefore implies, in the end, not only respect for the rights of every individual, but at the same time the rights of the truth.

The dichotomy between public and private ethics

The moral relativism I have mentioned is at once the cause and the effect of the other element that dominates the crisis of morality in our age. We cannot help noticing the substantial change in the relationship between the public sphere and the private with the arrival of modernity, a change that really took root within the Western democracies after the Second World War.⁶ Developments in jurisprudence in modern times, or perhaps more accurately developments since the rebirth of Natural Law (with Grotius and Pufendorf), can provide a key to the understanding of this process. The evolution underlies the separation, in the realm of ethics, between personal freedom and civil or legal freedom, for that separation was borrowed from the realm of jurisprudence.⁷ This dichotomy is connected with the modern conception of the state, founded on the conviction that life in common within the state cannot be other than a contract, generally restricted, indeed, to a system of agreements. Hobbes, Locke and Kant in a sense radicalized this vision, in rejecting the conception of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (reintroduced by Aquinas at the start of Part Two of the *Summa Theologica*), according to which actions by humans, as rational agents, must be considered on the basis of life understood as a whole and, consequently, ordered according to those goals and those goods which essentially characterize mankind. That conception made it possible to understand moral philosophy as a practical philosophy of human conduct in accordance with a good life.⁸

Nowadays, on the contrary, we find ourselves in the presence of an image of public ethics distinct from – opposable to – an ethics that is considered private: a faithful reflection of the division between personal

6. There is a careful analysis of this transition and its related phenomena (though its suggested implications are unacceptable) in R. Poole, *Morality and Modernity*, London/New York, 1991, in particular pp. 134–59.

7. F. Von Kutschera, *Fondamenti dell'etica* [Fundamentals of Ethics], Milan 1991, pp. 296–305.

8. G. Abba, *Quale impostazione per la filosofia morale?* [What can moral philosophy be?], Rome, LAS, 1996.

freedom and civil or legal freedom. An increasingly formal, norm-based public ethics, from which, as McIntyre⁹ rightly observes, the whole aspect of virtue is excluded; that aspect is given over to the free judgement of the individual. This radical dichotomy results from the steady erosion of awareness of the value of the social body as intermediary, and above all of its origin in marriage and the family – to the point where not only is the individual reduced, paradoxically, to a monad, but even the articulation of civil society is reduced to a mere sum of individuals. At both these levels, moreover, an irreparable dialectic is generated between the sphere of desire (subjective advantage), and that of (objective) moral requirements.¹⁰ In this dichotomy between private and public, it is clear that modern culture, beyond its radical insistence on the Subject, is unable to give any rational account of the individual/society polarity (essential to the proper constitution of either), and that it has lost sight of the man/woman polarity entirely.

We believe that it is possible to restore the unity of the private and public spheres, both in society and in the moral domain, provided proper attention is paid, not least in the Church's pastoral activity, to intermediary bodies and in particular to the family. Though in our democracies it may not always be entirely clear, these intermediary bodies have priority over the state. The social nature of the human being is not primarily defined by inclusion in or membership of the state, and the state is not the original expression of the social realm in the human experience. In fact the state, and in particular the modern state, is a function of civil society. Its life depends on people in mutual relationship, on what are known as 'intermediary bodies', the main one being the family. These are real entities (they may be social groups, or political, cultural, economic groups, etc.) whose origin lies in human nature; they have their own autonomy, even though they are subordinated to the common good. Speaking of such intermediary bodies, Pope John Paul II referred to 'the subjectivity of society'.¹¹ This expression emphasizes the supremacy of the person and of the intermediary bodies over a state which he says represents an objectivity (a secondary structure) in the service of civil society, which is the true expression of social subjectivity.

9. A. McIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 2nd edition. Notre Dame, Ind., University of Notre Dame Press.

10. F. Von Kutschera, *Fondamenti dell'etica* [Fundamentals of Ethics], Milan 1991, pp. 125–259.

11. John-Paul II, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, 15, 28 ; *Centesimus annus* 13.

Christian morality: a proposal open to all, or the experience of freedom as a meeting-point between Christian and secular ethics

If Jesus Christ came to all and for the benefit of all; if in him, and only in touch with him have all people at all times been able to find salvation, then clearly the morality offered by the Church cannot be restricted to some people only, as if it were a private issue. Christian morality can never be reduced to the private domain, as the Christian life can never be reduced to the sacristy, except by a perversion of Christianity's nature.

The Christian ethic is peculiar among all those that humanity has lived with or lived by in the course of history: paradoxically, peculiar in being universal, since it is addressed to everyone in Jesus Christ. We have to get past the disastrous and illogical implication according to which such a reference to Christology imposes a 'regionalization' of ethics.¹² It is not the case that, just because faith provides its starting point, Christian ethics cannot be universal. As a universal ethics, it is a proposal which may properly be put to all, since it is involved with the good life for human beings. So when we wish to speak to non-believers, in the name of what can we do so? In the name of what can we come to a shared understanding with them? Conventional theology showed how natural law was subsumed by Jesus Christ into the new law: and that which is subsumed is preserved, not lost or abolished (*quod est assumptum est servatum*). It is always possible to show those of no faith, or of a faith other than the Christian one, that a rule or standard which can be recognized naturally is something intrinsically reasonable, without thereby giving up *a priori* our right to present it as one part of a whole, something whose entire foundation can only be seen in the context of the Christian message.¹³

The encounter between Christian and non-believer will then be based on the nature of the human heart, which holds within itself, indelibly and for ever, the question 'What is good?'. That question moves us humans to open discussion with anyone, on any subject; it reflects the fundamental disquiet that is the hallmark of the human being: the constant quest for meaning and direction.

12. One of the consequences of this equivocal vision is the *aporia* or helpless double-bind into which many philosophers, including some Christians, have led ethics (and not only ethics, the same reasoning also applies to social doctrine): a clearly faith-based ethics must of its nature be partial, not universal; on the other hand the 'natural law' way of thinking is fallacious. Therefore ... there are no absolute, universally valid standards in the domain of morals. I believe that it is not necessarily impossible to avoid fallacy while thinking in terms of natural law: it is possible to find a quite legitimate basis for essential, universal ethical norms while still starting from a Christ-centered vision of reality.

13. Ibidem.

There is no doubt that dialogue, which for Christians always implies witness (*martyria*), must from the anthropological point of view address the basic questions, the main ones being our relationship with reality, the concept of reason, the dynamics of freedom, and so on. Without reflection on such matters it runs the risk of degenerating into a barren discussion about happiness as the ultimate object of human desire, since these days it is very generally the case that such discussion never touches on ontology, that is, the description of what human nature actually is, or of what actually is real.

First and foremost, then, the meeting-point between Christian ethics and secular ethics, as canvassed by non-Christians as well, will be the experience of freedom, since the very history of the West has often been defined as ‘the history of freedom’.¹⁴ Let us try, however, not to fall into the trap of giving up the light cast on the human situation by the event of Jesus Christ, for to do so would reveal that the dualistic pattern (known as the ‘anthropology of the twofold purpose’) persists, the pattern which, in claiming to preserve the gratuitous nature of grace, condemned theology to moral irrelevance.

We Christians cannot forget that we have received a complete revelation, in Jesus Christ, of what it is to be human (‘Christ, the final Adam, by the revelation of the mystery of the Father and His love, fully reveals humans to humans themselves, and makes his supreme calling clear’ – *Gaudium et Spes*, 1965, GS 22); and this moves us to favour dialogue with all our contemporaries. The new evangelization to which John Paul II constantly called us, showing the missionary nature of the Church as an expression of the personal mission in which every Christian finds fulfilment, is not complete without the integral morality it offers.¹⁵ For the Church does not proclaim a list of rules or set of instructions for living better, like one of today’s fashionable manuals (‘How to Be Happy and Not Die Trying’). No, what the Church proclaims, or rather offers or points out, is the actual happening of Jesus Christ, who saves humans – in the here and now of their existence – by giving them a rule to live by.

What, then, is the teaching of Christ (and consequently of Christianity) about moral values across national boundaries? It is all contained within the law of love: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself’ (Mt. 22.39): this is the supreme law of freedom, and the source of justice, truth, right conduct and perfection. I assert this with the support of the philosopher of Hippo, St. Augustine, who

14. C. Ruini, ‘Cristiani e laici : è possibile un patto ?’ [Christians and non-Christians: is agreement possible?], *Liberal* 28 (1997).

15. *Veritatis Splendor* pp. 90–94.

said: 'Love, and do what you will': a thoroughly reasonable summary which sounds fine, rings true, and goes deep. And indeed, this Christian exhortation is well linked to the golden rule first formulated in writing by Zoroaster (628–551 BCE), when he wrote: 'That which is good for all and for each, is good for me What I consider good of itself, I myself owe to everyone else. The only true law is universal law' (Ghata 43.1). This golden rule is universal; for we come across it (expressed in a variety of formulations) in many religions and many ages. In India, the *Mahabharata* (written in the third century BCE from an oral tradition dating back to 3000 BCE) expresses it in a positive and a negative form: 'Do not do to others what you do not wish to be done to you; Desire for others that which you desire and expect for yourself. Be advised – all this is of the Dharma.' (*Mahabharata, Anousasana Parva* 113.8). And again, in the Old Testament of the Bible: 'Do to no one what you yourself dislike' (Tb. 4.15). The Evangelist I have already quoted.

In conclusion, there seems to be a path that leads from Hinduism all the way to us, through the Judaic tradition, the teachings of Zoroaster, Buddhism, the Jainism of the *Sutrakritanga* 1.11.33 ('We should be primarily concerned to treat all creatures as we ourselves would wish to be treated'), Confucianism, Christianity, Shinto, Islam and or Sikhism. This is therefore a path in which humanity can surely still progress together, with a universal ethics.

Biography

Monsignor Francesco Follo has been the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to UNESCO since 2002. He has a Ph.D. from the Pontifical Gregorian University and has been Professor of the History of Greek Philosophy at the Regina Apostolorum Pontifical University in Rome and Professor of Cultural Anthropology and the Philosophy of Culture at the Catholic University and at the Ente Superiore Assistenti Educatori (ESEA) in Milan. He has also served on the Coordinating Committee of the Lateran Pontifical University and between 1987 and 2002 held posts in the Holy See's Secretariat of State in the Vatican, besides being Deputy Director of the weekly *La Vita Cattolica*.

His publications *La legge della Libertà* [The Law of Freedom], Milan, 1973; *Riflessioni sull'uomo* [Thoughts on Man], Milan, 1975; *Spirito e libertà* [Spirit and Freedom], Milan, 1980; *La Grammatica dell'Assenso* [The Grammar of Assent], Milan, 1979; *Maria e la Chiesa* [Mary and the Church], Milan, 1985; *La Storia della chiesa per Bambini* [A Children's History of the Church], Milan, 1980; *Sinodo di Cracovia* [The Synod of Cracow], Rome, Libreria Vaticana, 1985; *Sinodo e Penitenza* [Synod and Repentance], 1986; *Missione per i laici nella Chiesa* [The Mission of the Laity in the Church], 1988; *Mon Livre de prière de Mère Teresa* [My Prayer book of Mother Teresa], Paris, Nouvelle Cite, 2003; and *Vérité et Liberté* [Truth and Freedom], Paris, 2003.

5th Session:

Transversal Values in a Diverse World

Moderated by Eiji Hattori, Deputy Director of the Research Center for Moral Science, Institute of Moralogy (Japan) and Chargé de mission to the Executive Office of the Director-General of UNESCO

Towards a renewal of the concept *wa* (和) for the culture of peace

Naoshi Yamawaki

In everyday Japanese, *wa* (和) as an adjective is typically used to describe things that are especially Japanese, such as *washoku* (Japanese cuisine) or *washitsu* (Japanese room). In the triple word *wa / kan / yoh*, *wa* means nothing but the Japanese making a distinction from the Chinese and the European. However, *wa* is not confined to this meaning. Today I would like to talk about *wa* as a transversal value originating from ancient Chinese philosophy, especially from Confucianism, and exercising much influence on Japanese cultures. Moreover, it is a value that could be transformed into a transversal value at the global level.

First I will discuss *wa* (和, harmony) as distinct from *doh* (同, sameness) in ancient Chinese tradition. In fact, *wa* and *doh* are as different from each other as chalk and cheese. According to Shunju Sasiden (春秋左氏伝), *wa* harmonizes various flavours such as hot, sour, sweet, salty and bitter, as well as various ingredients, to prepare a delicious soup, while *doh* gathers only one flavour or ingredient. This parable can also be used to understand the relationship between a king and his subject. That is to say, *doh* is the attitude taken by the subject who obeys his or her king blindly or uncritically. In contrast, *wa* is an attitude taken by the subject who is ready to point out the wrong or unjust things in the king's thought and to make him change them into right or just things. Only on the basis of such relationships, led by *wa*, can people live peacefully and conflicts among various peoples vanish.

According to formal Japanese, *kokugo* (国語), *wa* is connected to development and creation. *Wa* refers to the capacity of making it possible for something to develop, or to generate other things, while *doh* has no such capacity.

The most well-known proverb in our ancient classics is '*wa shite doh zezu*' (和して同ぜず) written in Rongo as 論語. I would like to translate this proverb as 'The public spiritual person harmonizes but does not assimilate or harmonizes without assimilating'. This means that the public spiritual

person communicates with those who have different opinions and tries to harmonize with them on the basis of fairness, but does not assimilate with them nor force them to assimilate with himself or herself. This is in contrast to the narrow-minded people who easily assimilate with others without much thought, but never harmonize among one another.

In this way, the classical concept of *wa* in the Chinese tradition represents a principle for human conviviality and encourages public spirituality to make efforts towards harmonizing with others without assimilation and homogenization.

But how did this concept develop?

In Japanese tradition, *wa* (和) has meant harmony and peace since the time of Shotokutaishi (聖徳太子, AD 574–622?), who issued a constitution comprised of seventeen articles heavily influenced by Buddhism. At the same time, however, *wa* (和) also connoted conformity or behaving similarly – *doh*. For example, Shotokutaishi's first article says not only that '*wa* is to be valued', but also that 'one should not disobey orders'. In my view, the former means that harmony is the greatest of virtues, but the latter connotes *doh*, recognizing that uncritical obedience can force people into assimilation. If this is the case, the spirit of *wa* could easily be transformed into the spirit of *doh*.

Although a few Japanese thinkers influenced by Confucianism, such as Ogyu Sorai (荻生徂徠, 1666–1728), have emphasized the distinction between *wa* and *doh*, most Japanese thinkers have not paid much attention to this distinction. In fact, this concept of conformity played a totalitarian role in modern Japanese history – as the *Cardinal Principles of the National Polity*, issued by the Ministry of Education in 1937, demonstrates. Emphasizing the spirit of *wa* as a collectivist virtue of Japanese culture in contrast to Western individualism, these *Cardinal Principles* played an ideological role in driving many innocent Japanese people to support participation in the Second World War. There is no denying that the concept *wa* in this period degenerated from a transnational value into a totalitarian nationalist ideology.

The Japanese people of today must repent the grave errors of the totalitarian system, and reject this sense of *wa* that is so distorted as to be almost synonymous with *doh*. This distortion of *wa* tends to represses the diversity, spontaneity and subjectivity of each individual. Instead, we should try to renew the true concept of *wa* for the sake of world peace – a concept that takes centre place in the preface to post-war Japan's constitution of 1946:

We, the Japanese people, desire peace for all time and are deeply conscious of the high ideals controlling human relationship, and we have determined to preserve our security and existence, trusting in the justice and faith of the peace-loving peoples of the world. We desire to occupy an honored place in an international society striving for the preservation of peace, and the banishment of tyranny and slavery, oppression and intolerance for all time from the earth. We recognize that all peoples of the world have the right to live in peace, free from fear and want. We believe that no nation is responsible to itself alone, but that laws of political morality are universal; and that obedience to such laws is incumbent upon all nations who would sustain their own sovereignty and justify their sovereign relationship with other nations.¹

When we look up the word *wa* in a Japanese-English dictionary, we find English equivalents such as ‘peace’, ‘harmony’ and even sometimes ‘reconciliation’. I regard such translations as something of an opportunity. I suggest we make use of these translations to renew *wa*, that we embrace all such meanings and reconstruct *wa* as a transversal value at the global level.

What I advocate in this regard is that we understand the concept *wa* as ‘harmony in diversity and difference’ and ‘peace based upon reconciliation’. In my view, *wa* without recognition of diversity and difference should not be called *wa* but should rather be called *doh*. There would be no reconciliation if we forgot past errors, and there can be no peace-building without reconciliation. The Japanese people, including myself, should not forget errors Japan has made in Korea and China, nor those made by the United States in the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

I would also like to point out that there are beautiful nuances in the Japanese way of reading the Chinese character for *wa* (和). This becomes most evident when we consider it as a verb or an adjective. *Wa* as an intransitive verb (for example, in *yawaragu*, 和らぐ, or *nagomu*, 和む) means ‘soften’ ‘ease’ ‘thaw’ ‘moderate’ ‘relax’ of ‘melt’. *Wa* as a transitive verb (*yawarageru*, 和らげる) means ‘soften’ ‘cushion’ ‘ease’ ‘mitigate’ ‘melt’ and even ‘disarm’. Furthermore, *wa* as an adjective (*nagoyaga*, 和やか) means ‘harmonious’ ‘friendly’ or ‘serene’. Thus *wa* in Japanese verbs and adjectives suggests peace in the mind of each individual, which aptly parallels the Preamble to the Constitution of UNESCO. I believe this is one aspect of Japan’s cultural heritage that it is most important to propagate at the global level.

1. From the Preface to the Constitution of Japan, 3 November 1946. Accessed on 19 August 2006 at <http://www.solon.org/Constitutions/Japan/English/english-Constitution.html>

But what in the European philosophical tradition is equivalent to the philosophy of *wa* in the above sense? This question is indispensable if we are to understand the concept of *wa* as a transversal value not only in East Asia but also throughout the world. Erasmus (1466–1536) bemoaned wars and appealed to all people for peace, while Pico della Mirandola (1463–94) tried in vain to hold a philosophical conference among religions for peace. Two centuries later, Spinoza (1632–77) understood peace as a virtue of each individual's spirituality and Leibniz (1646–1716) respected 'Chinese philosophy' and believed in the harmony of each individual as monad in the world. Herder (1744–1803) objected to the homogenous and mono-cultural progress in world history and vindicated the idea of pluralistic development of various cultures. Despite differences in their contents, these philosophers all shared an idea of peace and harmony. Their philosophies are clearly in opposition to the 'enemy/friend' thinking of Carl Schmitt (1888–1985) and Samuel Huntington.

I will conclude my paper by emphasizing that *wa* as a transversal value should be renewed in terms of *wakai* (和解), *heiwa* (平和) and *chowa* (調和) to generate 'reconciliation-promoting gentle human solidarity' (柔和で和らぎある連帯の輪, *nyuwa de yawaragiaru rentai no wa*) in the world, which makes a sharp contrast with war and contributes to a culture of peace.

Biography

Naoshi Yamawaki teaches Public Philosophy and Social Theory in the Department of Advanced Social and International Studies, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of the University of Tokyo. He holds a doctorate from the University of Munich (Germany). Professor of Public Philosophy.

Professor Yamawaki's publications include *What is Public Philosophy?* (in Japanese), Tokyo, 2004; *History of European Social Thought* (in Japanese), Tokyo, 1992; 'The Philosophical Thought of Japan from 1963 to 1996', in G. Piovesana, *Recent Japanese Philosophical Thought*, Richmons, U.K., Curzon Press 1997; 'Opportunities and tasks for a trans-national public philosophy for the 21st century', in Wolfgang Pape (ed.) *Models of Integration in Asia and Europe: Generating Public Space for Our Common Future*, European Commission, 2001; 'Toward a Glocal Philosophy and Comparative Study of Philosophical Thoughts for Interregional Dialogue', in *Inter-regional Dialogue between Asia and the Arab World*, Paris, UNESCO, 2004; and 'Toward a Glocal, Intergenerationally Responsible and Responsive Public Philosophy', in *The first Kyoto Congress on Glocal Public Philosophy*, Proceedings, 2001

Why the civil society is not good enough*

Amitai Etzioni

William A. Galston insists that we ought to differentiate between the good *citizen* and the good *person*, arguing that, where the pre-liberal state was concerned with the good person, the liberal state is one that limits itself to the cultivation of the good citizen. While others, including Robert George, argue against making such a distinction, I suggest considering a third position, the good *society*.

Galston is representative of a communitarian variation of classical liberal thinking. Liberals believe that individuals must develop the *personal* virtues they need to be good citizens of the liberal state: for instance the ability to think critically. In contrast, social conservatives such as George Will maintain that it is the role of the state to promote not merely citizenship but also the good person, not only skills needed to participate in the polity, but also *social* virtues – those that make the society a good one. Will (1997) contends that people are self-indulgent by nature: left to their own devices, they will abuse their liberties and become profligate and indolent. People need a ‘strong national government’ that will be a ‘shaper’ of citizens. William Kristol and David Brooks (1997) similarly argue that anti-government themes provide too narrow a base for constructing a winning ideological political agenda. Conservatives, they conclude, need to build on the virtue of America, on the ideal of national greatness.

Religious social conservatives have long been willing to rely on the powers of the state to foster behaviour they consider virtuous. They favour measures include banning abortion and pornography, making divorce more difficult, curbing homosexual activities and institutionalizing prayers in public schools. Both religious and secular social conservatives have strongly advocated longer, more arduous prison terms for more kinds of crime, favouring death sentences and life sentences without parole. These penalties are often applied for engaging in business or consumption of which the state disapproves, rather than for failing to discharge citizen duties or actually

* Because of space constraints, we have abridged the original address for this publication.

endangering public safety. These are, on the face of it, not citizen issues but good-person issues.

The term ‘good state’ appropriately summarizes this position. Far from viewing the state as an institution that if extended would inevitably diminish or corrupt people, social conservatives treat the state as an institution that can be entrusted with the task of making people good. While not suggesting that the state is good in itself, they believe that the state can be good – provided it acts to foster virtue.

There are important differences of opinion among social conservatives. Many are less state- and more society-minded, such as Michael Oakeshott and the National Foundation for Civic Renewal. That there are strong and less-strong social conservatives does not invalidate their defining characteristic. Those who would rely mainly on society and persuasion to promote virtue are not social conservatives, however, but rather have one of the defining attributes of communitarians.

Both the liberal and social-conservative positions have rich histories and profound roots in social philosophy and political theory. Both address a particular historical constellation. The liberal position speaks to the authoritarian and dogmatic environments in which Locke, Smith and Mill first formulated it, as well as to the totalitarian experiences of the twentieth century. At its core is a profound concern with the overpowering state and established church, especially if these institutions not only muster superior and encompassing force, but also actually succeed in acquiring an ideological mantle of virtue. The classic liberal position, which arose as a rejection of the good state, tends to reject all social formulations of the good.

Contemporary social conservative positions, by contrast, address the loss of virtue that modernization and populism have engendered, and reflect a profound concern with rising moral anarchy. Such concerns have re-intensified since the 1970s. It is this condition that religious fundamentalism seeks to correct, whether the fundamentalists in question are Muslims, Orthodox Jews, or members of the Christian right.

The third position, the communitarian one, focuses on the good society. It addresses the same socio-historical conditions that motivate contemporary social conservatives, but provides a fundamentally different response. Much like its liberal cousin, the communitarian position rejects state regulation of moral behaviour. But where liberals typically take this position because they favour moral pluralism (‘the right to do wrong’), communitarians advocate state restraint because they believe that the society should be the agent

responsible for promoting moral behaviour. While the communitarian alternative may seem similar in certain respects to both social conservative and liberal positions, its focus on the good society is conceptually distinct.

The core, not the whole

A good society formulates and promotes shared moral understanding rather than merely pluralism: it is far from value-neutral. This does not mean, however, that a good society sets an all-encompassing or even ‘thick’ moral agenda.

Whether there are sociological needs and moral justifications for social formulations of the good is hotly debated. The discussion concerns the public realm – the formulations that guide the state, which in turn may impose them on society (Lund, 1997, pp. 108–09). I refer to shared formulations that arise out of moral dialogues among the members of a society, initiated by secular and religious intellectuals and moral authorities, community leaders and other opinion-makers, and nourished by the media (Etzioni, 1996).

Developing and sustaining a good society does require reaching into what is considered the private realm. A good society fosters trust among its members not solely or even primarily to enhance their trust in the government or to reduce burdens on the public, but rather to foster what is considered a *better* society. It may extol substantive values such as stewardship towards the environment, having children, charity for the vulnerable, or marriage over singlehood. These are all specific goods with regard to which the society, through its various social mechanisms, prefers one form of conduct to others. For instance, contemporary American society considers commitment to the environment a significant good. While differences regarding what exactly this commitment entails are considered legitimate, this is not the case for normative positions that are neglectful of, not to mention hostile to, the needs of the environment.

To suggest that conduct in the private realm needs to be guided by shared values, however, does not mean that all or even most private matters need to be subject to societal scrutiny or control. Indeed, one major way the communitarian position differs from its totalitarian, authoritarian, theocratic and social conservative counterparts (or *holistic* governments) is that while the good society reaches the person, it seeks to cultivate only a limited set of *core* virtues, rather than to be more expansive or holistic. A good society does not seek to ban moral pluralism on many secondary matters. For example, American society favours being religious over being atheist, but is rather

‘neutral’ with regard to what religion a person follows. Unlike totalitarian regimes, American society does not foster one kind of music over others. There are no prescribed dress codes or correct number of children to have. In short, one key defining characteristic of the good society is that it defines shared formulations of the good, in contrast to the liberal state, but the scope of the good is much smaller than that advanced by holistic governments.

Drawing on culture

The good society also differs from its alternatives in the principal ways it nurtures virtue. The basic dilemma that the concept of the good society seeks to resolve is how to cultivate virtue if one views the state as an essentially inappropriate and coercive entity.

I do not refer just to obeying the law, but rather to those large areas of personal and social conduct that are not governed by law, as well as to those that must be largely voluntarily carried out even if covered by laws, if law enforcement is not to be overwhelmed. At issue are such questions as what obligations parents owe to their children, children to their elderly parents, neighbours to one another, or members of communities to other members and other communities.

The means of nurturing virtue that good societies chiefly rely upon often are subsumed under the term ‘culture’. Specifically, these include (a) agencies of *socialization* (family, schools, peer groups, places of worship and some voluntary associations) that instil values into new members of the society, resulting in an internal moral voice (or conscience) that guides people towards goodness. (b) Agencies of *social reinforcement* that support, in the social psychosocial sense of the term, the values members have already acquired (especially interpersonal bonds, peer relations, communal bonds, public visibility and leadership). These provide an external moral voice. And (c) values fostered because they are built into societal *institutions* (for instance, into marriage).

The moral voice and liberty

One main instrument of the good society, the mainstay of ‘culture’, is the moral voice, which urges people to behave in pro-social ways. While there is a tendency to stress the importance of the inner voice, communitarians recognize

the basic fact that without continual external reinforcement, the conscience tends to deteriorate. The opinions of others can carry considerable weight because of a profound human need to win and sustain their approval (Wrong, 1994).

Is compliance with the moral voice compatible with free choice? Does one's right to be left alone include a right to be free not only from state controls but also from social pressure? Alexis de Tocqueville wrote that 'The multitude require no laws to coerce those who do not think like themselves: public disapprobation is enough; a sense of their loneliness and impotence overtakes them and drives them to despair' (1991, p. 261). However, de Tocqueville also highlighted the importance of communal associations in holding the state at bay. It is essential to recognize that not only is there a profound difference between the moral voice of the community and coercion, but also that, up to a point, the moral voice is the best antidote to an oppressive state.

At the heart of the matter are the assumptions one makes about human nature. If one believes that people are good by nature, and external forces merely serve to pervert them, one correctly rejects all social input. It follows that the freer people are from pressures, the better their individual and collective condition. But if one assumes that people possess frailties that lead to behaviour that is damaging not only to themselves but also to others, the question arises of how to foster pro-social behaviour (or the 'social order'). Classical liberals tend to solve this tension between liberty and order by assuming that rational individuals whose interests are mutually complimentary will voluntarily agree to arrangements that provide for the needed order. Communitarians suggest that reasonable individuals cannot be conceived of outside a social order; that the ability to make rational choices, to be free, presumes that the person is embedded in a social fabric. Moreover, communitarians posit that there is an inverse relation between the social order and state coercion: tyrannies arise when the social fabric frays. The moral voice speaks for the social fabric, thereby helping to keep it in good order.

Aside from being an essential prerequisite of social order and hence liberty, the internal, personal moral voice is much more compatible with free choice than state coercion. The external moral voice, that of the community, leaves the final judgment and determination of how to proceed to the acting person – an element that is notably absent when coercion is applied. Society persuades, cajoles, censures and educates, but the final decision remains the individual's. The state may also persuade, cajole and censure, but actors realize *a priori* that when the state is not heeded, it will seek to force actors to comply.

Is the moral voice never coercive? In part, this is a matter of definition. When the moral voice is backed up by legal or economic sanctions, it is not the moral voice *per se* that is coercive, but rather these added elements. Whereas in earlier historical periods, when people were confined to a single village and the community voice was all-powerful, a unified chorus of moral voices could be quite overwhelming if not technically coercive, most people in contemporary free societies are able to choose, to a significant extent, the communities to which they are psychologically committed, and can often draw on one to limit the persuasive power of another. And the voices are far from monolithic. Indeed, it is a principal communitarian thesis that, in Western societies, moral voices are often far from overwhelming. More often than not, they are too conflicted, hesitant and weak to provide for a good society (Etzioni, 1996, pp. 85–159). In short, highly powerful moral voices exist(ed) largely in other places and eras.

A comparison of the way the United States government fights the use of controlled substances and the way American society fosters parents' responsibilities for their children highlights this issue. The war against drugs depends heavily upon coercive agents; the treatment of children, by contrast, relies primarily upon the moral voice of the immediate and extended family, friends, neighbours and others in the community. Admittedly, the state occasionally steps in. Yet most parents discharge their responsibilities not because they fear jail, but because they believe this to be the right way to conduct themselves – notions that are reinforced by the social fabric of their lives.

The difference between the ways societies and states foster values is further highlighted by comparing transferring wealth via charity to taxes; between volunteering to serve one's country and being drafted; and between attending Alcoholics Anonymous meetings and being jailed for alcohol abuse.

The voluntaristic nature of the moral voice is the profound reason the good society can, to a large extent, be reconciled with liberty, while a state that fosters good persons cannot. It is the reason the good society requires a clear moral voice, speaking for a set of shared core values, which a civic society and a liberal state do not.

Virtues in social institutions

The other main instrument of the good society is social institutions. While the moral voice is 'informal', societal institutions are formal and structured societal patterns that embody the values of the particular society or community.

Contracts are a case in point, as actors find the very concept of a contract and the mutual obligations it entails ready-made in their culture. While these institutions change over time, at any one point in time many of them stand by to guide social life, especially in well-functioning societies.

Social institutions are important in characterizing the difference between the good society and others, because most institutions are neither merely procedural nor value-neutral; in effect, most are the embodiment of particular values. For instance, the family, a major societal institution, is never value-neutral, but always reflects a particular set of values. This is highlighted by the reluctance of the Catholic Church to marry divorced people or by attempts by several organized religions to encourage people to prepare better for and to strengthen their marriage. These institutionalized endeavours reflect the value of marriage – and a particular kind of marriage – that society seeks to uphold.

Similarly, societies do not merely provide public schools as neutral agencies to impart knowledge and skills. Public schools typically foster, despite recent tendencies to deny this, a long list of values, including empathy for the poor; interracial and interethnic and other forms of mutual respect (beyond merely tolerance); high regard for science, secularism and patriotism; and stewardship toward the environment. That societies foster specific values, through their institutions, is crucial in understanding the limits of conceptions of the civic society.

A civil *and* good society

The good society and the civil society are by no means oppositional. The good society is merely a more expansive concept. Far from being uncivil, it fosters additional virtues beyond the merely civil. The two concepts are like concentric circles, with the smaller circle representing the domain of civil society, and the larger that of the good society (Margalit, 1996).

While there is no single, agreed-upon, definition of civil society, most usages of the term reflect two institutional features and the values they embody. One is a rich array of voluntary associations that countervail the state and that provide citizens with the skills and practices democratic government requires. Another is the holding of passions at bay and enhancing deliberative, reasoned democracy by maintaining the civility of discourse.

E. J. Dionne, Jr., characterizes the civil society as (a) ‘a society where people treat each other with kindness and respect; and (b) a collection of voluntary associations that includes Boy and Girl Scouts, Little League, veterans groups, book clubs, Lions and Elks, churches, and neighbourhood

crime watch groups (1997). Most discussions stress the second feature. Robert Putnam, for example, argues that bowling with one's friends is less sustaining of civil society than bowling as members of a bowling league, because such leagues are part and parcel of the voluntary associations that civil society requires (1993, pp. 18–33).

The most important aspect of these characterizations of civil society is that they draw *no difference among voluntary associations with regard to any substantive values* they foster. Little Leagues cherish a healthy body and sporting behaviour; book clubs foster respect for learning and culture, but in terms of their contribution to civil society they all are treated by champions of civil society as equivalent. None is inherently morally superior to the other. In this particular sense, they are treated as normatively neutral.

Certainly, champions of civil society do recognize some differences among voluntary associations, but these are limited to their functions as elements of the civil society rather than their normative content. For instance, voluntary associations that are more effective in developing citizen skills are preferred over those that are less so. But the actual values to which these people apply their skills is not under review, nor are other substantive values the associations embody. Thus, the civil society does affirm some values, but only a thin layer of procedural and/or tautological ones; it basically affirms itself. It cherishes reasoned (rather than value-laden) discourse, mutual tolerance, participatory skills and, of course, volunteerism. Yet these values do not entail any particular social formulations of the good. They do not suggest what one best participates in or for, what one should volunteer to support, or which normative conclusions of a public discourse one ought to promote or find troubling.

Particularly telling are recent calls to find common ground and to deliberate in a civil manner. Commonality is celebrated on any grounds as long as it is common. And the proponents of civility seem satisfied as long as one adheres to the rules of engagements (not to demonize the other side, not raise one's voice, etc.), and as long as the dialogue is civil, regardless of what actually is being discussed (see, for example, Hunter, 1991).

For the civil society, an association that facilitates people joining to play bridge has the same basic standing as NARAL or Operation Rescue; members of the Elks share the same status as those of the Promise Keepers; and bowling leagues are indistinguishable from NAMBLA, whose members meet to exchange tips on seducing boys younger than eight.

Putnam (1993) found that bird-watching groups and choral societies were mainstays of 'social capital' in parts of Italy that are more soundly civil and

democratic than others. Bird-watching groups may enhance respect for nature and choirs may cherish culture, but this is not the reason Putnam praises them. He extols them because '[t]aking part in a choral society or a bird-watching club can teach self-discipline and an appreciation for the joys of successful collaboration' (p. 90). So could most if not all other voluntary associations.

From the basic standpoint of the civil society, one voluntary association is, in principle, as good as any another. (The relevant differences are instrumental, rather than principled or normative.) They differ greatly, however, from the perspective of the good society, precisely because they embody different values. Thus, to the extent that American society cherishes the notion of interracial integration, it views the Urban League and NAACP as much more in line with its values than the Nation of Islam, and the Ripon Society more so than the Aryan groups – all voluntary associations (see Sherry, 1993; Barber, 1984).

The concept of the good society differs in that, while it also strongly favours voluntary associations – a rich and strong social fabric and civility of discourse – it formulates and seeks to uphold some particular social conceptions of the good. The good society is centred on a core of substantive, particularistic values. For instance, different societies foster different values, or at least give much more normative weight to some values than others. Austria, Holland and Switzerland place special value on social harmony, acting only after profound and encompassing shared understandings are achieved. Many continental societies value the welfare state, lower inequality and social amenities more than American and British societies do, and put less emphasis upon economic achievements.

Similarly, the disestablishment of religion is far from a procedural matter. Many democratic societies that establish one church also allow much greater and more open inclusion of a specific religion into their institutionalized life than does American society. The routine of praying in UK state-run schools further illustrates this point. Promoting these religious values is deemed an integral part of what is considered a good society.

None of the societies mentioned are 'good' in some perfected sense; they aspire to promote specific social virtues, and in this sense aspire to be good societies. Good societies promote particularistic, substantive formations of the good: limited sets of core values that are promoted largely by the moral voice and not by state coercion.

While both the good and the civil society draw on the core institution of voluntary associations, these play different roles. In civil societies, voluntary associations serve as mediating institutions between the citizen and the state, and help cultivate citizen skills: they develop and exercise the democratic

muscles, so to speak. In the good society, voluntary associations *also* serve to introduce members to particularistic values and to reinforce individuals' normative commitments. While from the perspective of a civil society, a voluntary association is a voluntary association, *from the view of a good society, no two voluntary associations are equivalent*. Some are celebrated because they foster the social virtues the good society seeks to cultivate, some are neutral, some – while voluntary – sustain values divergent from or even contradictory to those the society seeks to foster.

The definition of civil society is anything but conclusive. Some commentators – most of them social conservatives – pack into their notions of civil society elements of what I refer to as the good society. Gertrude Himmelfarb, for example, argues that only a renewed and remoralized civil society can effectively curb such immoral behaviours as drug addiction, illegitimacy, or neglect of the elderly (1996, pp. 67–75).

But the definition of civil society seems to resist such expansions. When commentators invoke the concept, they typically do so in a more restrictive manner. Indeed, the very effort by Himmelfarb and others to expand the scope of civil society highlights the need for an additional concept that can capture this added normative element. The good society can well serve in this capacity.

We can learn a great deal about social doctrines and political theories by examining the alternatives they seek to engage. The civil society thesis addresses the fear that social formations of the good will be imposed by the state. It advocates a great restriction of the public realm and opposes collective fostering of virtues (all those not directly subservient to the civic society or liberal state). The crisis that modern societies increasingly have had to face for the last generation is that of the moral vacuum, an emptiness that religious fundamentalism has sought to fill. This challenge is variously referred to as the loss of meaning or virtue, the crisis of culture or the deterioration of values. This spiritual void, however, cannot long be left unfilled. If not addressed by values that arise out of shared moral dialogue, it will be filled, as we have already seen in large segments of the world, by command and control theocracies. Democratic societies will continue to be vigilant against the return of overpowering secular governments – a threat countered by a rich fabric of civil institutions. However, given the challenges posed by fundamentalism in the Moslem world, in Israel, and by various Christian, right-wing movements, concerns for the civil society may well need to be supplemented by concern about the nature of the good society. If societies must uphold some substantive values, what will these be beyond the narrow band of largely procedural

commitments that civil society presently entails? This is the question the next generation faces, a question highlighted by the concept of a good society as one that fosters a limited set of core values and relies largely on the moral voice rather than upon state coercion.

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Biography

Amitai Etzioni was a Senior Advisor to the White House on Domestic Affairs from 1979–1980 and has taught at Columbia, Harvard and Berkeley. He is Professor of Sociology at the George Washington University and Director of its Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies. He has also served as President of the American Sociological Association and founded the Communitarian Network (www.communitariannetwork.org).

In 2001, Etzioni was named in Richard Posner's book, *Public Intellectuals: A Study of Decline* among the top 100 American intellectuals as measured by academic citations.

His publications include *The Active Society*, New York, Free Press, 1968; *The Moral Dimension: Toward a New Economics*, New York, Free Press, 1988. *The New Golden Rule*, New York, Basic Books, 1997; *The Monochrome Society*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2001; *My Brother's Keeper*, New York, Rowman & Littlefield, 2003; *The Common Good*, Cambridge, Mass., Polity Press, 2004; *From Empire to Community: A New Approach to International Relations*, New York, Palgrave MacMillan, 2004; and *How Patriotic is the Patriot Act?* New York, Routledge, 2004.

'Hieroglossia'¹ the importance of sacred traditional languages to the great civilizations of Europe and Asia

Jean-Noël Robert

Recent decades have seen an almost unbelievable development of a process that began, no doubt, at the end of the eighteenth century: the diffusion of the English language across the whole globe. Now spectacularly faster through the spread of the Internet, this rise of a single language throughout the world seems not only irreversible but also in many ways desirable. To measure its progress, we may compare the reactions of two countries at opposite ends of Eurasia, both famous for their determined retention of their particular cultures, Japan and France. Faced with the prospect of an undiluted supremacy for English, some in France have recently suggested making it compulsory to learn English in primary school, to the exclusion of other languages that would no longer be studied except, at best, as a second foreign language. Some Japanese argue for something more radical still: there have been moves since the turn of the twentieth century to make English a second national language after Japanese, and to start teaching it in school at the very earliest stage. We have also seen a national education Minister in the Netherlands propose that English should be adopted instead of Dutch as the teaching language in universities. Admittedly this suggestion had to be withdrawn in the face of public outrage; but that the representative of such a symbolic part of government could even suggest so thorough a cultural shake-up says a great deal about the way people's ideas are going. Malta, with some 300,000 inhabitants and India with its billion souls and more have both made English one of their official languages, and almost every day there are new signs of the enthusiasm with which newly emancipated peoples from Eastern Europe to Central Asia are turning their backs on Russian to speak the new world language. This development affects not only the more cultivated sections of

1. From the Greek *hieros*, sacred, and *glossa*, language. The relationships among the different languages of a given culture, especially in the context of religion.

society but also extends as never before to the masses, whether from sheer necessity or from the seductions of music or film.

People quite often compare this worldwide phenomenon the days when Latin reigned unrivalled in European culture, from the time of the Roman empire to the start of the seventeenth century. This likening is further enhanced, in Japan especially, by the analogy often drawn between the Roman empire and the predominant role of the United States in today's world: the 'new world order' as an extension of Virgil's *magnus saeculorum ordo*. 'Pax Americana' has long been a journalist's commonplace expression, by analogy with the Pax Romana. There is, however, a basic difference between the two.

The technical and scientific progress that has fostered the rapid spread of English will most certainly call a halt to the process eventually. Advances in automatic language translation are at least as impressive as the globalization of English. If we take into account the constant systems improvement offered by the Internet and the eighteen-month doubling of hardware capacity, we may readily imagine that it will not be long at all before a thoroughly satisfactory simultaneous interpretation can be had – written or oral – from any modern language into any other. Then we shall see the study of foreign languages become once more the preserve of a few, as they used to be, while the role of English as the world's *lingua franca* will fairly rapidly wither away.

English is only so readily accepted by the rest of the world because it is nowadays thought of – mistakenly, of course – as a neutral language, one which conveys no baggage of deep cultural, religious or ideological values. Although it is the language of some of the most powerful states on earth, it is perceived as non-political, everyone's property. That is why many Muslim countries are making efforts to replace French (which was the language of the cultural and social elite) with English, regarded as more democratic and less connected with a particular nation. It is also why we see the beginnings in Japan and elsewhere in East Asia of the notion of 'Asian English' (to which Australia might also contribute) as a medium of instruction for Asia and the Pacific. And English could become the world language because it is above all else the idiom of the present day.

Things were very different in the case of Latin. True, the Roman armies introduced it into a considerable portion of Europe and most of North Africa; but being the language of an empire was only one phase in Latin's long history. It stayed in place for a very long time after that empire's disappearance, and indeed a considerable while after it had ceased to be a spoken language. It is arguable that Latin has never really disappeared from people's speech, and that today's Romance languages are its direct descendents, handed down without

interruption for 2,000 years from parents to children in various parts of the empire. But as far as Latin proper is concerned, the grammatically defined 'classical' language, 636 CE could be given as the symbolic date of its extinction (the death of Isidore of Seville, said to have been one of the last Europeans to receive a traditional Latin education). That would mean Latin had a thousand-year history as a living written language and then (after 600 CE) at least another millennium of use as a 'dead' one, no longer affected by the inevitable process of grammatical and phonetic evolution that characterizes living languages. The Middle Ages saw the steady rise of languages that would later be described as 'national'; the earliest attested in writing being understandably those furthest from Latin: Old Irish, Old English, and Old High German, some of whose texts go back very far indeed. The Latin dialects of *Romania vetus*, for their part, were destined to remain much longer in Latin's shadow, and tell a tale of the two-language situations ('diglossia', where one language carries higher prestige, the other being the spoken vernacular) that continued for a long time in these parts of Europe, where the only distinction contemporaries seem to have been aware of was that between scholarly and popular usage of a single language.

For over a millennium, Europe got its education in a dead language which conveyed a dual culture with mutually antagonistic aspects: a legacy of pagan Greco-Roman antiquity that could not be rejected since it was the foundation of literature, history and science, and a Christian legacy founded in opposition to that ancient culture but later at least partly merged with it. Latin was not, therefore, a *lingua franca*; it did not serve merely as a tool of communication, a common language; indeed, outside the domains of learned culture one could say it was hardly so used at all. It was first and foremost the indispensable medium for anyone wishing to take part in a higher realm of human activity. This concept was expressed to perfection – in the age of the Renaissance, just when all the great vernaculars of Europe were finally becoming established as literary idioms capable of competing with it – in the formula of *litterae humaniores*, the 'more humane' letters. French had already in the Middle Ages begun a fine career as a *lingua franca*: French was the means of expression chosen by the Venetian Marco Polo for his *Il Milione*, and by the Armenian prince Haytoun for his anthology of traveller's tales, *La flore des estoires de la Terre d'Orient*.

So in Europe we have a Latin tradition fairly well summarized by the formula of the Dutch novelist Cees Noteboom: 'Latin is the essence'.

Latin's place in Europe as the foundation of learned culture and the religious tradition was occupied in Japan by classical Chinese. This language is present in Japanese culture as far back as written documents can take us, and was

still the favoured means of expression for high culture until the start of the twentieth century. Though written Japanese got established very early, and has given world literature some supreme achievements of original composition, no Japanese would have been regarded as perfectly literate without a thorough knowledge of classical Chinese. As in the case of Latin, this was by no means a matter of merely mastering a Far Eastern *lingua franca*. Classical Chinese was not in a position to be used for oral communication; it was a wholly written language, long ‘dead’ in China itself.² There have always been those in Japan who knew of the spoken Chinese language, with its variety of historic phases and regional dialects; and there has always been an awareness of the extent of the diglossia in Chinese between a written or ‘ornate’ language, Wen, and a spoken language referred to as ‘*bái*’, white/blank or ‘bare’. Apart from a few noteworthy but limited exceptions, mainly in the Zen schools, this spoken Chinese was scarcely ever thought worthy of recognition in Japan. As with Latin, it served as a tool of international communication, mainly among Buddhist monks, Confucian philosophers and poets in China, Japan, and also Korea. Again as with Latin, classical Chinese was the vehicle for two mutually antagonistic visions of the world (at least), the Confucian and the Buddhist. Confucianism was born in China; Buddhism, of course, came from India. Almost all the Buddhist works arrived in Japan in Chinese translation. Unlike the Tibetans, the Japanese only felt a need to translate them into their own language very late in the day. Thus Chinese was throughout its history in Japan, as Latin was in Europe, the sole medium for a religion born and developed in an entirely different environment; it replaced Sanskrit as Latin replaced Hebrew and Greek. For instance, one of the Buddhist texts most widespread throughout East Asia, the *Sutra of the Lotus*, became, in the Chinese translation made by the Central Asian monk Kumârajîva in 406 CE, the version on which the entire edifice of one of the main currents of Buddhist thought developed, just as the Vulgate of St. Jerome (the Latin translation of the Bible from the Hebrew and the Greek), completed in the very same year many thousands of miles away, was the basis for European theology and philosophy for a millennium. And just as Latin transmitted pagan and Christian literature alike in its monastic scriptoria through the most troubled times, so in Japan Chinese represented two strands of a culture, and both are found in Buddhist temple libraries, side by side.

2. I shall not go into the question of the exact status of archaic written Chinese: was it always, from the start, a language unrelated to the spoken language, as Leon Vandermeersch has brilliantly argued, or was it partly a transcription of that language, one that did not, for example, record the inflected verb endings that probably existed in ancient Chinese? While the style of works such as the *Book of Odes* seems to support the hypothesis of a separate written language, a reading of Confucius’s *Analects* or Zhuangzi gives the impression of a language recorded live.

Such cultural dominance provoked a noteworthy reaction. Japanese found a large proportion of its everyday and learned vocabulary – at least two thirds – made up of Chinese loanwords or words built of Chinese elements, like the two-thirds of English vocabulary coming from French or Latin, or the Arabic presence in Persian. However, there is one area of Japanese from which Chinese terms are strictly banished and only a (supposedly) pure Japanese vocabulary is allowed: classical poetry, generally known as *waka*, or ‘songs of the Yamato’. Mastery of written Chinese, and therefore of poetry in the Chinese style, might be the mark of the fully literate in Japan; but it felt good to be a fine Japanese poet as well. To be capable of composing those subtle thirty-one-syllable poems, written for the most part in the phonetic alphabet with a minimum of Chinese characters was a means of showing off a double proficiency which was particularly prized in good society during medieval times; later came the idea of making verses in antique style on novel systems of thought, by celebrating Buddhist subjects in these Japanese metres. The first systematic examples are the work of women writers; then monks thoroughly trained in academic Buddhism, which gave their compositions an aspect all their own. These poets had recourse to all the tricks of the traditional Japanese poet’s trade and also the procedures – already well worn – for transposing from the Chinese language into pure Japanese; and they constructed pieces that were both literary and doctrinal developments from the Chinese versions of the great canonical texts of Buddhism, especially the *Sutra of the Lotus*. This poetical rhetoric at the service of religion led in the end to a rich body of works which only give up their full meaning to those who can unpick the web of allusions woven from the initial versicle as well as the Buddhist commentaries underlying their interpretation.

The dialectic between Chinese and Japanese within the Japanese language was also practised through some highly original procedures for direct transposition of Chinese texts into Japanese. These procedures are very important in Japanese religious history, for they made it possible to bend the sense of the Chinese while still remaining faithful, on the surface, to the original.

The legitimate status of this relationship between the two languages was earned by many poet-monks, and indeed facilitated by the very nature of the Buddhist Law, as well as by history. Buddhism had been born in India and revealed by the Buddha in the brahminical language; it spread eastwards in Chinese; on arriving in the Japanese islands, it found itself in yet another language zone, under the authority of the Japanese gods or *kami*. There is therefore a consubstantial link between the *kami*, the Japanese language and the Japanese people.

I have used the term 'hieroglossia' for the type of relationship established between these two languages, above all in the religious sphere. It denotes the presence of a sacred language and a popular language, the latter drawing from the former the legitimacy of the semantic connections it sets up in its vocabulary for religious or philosophical concepts. Undeniably, though, the hieroglossia relationship is a shifting one. While it originally implies a sacred or traditional language, but above all one that is dead – grammatically fixed for ever – and a language or languages which can be called living, popular or vernacular, these vernaculars have often reacted afterwards by aspiring to equal status. The history of ideas in Japan shows a constant reassessment of the place of Japanese, until in the end it came to occupy the highest position of all.

We could write a history of Latin, too, with a similar perspective; at the outset, Latin had no calling as a sacred language, but was explicitly exalted to that level – quite late in the day, it now feels – as the language of the Vulgate, which from the moment of its completion was regarded as the authentic version of Holy Scripture.³

The same relationships are to be found in practically all written cultures: in the world of India and the lands under Indian cultural influence, where Sanskrit or Pali form the horizon of the languages of the Indian subcontinent and South-East Asia; in the Islamic world, where classical Arabic takes the same role, except that here the relationship seems destined never to fade; and in the Slavonic Orthodox world, where the fall of the communist regimes has led to some resurgence of the Slavonic Church. This is not merely a relationship between cosmopolitan languages and vernaculars, as can easily be demonstrated: Hindi, for example, which grew up in the nineteenth century by distinguishing itself from Urdu with its Arabic and Persian vocabulary, chose to draw extensively on its Sanskrit background to rebuild itself a learned vocabulary, at a time when Sanskrit had already long lost its political supremacy. When secular languages have recourse to sacred ones, it is for their symbolic function.

There are many examples showing that this hieroglossia relationship cultivates similar attitudes across cultures. There is a tale⁴ for instance, of the

3. An excellent record of how Latin is regarded by the Catholic Church is the apostolic constitution *Veterum sapientia*, issued in 1962 under the pontificate of John XXIII. We may note that Latin is nowhere defined in it as a sacred language, but is recommended above all for its status as a language now independent of that historical evolution which is the destiny of 'popular' languages.

4. Told, I think, by Roger W. Cowley in *The Traditional Interpretation of the Apocalypse of St. John in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church*, Cambridge, U.K., Cambridge University Press, 1983. See also his *Ethiopian Biblical Interpretation: A Study in Exegetical Tradition and Hermeneutics*, U.K., Cambridge University Press, 1988.

Ethiopian monk who woke in the night to run and set down (in Amharic) a gloss that had just occurred to him on a passage of the *Apocalypse* in Ge'ez (ancient Ethiopian) which cannot but remind us of the story of St. Thomas Aquinas getting his secretary up in the middle of the night to dictate a page of commentary on the book of Isaiah.⁵ The resemblances can go far; one of the Japanese poet-monks I mentioned just now (Jien, 1155–1225) explains that Japanese poems can be understood on two levels, the true and the profane, and this statement is itself modelled on the well-known Buddhist doctrine of the ‘two verities’⁶, while in the *Journal des savants*⁷ we find this: ‘attention has been drawn to the fact that almost all the works of Old Russian literature can, like Holy Scripture, be read on two levels: they have a literal meaning and also a higher or spiritual meaning’. In Japan and in medieval Russia, the practice of hieroglossia had direct effects on the popular language.

The existence throughout Eurasia of sacred and traditional languages no longer in living use made it one of the component layers of culture to have a language which was not a mother tongue but was acquired through education. It was an inheritance to be handed on, and at the same time a mystery to be sounded, a model to follow, whose status made it impossible to rival: nothing could be more opposed to the notions of a deep and carnal connection between a people and its language, which the Romantic ‘reawakening of the nations’ imposed in Europe and across the world⁸, but nothing could be more different, either, from the notion of a ‘language of immediate communication’ as some would like English to become.

The manifestations of hieroglossia are certainly diverse, but it has informed these cultures in crucial ways. We could trace fascinating parallels between teaching methods in the monasteries of European, Ethiopia and Mongolia, all of which had the task of training their novices in a sacral

5. See M.-D. Chenu, *Saint Thomas d'Aquin et la théologie* [Saint Thomas Aquinas and Theology], Paris, Le Seuil, 1959, pp. 51–52.

6. See my forthcoming work *La Centurie du Lotus de Jien* [Jien's Century of the Lotus].

7. Pierre Gonneau, quoting R. Picchio, ‘La Funzione delle chiavi tematiche bibliche nel codice letterario della Slavia ortodossa’ [The Function of Biblical Subject Keys in the Literary Codices of Orthodox Slavonia], *Letteratura della Slavia ortodossa (IX–XVIII sec.)*, Bari, 1991, pp. 363–403. Quoted in ‘Le Faust russe, ou L'Histoire de Savva Grudcyn’ [The Russian Faust: the Story of Savva Grudcyn], *Journal des Savants*, July–December 2004, p. 453.

8. There is a link between the Japanese and their language, which they themselves perceive as inseparable; but this relationship is balanced by the pre-eminent position of classical Chinese in their culture and religion; one cannot be imagined without the other: literally a Japanese symphony, with two answering languages.

language – Latin, Ge'ez or Tibetan. Some of the ideas set out by Remi Brague in his splendid book *Europe, la voie romaine* (1992)⁹, must be extended to the whole of Eurasia, particularly those on 'cultural secondariness'; his intention, admittedly, was to point to it as a European peculiarity, but for my part I see in it a feature of all the written cultures of Eurasia, and one which brings them closer in an unexpected way.

I began with English, pointing out that there is a more or less conscious move to make it a lingua franca divested of any cultural context. This will not be an easy thing to do: I need only call to witness an important article by James Wood arguing that the English prose of Saul Bellow was greatly influenced by the King James version of the Bible, which reproduces stylistic traits of the Hebrew. According to him, that version was implicitly regarded as a faithful transposition of the Hebrew into English, whereupon its language indirectly acquired some of the sacral nature of the original: an echo of the idea of the *hebraica veritas* in St. Jerome's Vulgate. Not much later, we have Marina Warner offering an analysis of the Book of Revelation's influence on the bellicose English styles of Bush and Blair. It really will be very hard indeed, even in the fleshless language people want to make out of English, to leave behind the hieroglossia which makes us what we are.

Biography

Jean-Noël Robert studied at the École Nationale des Langues Orientales Vivantes (now the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales) in the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris and at the University of Paris-VII before leaving for Japan in 1972 to study at Kyoto's Otani University with a fellowship from the Maison franco-japonaise in Tokyo. He was a researcher at France's National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) from 1975 to 1990, since then he has been Director of Studies in the Religious Sciences section of the École Pratique des Hautes Études, where he is Professor of Japanese Buddhism. He spent six years in Japan and was a pupil of Bernard Frank, one of the most knowledgeable students of Japanese culture. Jean-Noël Robert is a Docteur ès lettres, and devotes his research mainly to the study of Buddhist doctrines as they developed in Japan from Chinese origins, in particular the Tendai School.

His publications include *Les doctrines de l'école japonaise Tendai au début du IX^e siècle* [Doctrines of the Japanese Tendai School in the early ninth century], Paris, Maisonneuve & Larose, 1990; *Le Sûtra du lotus* [The Lotus Sutra] (translation of the Chinese Kumârajîva version), Paris, Fayard, 1997; *Contemplating the Temple of the Heart: Buddhism as viewed by a French Buddhist* (in Japanese), Tokyo, 1995; *Kanbun for the XXI^e Century: The Future of Dead Languages* (in Japanese), Japan, Kyoto, 2001; also articles in Japanese, English and French.

9. Brague, Remi. 1992. *Europe, la voie romaine* [Europe, the Roman Road]. Paris, Criterion.

Islam and the Knowledge Society

Mhamed Hassine Fantar

The etymology of the word 'Islam' conveys two basic concepts: wholeness and peace. The idea is that of building peace within oneself and outside: being at peace in or with oneself and at peace with others.

This is the plan that the Prophet Mohammed set himself to bring about within the tribal society of the Arabian Peninsula. Despite enormous obstacles he succeeded in returning to Mecca where the tribes acknowledged their submission, an astounding victory for Islam. His immediate successors had to deal with formidable opponents including the Byzantine and Sassanid empires, neither of which would brook a rival power, however peace-loving; the Islamic authorities found themselves accordingly enmeshed in an implacable dialectic where defence generated attack. However that may have been, Islam aims to be the bearer of a message of peace; and nothing fosters violence and war like proselytizing or anathematizing.

So let me speak now of the human being in Islam as presented by its founding messenger, who was a true peace-maker. As well as peace, Islam aims to build the knowledge society. Allah is presented as teacher and source of wisdom from the moment of Adam's creation. He opens the doors of learning, and offers education.

For Adam, creation is a privilege in itself. He is distinguished from the other earthly creatures by his consciousness: he is, and knows that he is. The Koran says [Adoration, As-Sajdah, verse 9]: 'Il [Allah] forma d'abord l'homme d'argile ... ensuite il lui donna sa forme accomplie et insuffla en lui de son esprit. Il vous pourvut ainsi de l'ouïe, de la vue et de l'entendement ; mais vous êtes peu reconnaissants.' [He first formed humans of clay ... then he gave them his finished form and breathed his spirit into them. Thus he gave you hearing, sight and understanding; but you are hardly grateful]. This is the French translation by Sheikh Mazigh; that of Régis Blachère is slightly different: '(Allah) a originellement façonné l'homme d'argile Puis il l'a formé harmonieusement et a insufflé en lui son esprit de vie. Il vous a donné l'ouïe, la vue et les viscères. Combien peu vous êtes reconnaissants.' [Allah originally formed humans of clay Then He shaped them in harmonious form, and breathed into them his spirit

of life. He has given you hearing, sight and bowels. How ungrateful you are.’ For a published translation into English, compare N. J. Dawood: ‘He first created man from clay ... then moulded him and breathed His spirit into him. He gave you ears and eyes and hearts: yet you are seldom thankful.’

Humans were created from a thing made of clay and a little part of the Creator, the divine breath or spirit. They are made of matter and non-matter, the impure and the pure, the mortal and the immortal, the temporal and the spiritual.

This duality was already present in the mythologies of Sumer, Akkad, Assyria and Babylon: to relieve the gods of their everyday labours – for they were obliged to live by tilling the earth – the Sumerian god Ea charged the goddess Belet-il (the Bringer-Forth) with creating a human being to bear the burden of work and free the gods. At this request, Mami the Bringer-Forth called for the flesh and blood of a god to be mixed with clay ‘so that god and humans may find themselves mixed together in the clay’. And that is how and why, in Mesopotamian mythology as in the Bible and the Koran, impure matter came to be ennobled by the flesh and blood of a god: what we have here is the subject of the divine sacrifice for human benefit. There is, then, a real correspondence, at least so far as the vehicle is concerned, between the Mesopotamian scriptures on the one hand and those of the Bible and Koran on the other. Interacting traditions about the origins of humanity are found all over this Semitic world.

Allah created Adam for a number of purposes. In the Sumerian/Akkadian myth, humans seem to have been created to serve the gods who complained they were crushingly overworked, while the Koran (and indeed the Bible) gives humans a mission of responsibility, freedom and authority. In these two ‘Abrahamic’ religions, humans are created to serve God, the supreme master; but in so doing they are themselves served: they exalt the humanity of humankind.

Humans are Allah’s lieutenants on earth, responsible for all creatures and for the good governance of the cosmos. The Fall should then be understood not as a punishment or expiation but rather as promotion.

The Fall is an ontological one. The creation of humankind in these holy books seems to have been made in two stages: first, the genesis, and then the investing with responsibility. Adam becomes human.

Admittedly, Adam in the Garden of Eden was in a thoroughly blessed situation; but he was not aware of it. Awareness came because of the event which led to the Fall. It is the second stage in the creation of humankind; the one where we see the beginnings of the human being. The self emerges and is translated into countless projects and counter-projects.

Humans represent Allah on earth. The theme goes back way beyond the Abrahamic monotheisms: it is found in the Mesopotamian texts. Sumer, Akkad and Babylon had said it all: Abraham himself is the witness, for the hero of the monotheistic saga seems to have been the bearer of the whole Mesopotamian tradition as it appeared in Ur around the eighteenth century BCE. That tradition had had time to rub up against Egyptian and pre-Canaanite culture, and may indeed have had contacts with sources in the Arabian Peninsula. Abraham is the great worker of cultural transfer, bringing Mesopotamian culture and civilization to the shores of the Mediterranean.

We have every reason to believe that Mesopotamian gods had their representatives on earth: King Sargon II proclaimed himself the legitimate shepherd chosen by Assur and Marduk. The divinity regularly came to earth to inspect the condition of the viceregency.

There is no anthropological bar to making a connection between the coming to earth of the Mesopotamian divinity and that of the sacred books. The revelation is presented as the result of a descent by the archangel Gabriel (*angelos* in Greek, *malak* in Arabic and *mathe ak* in Hebrew all mean ‘messenger’), bearing the message to the prophet. So humans owe it to themselves to accomplish or realize all the gifts that God has given them; to be, on earth, the knowers, rulers and indeed the measure of all things. If they fail in that mission, or abuse their position, they may expect severe divine punishments.

As the Koran sees it, humankind was created to serve its own ends and in doing so it serves its Lord, who has given it all the faculties required to know, manage and dominate the cosmos.

The Koran brings out this conception from the very start, in the first revelation. As Mohammed was given over to meditation in the cave of Hira, Gabriel came to him and ordered him to invoke his master. This is Sura 96, whose first verse, ‘Call on the name of your Master!’, recalls Genesis 12.8 ‘And he called on the name of Yahweh’. Most translators have translated this first verse of Sura 96 as ‘Recite [or Read] in the name of your Master’, as if the Archangel Gabriel was showing him a text engraved on a tablet or written on a scroll. That would be an invitation to learn to read, and indeed an exaltation of reading and writing, the twin keys of knowledge. In this same Sura, Mohammed is given another order: ‘Preach! [or Read!] Your Lord, the most bountiful, who has taught by the reed pen, has taught humans what they did not know.’

From the start, Allah presents himself as the great teacher, the informer and moral guide. He takes charge of humans through factual instruction and

moral education, whose combined effects are needed if humans are to conquer their humanity and perfect themselves in skill and righteousness.

Instruction makes it possible to lift the veil that hides the laws of the cosmos and prevents humans deciphering them. So Allah has the benevolence and generosity to lead them in the direction of discovery, and gives them the tools so that they can succeed in lifting the veil. This aspect of teaching is shown in many verses by the verb ‘teach’: ‘He taught Adam the names of all things’ (Sura 2, 31), a preparation for dominating the universe and being in a position to take on and carry out his functions as Allah’s representative on earth. The same desire and will to be humankind’s instructor are shown in Sura 55, 1–4: ‘The Merciful has taught the Koran [or ‘has taught recitation’]. He created humans and taught them exposition’ (*al-bayane*, apparently another name given to the new revelation). There remains the question of what the Master expects from His pupil.

The building of the knowledge society seems have been one of the Prophet Mohammed’s main concerns. It is said that on the occasion of one of the battles against the Arab tribes hostile to his preaching and to the change he proposed to introduce, his disciples took a great number of prisoners. Instead of ransom, the prophet required any that could read and write to teach those of the Muslims who were illiterate. It was one of the Prophet’s first actions to promote the knowledge society by the transfer of knowledge. Learning is learning, whatever the religion of the teacher.

Statements expressing the Prophet’s preoccupation with building the knowledge society are plentiful; here are some of the best known: ‘Seek to acquire knowledge, from the cradle to the grave’: truly lifelong education: no one should ever stop learning. Another saying urgently recommends going in search of knowledge – even to China. The prophet also declared the quest for knowledge to be an obligation for men and women alike. In Islamic society, knowledge concerns the profane as well as the sacred: knowledge of God depends on knowledge of humans and of the world: Massignon argues that this betokens a lay theocracy.

This conquest of knowledge in which the sacred is mingled with the profane is an obligation on everyone, without any distinction. But for knowledge of the rules required for the carrying out of one’s religious duties, the community can depend as required on its scientific and moral elites, those in which it trusts. This is a democratic act, a choice whereby some are invested with the teacher’s authority on the basis of recognized competence and within the framework of a sensible division of labour within society. The responsibility nonetheless remains with the individual.

The acquisition of knowledge depends on the state of the arts, and that in turn on many variables. The elites whose task it is to explore the universe, to lift the veil, to chase away the shadows and reveal the light, must have tools. Those we have nowadays are far more powerful than those of our predecessors.

In terms of hermeneutics, we can regard a revealed text as a literary or archaeological artefact. The sacred text contains a meaning, values, guidance of universal validity, while the literary or archaeological artefact, though profane, modest in the extreme and far from universal, also contains matter loaded with meaning and values. Yet literary critics and archaeologists very often find themselves going beyond this material reality. Many elements, many significances, slip unnoticed through their respective siftings; and they seek no more than to further the understanding of their particular fields on the basis of such elements as are available, though they will always understand – and hope – that future generations will be able to detect other motes of reality, and better understand the material and immaterial content of their quarry. Whatever the nature of this research, it is appropriate to take into account both the visible layer and the many layers which might have remained invisible. Islam, as a bringer of peace and builder of the knowledge society, implicitly advises Muslims to take part in all that fosters the flowering of such a society. There is little difference, in Allah's sight, between endowing a mosque and building a university campus, equipping a laboratory or stocking a library. We have every reason to believe that we are supposed to engage in those undertakings which open the path of knowledge and enable the Muslim to manage the cosmos.

In the Islamic world, people – in this case, Muslims – receive instruction which opens the way to knowledge of the world thanks to the countless techniques they owe it to themselves to acquire and master. For Muslims, mastery of these technologies is a personal obligation.

Even more than a teacher of facts and skills, Allah is a moral educator. We should remember that the name 'Mohammed' in fact contains a whole programme: it is a name (not frequently used in pre-Islamic Arab society) connected with a root whose meanings revolve around the *fine* and the *good*. Through his intermediary, the Archangel Gabriel, Allah, creator of humankind, charges his Prophet Mohammed with a mission which is essentially humanitarian. And like his Prophet, the Muslim must be fine and good.

That is the project. Allah chose Mohammed to make him an ideal, to be put as an example before all Muslims of every age. He is fine and good: that is an understatement, a mere summary description of the society Islam intends to build. Mohammed the man, leader in this project, deserves his status as

prophet, missionary and leader because of the perfection of his morality. Allah says to the Prophet: 'Truly, yours is an outstanding moral status' (Sura 68, 4). There are divergent interpretations here, but all translators recognize that this verse is exalting the Prophet's morality, the excellence of his conduct and the quality of his relationships with others at profane and sacred levels.

The expression 'outstanding moral status' embodies such human values as acknowledgement of others, love of one's neighbour, solidarity, justice, clemency, gentleness, peace, and so on. The Koran and the Sunna pay special attention to all these fundamental values, each of which is frequently commended, often with talk of rewards for those who uphold them and take them into account in their relationships with other people. Severe chastisement is predicted for those who stray from them, or who detract from them. The Koran and the Tradition of the Prophet contain an entire programme of moral education, to ensure that science does not come without conscience. This recalls the words of François Rabelais 'Science without conscience is nothing but ruin to the soul'. When asked to spell out the essence of his mission, the Prophet replied 'the aim of my mission is to perfect the supremacy of morality'.

Islam, then, offers a humanist project in which human individuals are charged with managing the universe rightly, as free and rational beings. Their choices and actions must in all circumstances be based on and illuminated by love and reason. This is a humanism which recalls the definition of André Malraux, who said: 'Humanism does not mean "What we did no animal would have done", but "we refused to do what the animal in us wanted to; and we became human without the help of the gods".' For centuries the Muslim world has shown itself ready and able to tackle this project: we need look for no further proof than Medina, Damascus, Baghdad, Kairouan, and names such as Haroun ar-Rashid, al-Mamoun, the Beit al-Hikma, Averroes, Maimonides, al-Khawarizmi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), Ibn Khaldun and other illustrious figures of whom the Muslims can justly be proud. Islam has in the past brought much fertile knowledge to many peoples and enriched vast lands; it still keeps today and will keep tomorrow all its fruitful and fructifying qualities, provided Muslims remember to receive the seed and work for the building of the knowledge society, fully recognizing the importance of knowledge in their religion, mastering new technologies and giving humans everywhere the opportunity to perfect their humanity by gaining knowledge and respect for moral values.

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Biography

Mhamed Hassine Fantar occupies the President Ben Ali Chair in Dialogue among Civilizations and Religions in Tunisia. He studied at Sadiki College and the École Normale Supérieure of Tunis, then at the École Pratique des Hautes Études at the Sorbonne in Paris. He specialized in Western Semitic languages and the civilizations of the Near East, and among other functions has been Director of the Tunis National Institute of Archaeology and Art (1982-1987), of the Tunis Centre for Research into Phoenician/Carthaginian Civilization and Libyan Antiquities, and of the Museums Department of the National Heritage Institute in Tunis. He has also been Professor of Ancient History, Archaeology and the History of Religions at Tunis University and has lectured at the Rome, Bologna, Cagliari, Tripoli, Benghazi and Louvain Universities and at the Collège de France. He has received an honorary doctorate from the University of Bologna, Orders of Cultural Merit from the French and Italian Republics and the Order of the Tunisian Republic; he is a Commander of the Tunisian Order of Merit for Higher Education and Scientific Research. He belongs to a great number of clubs, associations, institutes and cultural and archaeological foundations.

The Academia des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres of France awarded him the Toutain Blanchet Prize for his work *Kerkouane, une cité punique du Cap Bon* [Kerkouane: a Carthaginian Reference to Cap Bon], Tunis, Institut national d'archéologie et d'art, 1987; he also received the Prix du Comité Culturel National for his book *Jugurtha* (in Arabic), and, in 2002, the Mediterranean Civilization Association's Sabatino Moscati Prize.

The network of interdependence as a basis for transversal values

Nobumichi Iwasa

Diversity and universality of stages of moral development

Anthropological or cross-cultural research provides people with a lot of evidence that their own views of the world and human life are not the only views, relativizing their own as merely one of many. Culture determines how we interpret, and interact with, the world and other people. It also determines how we behave within this world, and how we define what is right and what is wrong. Individuals living within one culture tend to behave in similar ways, which are distinguishable from other cultures. Such cultural differences often cause distrust among people from different cultures and sometimes result in conflicts among them.

However, all people belonging to one culture do not think and behave in the same way. One important factor that might differentiate people's attitudes and behaviours is their level or stage of moral development. Lawrence Kohlberg, director of the Center for Moral Development and Education at Harvard University in the 1970s and the 1980s, first clarified the importance of the level and the stage of moral development in understanding human behaviour in different societies. Kohlberg studied the moral reasoning of people from different cultures by presenting them with hypothetical moral dilemmas. He identified the following six stages of moral development, which he suggests are culturally universal (Kohlberg, 1981, 1984).

Pre-conventional level

Stage 1: Heteronomous morality

Stage 2: Individualism, instrumental purpose and exchange

Conventional level

Stage 3: Mutual interpersonal expectations, relationships, and interpersonal conformity

Stage 4: Social system and conscience

Post-conventional or principled level*Stage 5: Social contract or utility and individual rights**Stage 6: Universal ethical principles*

For example, Kohlberg presented a modified version of his well-known Heinz Dilemma to people in Taiwan and Malaysia. He asked interviewees whether, if a rich family refused to share their food with a poor farmer, who could not afford to buy food himself, should the farmer steal food from them to save his wife from dying of starvation. In both countries, many subjects answered 'Yes, he should steal the food.' However, the reasons Taiwanese and Malaysian people gave in support of the act of stealing differed. The Taiwanese typically justified their response by saying that the husband should steal the food because he could not afford to pay for the funeral if his wife died. In contrast, Malaysians answered that the husband should steal the food because if his wife died there would be nobody to cook for him. Kohlberg argued that, although the reasons given in support of stealing food were apparently different, reflecting different cultural backgrounds, they were fundamentally, or developmentally, at the same stage; Stage 2. Both considered the wife's life in terms of utilitarian value for the husband. This developmental framework, although originally derived from Kohlberg's study of moral reasoning, is also useful in understanding people's behaviours regardless of their cultural background.

Much cross-cultural research has examined whether Kohlberg's six stages of moral development could be found in the responses of people with diverse cultural backgrounds. Snarey (1985) carried out an extensive review of the cross-cultural research literature and concluded that the results of all available studies generally supported Kohlberg's hypothesis that moral development occurs through an invariant, upward sequence of hierarchical stages, at least up to the conventional stages.

However, some researchers have questioned the universality of these stages. The focus of discussion is the ideology underlying the definition of the higher stages, especially Kohlberg's emphasis on justice and autonomy. Dien argues that Kohlberg's six-stage hierarchy reflects 'the idea which derives from Western traditions that man is an autonomous being, free to make his own choices and to determine his own destiny' (1982, p. 333). In China, according to Dien, the Confucian conception of morality has been the cultural ideal of which the nucleus is *Jen*.

[Jen] has been variously translated as 'love', 'benevolence', 'human-heartedness', 'man-to-manness', 'sympathy' and 'perfect virtue'. It is basically

the deep affection for kin rooted in filial piety and extended through the family circle to all men. (p. 334.)

Vasudev, however, maintains that ‘the question of what constitutes principled moral thinking remains open and debatable’ and suggests two Indian concepts of non-violence and of unity of all life as candidates for principles other than justice used in moral reasoning (1984, p. 166).

In conducting a comparative study of moral reasoning in American and Japanese adults using Kohlberg’s hypothetical moral dilemmas, I found a substantial number of post-conventional subjects in both countries, but they revealed rather different attitudes to the moral problems in the dilemmas (Iwasa, 2001). While American post-conventional subjects showed consistent autonomous action choice based on universalizable justice reasoning, some Japanese post-conventional subjects did not fit into Kohlberg’s scheme, demonstrating a basic understanding of human life in terms of connectedness to the much wider world. Individuation and autonomy, which find full expression in Kohlberg’s model of humans at post-conventional stages, need to be supplemented by a post-conventional expression of the connected aspect of human existence – interpersonally, socially, and naturally or universally.

A network of interdependence extended in space and time

In this context, the work of Chikuro Hiroike, author of *Treatise on Moral Science* (1928) and the founder of the Research Center for Moral Science in Japan, has two important implications for our discussion of cultural diversity and transversal values. Firstly, Hiroike had a fundamental understanding that we humans are closely connected with all other existence, and his *Treatise on Moral Science* is nothing but an effort to clarify the essence of post-conventional morality for humans living within this network of interdependence. Secondly, in his effort to clarify the essence of post-conventional morality, Hiroike heavily depended on the lives and teachings of spiritual leaders such as Confucius, Shakyamuni Buddha or Jesus Christ.

More concretely, Hiroike’s concept of post-conventional morality is closely connected to his basic understanding that we humans are members of a global network of interdependence. Hiroike made this point very clear as early as the 1920s:

Viewed from the scientific standpoint...the content of this universe constitutes a system in which all the phenomena are related to one another. In particular,

the living things on earth are related to one another not only in their physical forms but also in their living functions. (2002, p. 111.)

Hiroike emphasized that this mutual dependence exists not only in our natural surroundings, but also between humans and our environment and among humans – connecting us with all and everything in space and time.

Nearly eighty years have passed since Hiroike tried to clarify the essence of post-conventional morality from the standpoint of a global network of interdependence. With the increase of ecological and environmental understanding over the past decades, more and more people have become aware of this fact. The term ‘spaceship earth’ became popular in the 1970s and ‘sustainable development’ has become a key term not only for specialists in economy, politics and administration, but for ordinary people as well.

Such growing awareness of our interdependent relationship with all living and non-living beings on the earth may be due to the present aggravating conditions of our environment, such as global warming. Apart from such environmental problems, however, we are not necessarily aware of this global network of interdependence, and we do not think and behave according to its ramifications. The following episode illustrates this point.

One day, a Japanese man dropped into a supermarket on his way home from work to buy some food to prepare dinner for himself and his children. At the supermarket he bought some fillets of a fish called *aji*, coated with breadcrumbs ready for frying. He returned home, heated some cooking oil and fried the fish, and the *aji-fry* was the main dish for the dinner. His children liked the fried fish and praised their father as a cook. He was very satisfied with the taste of the dinner and his children’s response, and thought, ‘My wife not being at home, I did everything by myself as far as tonight’s dinner is concerned.’ A few days later, however, when he was watching television, there was a scene of men catching horse mackerel, or *aji*, in Thailand, and it was the same fish he had fried a few days before. The next scene was a factory in which Thai women in uniform were processing horse mackerel fillets to be exported to Japan. The father was shocked by this television program, as he realized that he had been entirely wrong in thinking he had done everything by himself in preparing the dinner. What he had actually done that evening was only the last small part of a long series of tasks involved in preparing the fried fish fillets, and all the other parts had been done by numerous people he had never met.

In fact, we humans are very dependent on plants, for instance, for the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide. We depend on all kinds of livestock, fish and vegetables that we eat for our existence. In many cases, however, we

just use these natural resources for our own comfort or profit, and we sometimes exploit them. Moreover, we maintain interdependent relationships with many people in the world. However, in many cases, we do so to obtain goods and services we need for our daily life, and we do not necessarily care, or pay enough attention to, other people themselves. We simply use all these people and things for our own purposes and benefits and do not pay due respect to them as authentic members of this global community or network of interdependence.

However, when we look back at traditional ways of life we see examples of human modesty towards nature and harmonious attitudes towards other living beings. We see people considering themselves to be part of nature. For example, people in Mongolia keep flocks of sheep, which are frequently attacked by wolves. Although they hope the number of wolves will be kept at a certain level, it is said that they never try to annihilate them entirely. They understand that wolves play an important role in killing weak and sick sheep, so preventing contagious disease from spreading to the entire flock. These Mongolian shepherds see the wolves as a kind of doctor for their sheep and for themselves: a tribal wisdom that recognizes the important aspect of the interdependent network of all living beings on the earth. Furthermore, they consider wolves to be their fellow animals, their lives given from heaven, who share this beautiful nature with them. Such a modest and harmonious attitude to nature is needed in the present culturally diversified world.

While we are members of the network of interdependence on the physical level and on the social or economic level, it is questionable whether we are truly members of the network of interdependence on the fundamental, or humane, level.

The network of interdependence and post-conventional morality

How can humans become true members of the network of interdependence? What Hiroike tried to do in his *Treatise on Moral Science* is relevant to this question. Hiroike tried to approach post-conventional morality with a view of humans as connected within this world. His effort supplements Kohlberg's concept of post-conventional morality as characterized by its emphasis on justice and autonomy. Unlike Kohlberg, who basically depended on interview data using hypothetical moral dilemmas, Chikuro Hiroike focused his study on materials from the lives and teachings of Confucius, Shakyamuni Buddha,

Jesus Christ and others. These leading figures in human civilization taught and acted according to specific situations in time and space, but they all manifested the highest moral character. Hiroike tried to clarify the essence of post-conventional morality, so that contemporary people could understand this morality and aspire to practice it according to their own circumstances. Hiroike enumerated the following five points as characteristics of post-conventional morality commonly identified in the lives and teachings of the leading figures of the world's major civilizations.

(1) Benevolence extended to all living beings as well as to all humans on earth

The earth on which we live is the only planet in the solar system on which water exists in liquid form. This very rare condition of the earth makes it possible for all kinds of living beings to exist and flourish. We humans are nothing but one phenomenon on this earth, living together with other animate beings in an interdependent relationship. This global network of interdependence, in which we are just one member of the whole system, requires us to have a sense of cosmic modesty – an understanding that our life is made possible by the very special condition of the earth in this universe – and to have respect for all other living beings. We should not hurt or kill other people and other living beings, and we should live in harmony. Such love and respect for all people and other living beings on this earth is exemplified in the conduct of the leading figures of humanity.

(2) Freedom from self-centredness and from the instinct for self-preservation

Unlike animals, who depend on their instinct for self-preservation, we humans have great intellectual capacity. However, we are not necessarily free from self-centeredness, which often leads to serious problems in the shape of conflicts with other people, an unequal distribution of goods, environmental destruction and so on. Self-centred thinking and activity in humans is the major factor disrupting the harmony of the network of interdependence. The above-mentioned exemplary figures in human history can be said to be free from this self-centred mentality and this instinct for self-preservation. It is very important for us to be deeply aware of these tendencies and to try to overcome them, even though this can be very difficult. In our efforts towards achieving this, we have to understand that we are living within a network of interdependence and that we must behave accordingly.

(3) Respect for our fundamental benefactors for our bodily, social and spiritual existence

When we try to widen our perspective and begin to understand the fact that we are living in a network of interdependence, we will see that there are people who have worked very hard for the development and harmony of this network. They are benefactors who have greatly contributed to us (1) in our bodily existence and our happy family life, (2) in our safe and orderly social life, and (3) in our meaningful and satisfactory spiritual life. We owe a lot to them. Hiroike coined the word ‘ortholinson’ to denote these important benefactors, because the concept has been forgotten since the time of the leading figures of our civilizations. By respecting and following the example of the benefactors, we will be able to overcome our self-centeredness, little by little.

(4) Heartfelt devotion to the promotion of happiness for all people in the world

If we understand the contribution that such important benefactors have made to the network of interdependence, we become grateful to them. At the same time, we realize that we do little for the network of interdependence in simply seeking our own satisfaction. In other words, as members of a network of interdependence, and because we owe so much to it, we have a duty to do anything we can to help other people or the network. Over time we will start to feel it is pleasurable to work for other people while expecting nothing in return.

(5) Efforts to share with other people the awareness that we are all members of a network of interdependence

As already mentioned, we have a tendency to think and act in a self-centred way. But once we become aware that we are members of a network of interdependence, as well as trying to practice the four behaviours discussed above, it is very important also that we share our awareness with others. As we are living within this network, it is not enough just to be aware of it. The spiritual leaders in human history all devoted themselves wholeheartedly to sharing this awareness with others.

These are the main points that Hiroike extracted from the teachings and practices of the major spiritual leaders. I consider that these points are vitally relevant to our discussion of transversal values.

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Biography

Nobumichi Iwasa holds degrees from the University of Keio (Japan, 1977) and from Harvard University (United States, 1989). Professor Iwasa is Director of the Moral Sciences Research Centre and Professor of Education at Reitaku University, Japan.

His publications include 'A developmental and cross-cultural consideration of justice and benevolence', in *Transactions of the International Conference on Moral Education; Moral Education, East and West: Tradition and Innovation*, Japan, Institute of Moralogy, 1987; 'Postconventional Reasoning and Moral Education in Japan', *Journal of Moral Education*, 1992, Vol. 21, No. 1; 'Moral Reasoning among Adults: Japan-US Comparison', in H. Shimizu and R.A. LeVine (eds), *Japanese Frames of Mind: Cultural Prospects on Human Development*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2001.

International Symposium

Cultural Diversity and Transversal Values: East–West Dialogue on Spiritual–Secular Dynamics

7–9 November 2005
Paris, UNESCO Headquarters

FINAL COMMUNIQUE

In conjunction with UNESCO's sixtieth anniversary, an international symposium entitled *Cultural Diversity and Transversal Values: East–West Dialogue on Spiritual–Secular Dynamics* took place at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 7 to 9 November 2005.

This symposium was coordinated by the Social and Human Sciences Sector (Philosophy and Human Sciences Section) and the Culture Sector (Division of Cultural Policies and Intercultural Dialogue) at UNESCO in cooperation with seven institutions: the International Research Center for Japanese Studies and the Research Center for Moral Science at the Institute of Moralogy (Japan) under the impetus of Eiji Hattori, Deputy Director at the Research Center for Moral Science and Chargé de mission to the Office of the Director-General of UNESCO, the French National Commission for UNESCO, the International Council for Philosophy and Humanistic Studies (ICPHS), the École Pratique des Hautes Études, the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales (INALCO), and the International Society for the Comparative Study of Civilizations (ISCSC). Additional assistance was provided by the Permanent Delegation of Japan to UNESCO, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, the Japan Foundation and the Japanese National Commission for UNESCO. The symposium was inaugurated by Mr Koïchiro Matsuura, Director-General of UNESCO.

Almost fifty years after the launching of the major project, the Mutual Appreciation of East–West Cultural Values (1957–1966), and twenty years after the Silk Road project, this symposium aimed at highlighting the richness and fragility of cultural diversity in its various expressions, particularly in Europe and Asia, while also recalling the common values capable of bringing together these two distinct geocultural areas. Researchers from various fields and cultures were able to share their experiences and viewpoints in relation to five themes: (1) The East–West Encounter in History; (2) Mediators and Means of Dialogue; (3) Cultural Diversity and Plurality of Values; (4) The Impact of Modernity on the Transfer of Cultures; and (5) Transversal Values in a Diverse World.

From the outset, this undertaking ran the obvious risk of being unable to explore each of these themes in depth, given the limitations inherent in such interdisciplinary exercises and the usual time constraints. Nevertheless, this meeting proved to be very

productive: indeed, the participants were able to distinguish new lines of investigation and develop a blend of fundamental debates, either recurrent or new, which more than ever before concern UNESCO as the sole agency in the UN system responsible for culture.

The participants suggested new avenues of dialogue allowing for a renewal of the flow of ideas and cultures that influence ways of being and thinking in contemporary societies. Special emphasis was placed on the notions of temporality and spirituality underlying this age-old dialogue forged from ruptures and continuations. Indeed, considering the spiritual–secular tensions at the heart of many global conflicts, we are compelled to question how transversal, rather than universal, values can lead to mutual learning. These transversal values thus serve to bridge distant cultural horizons in addition to providing a possible basis for dialogue and understanding between societies with diverse cultural heritages. Transversal values are those that are shared by two or several cultures as, for example, universal education and the aspiration towards the primordial ‘sacred’, which extends well beyond specific religious expressions. Other values were examined from the perspective of Japanese philosophical language. Among them, the concept of *wa*, which can be translated as ‘harmony among differences’ but also ‘peace based on reconciliation’, and *Wa shite Do zezu*, a term referring to the state of being in harmony without assimilation. All of these values belong to the common heritage of humanity.

By addressing this question in such terms and at the present time, we are contributing towards creating a global environment of mutual respect among peoples of different cultures and civilizations.

The following ideas, leading to concrete action, emerged in a particularly striking manner:

— *Cultural diversity* constitutes the raw material necessary for genuine dialogue. Without this fundamental prerequisite, so crucial to any exchange between peoples, cultures and civilizations, no attempt at international cooperation and mutual understanding is possible. In this context, encounters between civilizations occur through time and particularly over long periods. Civilizations do not clash; instead it is the ignorance of civilizations that can lead to conflict. For instance, an examination of founding myths, often considered to be graven in stone, demonstrates that they owe much to the exchanges and common aspirations of humanity. Similarly, science, which was long considered incompatible with religion and spirituality, proved, on the basis of theories put forward in the twentieth century, the existence of an unknown omnipresent zone or factors that influence the concepts of nature, human beings, and their role in nature. This notion of an unknown zone or factors constitutes a common foundation for two manifestations of the thought process, namely science and the intangible spiritual dimension: at this point a dialogue between the two can begin.

— *Dialogue*, a means of verifying the validity of an idea shared by two or more people willing to confront their logical systems, is a difficult undertaking because the speaker runs the risk of witnessing his or her ideas transformed. Dialogue becomes an ever-evolving means of reviving the thought process, calling into question convictions and progressing from discovery to discovery. Therefore we should reaffirm the merits

of dialogue as an exercise in displacement, confrontation, testing and transformation. The emphasis should be placed on dialogue's remedial powers as a means of decentring and stepping outside of one's cultural origins so as to plunge into a transversal dimension. In this way, we may go from a 'dialogue of civilizations' to a 'civilization of dialogue'.

— *Cultural transfers* most often take place in a given context according to real or created needs. Modernity, understood as the critical integration of outside cultures, has been associated very often with the notion of these transfers. In this way, a 'cultural synthesis' between cultures and civilizations develop. In this regard, the role of languages and translation has been strongly reaffirmed. It is therefore necessary to define the conditions and means of dialogue so that encounters and exchanges may be productive. In this context, the importance of mediators in cultural transfers becomes evident: the mediator transports and transforms components that evolve as they are borrowed.

— The concept of '*Roads*' as the ideal platforms for dialogue – enriched by UNESCO's long experience – offers not only a history and roadmap of intercultural dialogue over the centuries; it also contributes to our thinking about the future: the somewhat forgotten encounters and interactions serve to illustrate that the intercultural processes in question existed long before the current debate.

— *Nomadism*, taken literally and metaphorically, offers a new line of thinking, owing to its similarities with the complex and scattered nature of cultural exchanges resulting from globalization: nomadism is characterized not so much by the need to perpetually move but rather by a predominant dispersion as opposed to agricultural exploitation and accumulation. This dispersion forces nomadic peoples to create a network of solidarity and constant exchange, which, rather than uprooting and isolating them from their homelands, enables them to continuously re-appropriate their lands. It is all the more crucial to consider the uniqueness of places and environments at the present time when globalization increases the risks of cultural standardization as well as the risks of an overall uprooting of civilization from its natural foundation: Earth. Similarly, the attachment to one's original culture is enriched from contacts with other cultures, which ensure culture's lasting vitality and prevent it from attaining a state of disastrous sclerosis.

— *Civilization based on beauty* and the aesthetic field were regarded as a promising direction through which it could be possible to break the deadlock on certain issues or to further the discourse on 'goodness' and 'truth' upheld by ideological presuppositions. In the context of the current crisis of doctrines founded on the concepts of goodness and truth, beauty appears to offer a means of going beyond axiological views. Owing to their sensitive and transferable nature, beauty and the aesthetic sphere seem to offer the most fertile domain for cultural exchanges, which have been intensified by the accelerated pace of globalization. This has been demonstrated by the recent adoption of the Convention for the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions.

Human existence must be reconsidered beyond the limitations of the modern individual: according to the paradigm of 'Being towards life', existence is directed towards the future by virtue of its transversal and social dialogic dimension, which also obliges it to sustain life cycles within the biosphere.

In conjunction with UNESCO's sixtieth anniversary, an international symposium entitled 'Cultural Diversity and Transversal Values: East–West Dialogue on Spiritual–Secular Dynamics' took place at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris from 7 to 9 November 2005.

The symposium aimed at highlighting the richness and fragility of cultural diversity in its various expressions, particularly in Europe and Asia, while also recalling the common values capable of bringing together these two distinct geocultural areas. Researchers from various fields and cultures were able to share their experiences and viewpoints in relation to five themes: (1) The East–West Encounter in History; (2) Mediators and Means of Dialogue; (3) Cultural Diversity and Plurality of Values; (4) The Impact of Modernity on the Transfer of Cultures and (5) Transversal Values in a Diverse World.

The symposium suggested new avenues of dialogue to enable a revitalization of the flow of ideas and cultures that influence ways of being and thinking in contemporary societies. Special emphasis was placed on the notions of temporality and spirituality underlying this age-old dialogue forged from ruptures and continuations. Indeed, considering the spiritual–secular tensions at the heart of many global conflicts, the symposium looked at how transversal, rather than universal, values can lead to mutual learning. These transversal values serve to bridge distant cultural horizons by providing a solid basis for dialogue and understanding among and within societies, enriched by their diverse cultural heritages.

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The International Research Center for Japanese Studies

The Research Center for Moral Science, Institute of Moralogy, Japan