

INTER-RELIGIO

A NETWORK OF CHRISTIAN ORGANIZATIONS FOR INTERRELIGIOUS ENCOUNTER IN EAST ASIA

NEWSLETTER

No. 8

Fall 1985

HONG KONG

*Tao Fong Shan Ecumenical Centre
Catholic Commission for non-Christian Religions*

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FORE -WORDS

From 10 to 25 September of this year, a group bearing the official title "Scholars of World Religions" and composed mainly of members of the Inter-Religio network, visited the People's Republic of China to meet with leaders of China's religious communities and representatives of current religious scholarship. At several points during the two years of preparations that lay behind the trip, it seemed as if everything would collapse on one technicality or the other. Right up to the moment that the 20 of us set off from Osaka International Airport we did not know what kind of reception to expect and were resigned to seeing no more than a fraction of our dream realized.

In the end, it was as if a mysterious wind had preceded us to clear every obstacle from our path. Not only was the group able to tour the major religious sites in Beijing, Luoyang, Xian, Nanjing, Shanghai, and Hangzhou, but was warmly received by the leadership of the Chinese Buddhist Association, the Islamic Association, the Catholic Patriotic Association, the Three-Self Movement, the Institute for the Study of World Religions in Beijing and its counterpart in Shanghai, and the Bureau of Religious Affairs, as well as by the Protestant seminary in Nanjing and the Catholic hierarchy in Shanghai. In addition, a number of side trips led to meetings in Protestant and Catholic Churches, a Taoist community in Shanghai, and other Buddhist and Islamic religious communities. The Protestant seminary in Nanjing and the Institute for the Study of World religions in Shanghai both made extensive arrangements for us to share ideas in a more formally academic setting.

More important than simply witnessing such a wide cross-section of religious activity was the amicable spirit in which both sides were able to express their hopes of future collaboration and exchange. It was as if the wheel of history were taking a turn and we stood here at the hub, not quite sure what it all meant but convinced that there is much more in store. For those of us who live near the edge of China, there will be other trips, no doubt. And perhaps in the near future we will be receiving young scholars of religion from China to our centers and institutes. But however much new activity this first contact generates, I hope always to carry with me the conviction I am sure I shared with everyone in our first troop: that something of the proportions of a divine grace was travelling with us, turning our heads and our hearts to the great religious wealth waiting in China.

J.W.H.

Partners for Dialogue:

Joseph S. O'LEARY

From 6 to 9 September 1985, the Third Inter-Religio Conference, on the theme "Partners for Dialogue: the Search for Discriminating Norms," was held at the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, Nagoya, Japan. Six papers distributed in advance of the Conference have been published in East Asian Pastoral Review (Manila), vol. 22, 1985:4. An account of the presentations and discussions follows. The proceedings of the earlier conferences, Manila, March 1982 and Hong Kong, September 1983, were reported in Inter-Religio, Nos. 1 and 4.

Interreligious encounter cannot be confined to the laboratory conditions of academic study. As soon as it is embodied in concrete interaction between people, a host of problems arise. Theology has focused on the problems of being open to the other 'treat traditions' while maintaining fidelity to the Christian one. Dialogue with tribal religion, with new religions, or with heavily politicized groups (nationalistic Shinto, Chinese patriotic churches) tends to have less attraction for theologians, who are often reluctant to see how much historic Christianity too has been infiltrated by cosmic or animist religiosity, how heavily it has been politicized, and how many of its creative movements (and indeed the religion itself in its first appearance) at first seemed as bizarre and vulgar as any contemporary new religion. Sociologists and anthropologists are more welcoming of and more curious about such phenomena, providing scientific lens through which they may be viewed from a safe distance and rationally classified and controlled. But the prejudgement this safe distance implies has become increasingly untenable, as anthropologists find their own categorizing procedures subverted by the unexpectedly subtle and comprehensive networks of meaning elaborated by the cultures studied. Theologians too are beginning to have second thoughts about the negative evalua-

tion of “religion” as opposed to “faith” espoused by Barthians, secularists, liberation theologians and some psychologists of religion. The brutal exclusiveness of such a norm for dialogue is particularly evident in the Asian context.

Christians in Asia are not free to pick and choose their partners for dialogue and interaction in accord with a rarefied ideal of authentic religion, one realized nowhere in history. If they wish to witness to the Kingdom and work effectively for it in this region they cannot neglect the fellow-workers by their side, whether these come from the ranks of Buddhism or Shinto, Soka Gakkai or the Unification Church, shamanism, tribal groups, or Christian fundamentalism. Yet not all religion, still less everything that calls itself religion, is intrinsically innocent; indeed at all times religious zeal has had its demonic perversions. Thus a union of people of good will today may often have to apply norms derived from the Enlightenment against religions which trample on reason, liberty, tolerance. Yet these Enlightenment norms themselves are not totally above question, for a religion we regard at first as insane may well turn out to be telling us something about the limitations of our idea of reason. Religions which are politically or psychologically oppressive should be resisted in the degree that they are so, but with the consciousness that no religion can claim to have no oppressive aspects, and that even oppressive religions may serve a liberative function for some people in some contexts.

One might continue to multiply the riddles and antinomies the dialogue between religions faces, and as one does so it becomes clear that the norms for such dialogue can never be simple or static ones. Only through the accumulation of experiences and mistakes can a body of wisdom about how to proceed in such dealings be assembled. The Inter-Religio discussions reveal that this learning process is in full swing among reflective Christian activists in the region. If no clear and distinct norms were established during the days of discussion, this in itself may be a sign of how sophisticated their awareness of the problems has become. If one clear message emerged, it was that one cannot vault over the local context and the concrete values at stake there, General norms have only the most vaguely regulative function; the texture of our thinking on the question must become ever more thoroughly situational. Indeed, interaction with other religions, old and new, lights up the thoroughly situational character of Christianity itself, and its theologies, at all periods.

Reports

As one listened to the participants' reports on the activities of the Inter-Religio institutes throughout East Asia, it already emerged that the search for lucid principles for the pursuit of interreligious dialogue was a concern common to their widely varying contexts. Felipe Gomez told how the East Asia Pastoral Institute dealt with inculturation (applying lessons of African experience to the Asia/Pacific region) and increasingly oriented its students to interreligious encounter. Michael Sastrapratedja spoke of the relation between religion and state ideology, and the growth of fundamentalist trends, as major concerns in Indonesia. Eugene Denis reported on a book of guidelines prepared for the Thai Catholic Bishops, with a view to making the best use of a context in which the civil roles of Catholics may oblige them to participate in Buddhist ceremonies, and Seri Phongphit described the growth of Catholic openness towards Buddhists through their shared work for development and human rights. Edward Khong told how, in Hong Kong, leaders of the different religions were acting together, notably in dialogue with the Peking authorities, as they prepared for 1997. Raymond Renson of the Oriens Institute, Tokyo, spoke of problems faced by the Commission for Non-Christians in Japan in producing its *Guidelines for Catholics with regard to Ancestors and the Dead*. Jim Heisig described how the Nanzan Institute has found itself more and more accepted by the official church, in contrast to the sense of exploring an adventurous frontier expressed by participants at the 1982 conference. Thomas Immoos related that the Sophia University Institute had set up a Shinto study group, and spoke of projects to inculturate the liturgy and of his personal research on a theology of Shinto from the point of view of Eliade and Jung, noting that such a theology can be derived only from the experience of the *matsuri*. Hakan Eilert spoke of the twice-yearly seminars organized by the NCC Institute, Kyoto, followed by brief stays at Japanese religious sites, which stimulate pastors and laity to undertake studies of Japanese religion and culture. Sean McDonagh, Bishop Bienvenido Tuddud and Moctar Matuan described the work of the Gowing Memorial Research Center (Philippines): research into tribal religion, sometimes conducted by tribal people themselves; involvement in the struggle to save the lands and environment; participation of visiting researchers from other countries.

Langdon Gilkey: Plurality and its Theological Implications

In his paper (EAPR, pp. 326-39) Professor Gilkey had explored the shift in the relation of Christianity to other faiths “from a position of clear superiority to one of rough parity” and had pleaded for “a religious or theological mode of universality, that is, an interpretation of religious symbols that is inclusive of other traditions” and also avoids the element of absolutism still found in Tillich’s and Schuon’s efforts in this line. “A slide towards radical relativity has appeared; and any theological basis we might suggest for stopping that slide also begins itself to slide ‘ But in order to resist a Khomeini or a Falwell we must assert “the value of the free, just and equal community which this theocratic tyranny so deeply threatens:’ “The present flood of relativity is balanced by the stern demands for liberating praxis and for creative theory.” In his keynote address, Gilkey expressed his personal fascination with and bafflement by the issue of religious plurality. Since the Enlightenment the relativity of all verbal and conceptual expressions has slowly impressed itself on almost all Christian theologians. How far does this relativity extend? The end of Western dominance in the course of the twentieth century and the rise of cultural alternatives (including upsettingly successful inroads of other faiths) has brought to light the ambiguities hidden in Western consciousness for centuries, and has thrust Christianity into the unaccustomed role of accused rather than accuser. Christianity is forced to recognize its cultural particularity, and the fact that none of its symbols can be extracted from the hellenic-semitic cultural system to which they belong, so that even the notion of God is opened to radical reinterpretation in a situation of cultural pluralism. The liberal, Tillichian approach, holding to the supremacy of Christian revelation, is still, in Wilfred Smith’s words, a polite, tolerant, genteel imperialism. Gilkey proceeded to the other horn of the pluralist dilemma, the need to counter the Intolerable, the appearance of religions and ideologies that are destructive or demonic, which have created the most terrible social dilemmas of the century. The new religious right uses the sacred as a weapon of American imperialism and calls for a resistance such as the Barmen Confession opposed to Hitler. Thus not all forms of religion can or should be tolerated. Can one develop the necessary norms, the norms that allow one to say No, without falling back into intolerance? The ethical, as Kierkegaard reminds us, demands at least that pinch of absolutism that allows us to take a determinate stand. Political and dialogal praxis allows us to incarnate a certain relative absolutism, standing somewhere without

being fanatical. Our generation is rather on its own in facing these problems, not known in the past.

Bishop Bienvenido Tuted, in his response, observed that dogmas are only “a finger pointing at the moon” and should not enslave us. We must learn to live with contradictory ideas while still functioning as engaged, concerned human beings. Thomas Immoos thanked the speaker, remarking that theologians too often left one in the lurch by providing no norms for discriminating bona fide religions from the criminal or lunatic fringe. Gilkey observed that to make the American way of life or civil religion a norm was even more dangerous than adopting a polemic Christian norm. Sung-Hae Kim criticized the vagueness of the conclusions of Gilkey’s paper (EAPR, pp. 338-39); Gilkey agreed that these suggestions were the most tentative of pointers, that the finger was not even a finger yet. Hakan Eilert asked why theologians have not taken seriously the point of view of F. Schuon; Gilkey supposed that it is because his account of Christianity was too one-sidedly sacramental, ignoring the social gospel for instance, and that his subjection of all religious traditions to a mystical absolute is unattractive to theologians. Joseph O’Leary suggested that pluralism is helping Christianity, paradoxically, to find its identity, throwing it back on the poverty and finitude of its tradition, now grasped in its entirety as one “finger” among others. “We theologians,” Gilkey opined, “are at the frontier, and our colleagues, in philosophy for example, have not yet begun to realize that Western consciousness is relative.”

Jim Heisig wondered if the shock which the realization of “parity” had inflicted on reflective theologians was felt at the level of more primary expressions of belief, or by Shinto and Buddhist believers. Perhaps the real interreligious dialogue was happening at the level of spirituality without the sense of relativization registered in sophisticated reflection. Gilkey felt that Buddhists too are bound to be affected by the shock of relativity, even if it has not yet become explicit (indeed the experience is quite recent on our side too). For instance, in Buddhism “higher consciousness” is the norm of what is true, yet a Calvin knew nothing of it; it appears in the interreligious perspective, then, as but one way among others, unless one is prepared to uphold a mystical imperialism which sees all religions converging on this single peak.

Richard Wentz recalled that the shock of realizing there was a fusion between the churches and American culture has set theologians in the 50s creating an abstract ideological Christianity immune to cultural contamination. We must renounce the recourse to such insulation and face the fact that religion always has a political and cultural

embodiment and that religious questions are always questions of identity, social as well as individual. Tsuchida Tomoaki proposed that in face of the major ethical issues of technological society there was need of a tentative, provisional ethical consensus among the religions (despite the diversity of their traditional attitudes to the ethical); otherwise the religions would be robbed of an effective public voice. How could theologians bridge the gap between the core of religion and public ethics? Gilkey replied that, indeed, Catholics, Protestants and Jews in the U.S. are increasingly acting together on issues of medical ethics, for example. In resistance to the poverty-stricken view of “the human animal” expressed by a positivistic, scientistic culture, they find their unity very quickly in *defending the human* and it thus becomes clear that every problem is in a sense a theological and philosophical problem.

In response to a question about Zaehner’s view that Buddhism regards all contradictions as illusory and that this logic was carried to its extreme by Charles Manson, Gilkey agreed that one may say that the ultimate transcends finite contradiction; but this mystical insight can be misused, as religion always can, for demonic ends. As the Bible teaches, the principle of ultimate destruction in history always has a religious quality; religion does not represent the good over against the evil, but the ambiguity of the human over against God. Religion is the principle of ultimacy in history, of fanaticism and cruelty, as well as of healing and spiritual power. This ambivalence makes the enterprise of dialogue more interesting and precarious, for there is a constant tension between the principles of love and tolerance, on the one hand, and of justice and discrimination, on the other. Bishop Tutud related that the military in his country are using sects to “salvage” (liquidate) people. These, then, are groups with whom one cannot dialogue. Critics say we should dialogue with such groups, rather than condemn them outright, but it is clear that there are certain groups with which dialogue is impossible. Gilkey agreed that we cannot forget the reality of tyranny, and that no dialogal openness can make unnecessary a religious stand against it, as at Barmen.

Sean McDonagh: Dialogue with Primal Religions

In his paper (EAPR, pp. 351-362) Sean McDonagh analyzed the incomprehension shown by Great Religions to shamanistic and animistic religion, which is still being dismissed as superstitious. Primal religions have a key role to play at a time when modern technology is destroying the air, soil, and tropical forests, causing an incalculable

loss to human beings, who have forgotten the interdependence of the community of the living. Ecological devastation has advanced to the point that one might be tempted to see the human component of the earth community more as a cancer on it than as the zenith of its evolution. Quoting American Indian and T'boli sources, he called for a religious preaching more sensitive to the earth and capable of motivating resistance to its despoliation. In his vivid lecture, he spoke of the tribal peoples among whom he lives and of the factors threatening them with extinction. The destruction of their natural habitat, especially the tropical rain forest with its abundant and irreplaceable life-forms, undermines their culture and religion. When people speak glibly of this as "the price of progress" they are invoking a myth of social Darwinism which has roots in Western religion. Here is a norm, surely: what destroys the earth must be evil; and a religious tradition insensitive to this, or whose mythic values actually promote it, betrays a radical antagonism to the natural world.

There is a salvation for us in primal religions. McDonagh described the "earth-liturgies," one for each month of the year, open to Christian and non-Christian alike, celebrated in a house, not a church (which to tribal people stands for lowland religion). These liturgies relate the biblical message ("The Lord's is the earth and its fullness") to T'boli sensibility, as expressed in their myth of origins, in which the first words spoken by its Adam-figure are: "What a privilege it is to be called to care for the sky and the earth!" The people pray: "How beautiful is the soil the Lord has made! It is rich and black and fruitful. A single seed planted in her womb will produce a hundred seeds. Who can live without soil? Can the caribou eat grass without soil? Even the eagle who soars above highest mountains must return to the earth to find food. How precious is our soil, the gift above all gifts. Our soil is truly our Mother, a mother that contains us and feeds us.' Litanies naming the various forms of rice bring home to the people the fact that many of these no longer exist. The sermon is replaced by shared reflections on the problem of saving their lands from destruction. Everyone in the group is signed with soil, as a reminder that "our lives and the lives of every creature depend upon our soil" These liturgies bring the crisis of soil erosion into a religious context. The Judeo-Christian tradition is thus brought into dialogue with a religion which can heal it of its destructive potential.

Moctar Matuan, in his response, pointed out that the magnetic attraction of the majority culture is more powerful than the resistance of the minorities, who seem doomed to lose their identity. Apart from heightening awareness of the problem through liturgies, what concrete proposals could McDonagh offer? McDonagh answered that the sensi-

bilities of the tribal people to the earth had much to teach lowland Christians in the Philippines, and could help them grow beyond the dismissive attitude to the “primitive” and the uncritical acceptance of “progress” which were preventing them from arresting the destruction of the environment. The story of the Philippines is a mosaic one, and the tribal peoples have a lot to teach about what it means to be a Filipino.

Joseph O’Leary asked if one should not distinguish the religious dimension of the problem—the loss of the earth, going hand in hand with the death of God—which had been long been taken to heart in the West by poets like Wordsworth and thinkers like Heidegger (though not so much by theologians) from the more recent practical and political challenge posed by the threat of ecological disaster; this latter aspect had perhaps less to do directly with tribal religion. Tribal culture has indeed a message for the West, one which would have a large audience, but this message is not one about turning technology back, but about maintaining fidelity to the earth in a modern technological context (as perhaps Japan had succeeded in doing to some extent). If the T’boli merely clutched defensively at their traditional identity, they would contribute neither to the religious quest of humanity nor to countering the ecological threat. The American Indian quoted in Sean’s paper, who said that “without hunting, life loses its taste,” might be expressing a failure to adjust, which could not effectively counter the threat posed by technology. It might simply be a fact that such cultures had to “adjust or die” and therefore, for their own sake, all their energies should be channelled into adjusting for survival (as Japanese culture has done). Technology is the law of the jungle we live in today. Jan Swyngedouw agreed that Shinto had survived within industrial society because it had transferred the values of nature to the new technological context. Jim Heisig asked: “If you recognize that these people belong to a myth, a religious tradition that is dying, are you not in danger of encouraging a kind of fatalism, or the delusion that they can fight the machine with machetes and rain dances? Should you not rather encourage the T’boli to undergo a major cultural adjustment, to adopt reflective categories they never thought of before, to become transcultural missionaries? The T’boli people do not need to learn sensitivity to nature, from earth liturgies for instance; that is where they are our teachers. But they do need to learn a language to discriminate between the helpful and life-destroying aspects of technology. They cannot tackle technology in its totality but they can tackle concrete evils close at hand:’

Sean denied that the extinction of T’boli culture was inevitable; the ecological crisis threatens all of us tomorrow with the same fate

the T'boli face today. The present technological system wherein 6% of the population consumed 40% of the earth's resources could not be sustained much longer. (Thomas Immoos noted that *Waldsterben* in Switzerland bore this out.) Reaffirming the religious dimension of this crisis and of the struggle to ensure the survival of the greatest possible cultural and religious diversity, Sean argued that the story of the earth is one of the efflorescence and multiplicity of life forms and of human culture, and that when a quarter of the world's life-forms are threatened with extinction, or when American and Australian primitive cultures are destroyed by the sterilizing impact of exploitative technology, Christian love cannot allow itself to be blind to the tragic dimensions of what is happening, or indifferent to the needs of tribal peoples suddenly called to advance from hunting and gathering culture to technology. We must help people find the energy to resist the fate of extinction suddenly thrust upon them. Once liberating, the Judeo-Christian attitude to the earth has now revealed its defective side. No doubt the stress on history and the person discloses universal values, uniquely embodied in Israel and in Jesus, but it is urgent to recapture the wider religious sensibility illustrated by the American Indian quoted, or by Francis of Assisi almost alone in our tradition. The European Romantic tradition took nature seriously, but it was a humanized nature, not the bounty and terror of the tropical forest; we need liturgies that confront the terror of nature (as we need liturgies that confront the terror of Hiroshima). He doubted if one could view optimistically a technology which attacked the basic biological foundations of culture; tribal people had a sustainable culture which never destroyed life-systems; technology has not succeeded in this; who could tell what the effects of erosion and pollution would be in the next generations? Are we creating a sustainable society? Unlike life, technology has no means of self-renewal and self-replication. Biological destruction, as in the transition from the rich life-system of the rain forest to rats and cockroaches, is irreversible. The search for appropriate technology is very important, but it is naive to believe in a "technological fix." There is a religious and demonic dimension to technology. He liked to think that the earth and the earth-spirits are trying to bring about a change, before we destroy them.

Bishop Tutud said that technological maximization of speed gave people no time to absorb the technological values, and described how the government in the Philippines often favored industrial development over more basic life-values, bulldozing the sacred grounds of tribal peoples, with armed soldiers to ward off the protesting local people, and allowing great damage to the environment. Richard Wentz mused on the inevitability of the advance of the technological juggernaut and

the corporate system behind it. He recalled a Navaho elder who had recited their creation story at a conference on education. Everyone had understood his lesson, that for real education one must get in touch with origins, but such wisdom had little effect on the actual procedures of technological society. Larry Sullivan, speaking from his own experience of the rain forests in Africa and the Amazon, suggested that tribal peoples often work out a critique of Christianity in religious terms, a critique which has much to teach us about Christianity and its relation with life and matter (a relation which forbids us to turn our back on life as manifested epiphanically in the rain forest). For instance, in the Eastern Montafia district of the Andes there is a widespread belief in a supernatural being which squeezes the life out of the native population to lubricate the machinery of industry; the whining of the machines is interpreted as the whining of the people they are destroying. As to the question of technological progress, its shadow side is easily masked in countries like Japan or the U.S., where its benefits are at the expense of poorer countries; the Amazon forest is turned into our paper packaging.

“Can there be a dialogue at all,” asked Jan Swyngedouw, ‘between such different cosmologies as the Judeo-Christian one of dominating the earth, and the T’boli one of revering it?’ McDonagh doubted if the word dialogue was apposite; the real “dialogue” between the cosmologies is conducted by the agro-businesses, based on our cosmology and our notions of developmental time (our music is in equally aggressive contrast to the cyclic rhythms of T’boli music). The T’boli too want to be heirs to the total human tradition, and they know they must wrestle with technology (perhaps to humanize it). The context of the dialogue is, however, set by the domineering lowland culture, and to advance to a Christian level of dialogue we must expose the presuppositions of that culture. Of course, “domination of the earth” is not the only valid model of Jewish or Christian cosmology: Francis of Assisi was as much a Christian as James Watt. In reply to a question from Sung-Hae Kim, McDonagh deplored the approach of fundamentalist missionaries who told T’boli people their culture was worthless, if only by the exclusiveness of their focus on Jesus.

Felipe Gomez Filipino Sects and Dialogue

Felipe Gomez noted the difficulty of deciding who *qualifies* as a partner in dialogue in the case of the quasi-Christian religious movements pullulating in the Philippines, where there are at least 585 Christian groups, which have splintered into thousands of sub-groups.

The Aglipayan (3.3% of the population) is the largest of the 14 main groups which split off from Catholicism (85% of the population) at the beginning of the century; it is named after Gregoria Aglipay, ostensible founder of the nationalist Filipino Independent Church, 1902, and preacher of a "religious Philippinism." Of indigenous sects the most visible is the Iglesia ni Cristo, founded by Felix Manalo Ysagun in 1904, and characterized by sumptuous architecture, Arian Christology, and narrow sectarianism in the sense of *extra ecclesiam nulla salus*. Next come the Espiritistas (which combine parapsychology with Catholic imagery and ancestral spirituality; most of the faith healers stem from their ranks), the Rizalistas (patriotic worshippers of Jose Rizal, national martyr slain by the Spanish in 1886, canonized and subsequently decanonized by the Filipino Independent Church early in the century, and expected to lead the faithful into the New Jerusalem in 2000), and the cluster of the Colorum (a virulently anti-communist Christian-animist mix, whose name derives from "in saecula saeculorum"). Among the flamboyant titles of the native cults are:

Monotheocratic Monstrance, Church of the Flag of the Race, Sons of God, Brotherhood of Mother's Kids, Three Persons One God, Association of the Merciless Ones, Temple of God Galactic Panacea, Remnant Family of God in the Far East, Manna Faith Incorporated, Iglesia Apostolica Romana, Iglesia Apostolica Filipina, Iglesia Apostolica Indigena Filipina, Iglesia Apostolica Santisima Trinidad Filipina. Shamanistic hearing of the voices of such figures as Rizal is a common starting point for the founding of a sect. (One woman who heard St. Joseph and saw herself as his incarnation started a cult which the local church coopted by offering it the use of a chapel.) Politically these groups range from pacificism to revolutionary millenarianism to para-military terrorism; the Rizalians are used by the military; the Colorum tend to violent fanaticism; the New People's Army machine-gunned a whole Colorum congregation in March, 1985, and such groups as Sacred Heart Lord (also called Chop, from their practice of chopping their victims) repay in kind. In addition to having Protestant, Buddhist, Islamic, Jewish, Hindu and Confucianist minorities, the Philippines are also a favorite hunting ground for all modern sects. Even within the Protestant community, no form of meaningful dialogue has been established between its numerous factions. The intention of overcoming division can produce further divisions, as in the emergence of Patricio Tolosa's Christian Ecumenical Faith of the Philippines, 1966.

Religion in the Philippines is highly visible and deeply intertwined with secular affairs. Belief in spirits continues to pervade daily life. Trust in magical prayers and amulets and in mediators, such as faith

healers, or indeed Catholic priests and nuns, is one of the major preChristian attitudes coopted in folk Catholicism. Cults of the Virgin, the Holy Child, and especially the Passion of Christ, are a powerful motive for the renewal of moral values and a springboard for the search of the Absolute. Relishing mystical experience, communitarian life, and symbolic rather than logical thinking, and lacking a firm doctrinal identity, a literature, or qualified representatives, Filipino sect-followers are poorly prepared for dialogue, and indeed, despite fluctuating allegiances, most sects are passionately hostile to the idea of dialogue. The present socio-political crisis has sometimes united activists on justice issues from all religious backgrounds. Another approach to dialogue is that of theoretical study (with which the Vatican Secretariate for Non-Christians began in 1964, proceeding to personal encounter only in 1973). Nationalism and the search for cultural roots are now prompting academics to undertake such study, in place of the previous disdain. A positive appraisal of the sects as a religious flowering, as cultural invention or as "protest in action" giving a voice to the voiceless is becoming more common. The current crisis is one of identity, which in the Philippines always means religious identity; the proliferation of sects is a product of this crisis. Clergy and intellectuals who have lived with these sects find that they are not as senseless as they seem at first sight; they communicate an experience of the presence of God in nature, and give symbolic expression to an instinct of returning to nature as a response to social crisis. Perhaps, in another generation, they may acquire the grammar to express their beliefs in a more understandable way. The fear of sects in the established churches partly stems from a sense that the sects offer an awareness of God, a confirmation of Filipino identity and a spontaneity not found in the churches. Their message is that something has to change in the attitude of the churches to religious experience as such.

In his response, Eugene Denis asked why the search for identity was conducted so intensely in the Philippines, alone among Asian countries, and how the religious syncretism of the Philippines differed from that of China and Japan. Jan Swyngedouw asked if the sectarianism of the *Iglesia ni Cristo* extended to their social life. Yes, answered Gomez, they vote as they are told, but in everyday life they mix normally with others; sect-followers are of course only a marginal minority in Filipino society. Seri Phongphit found his impression confirmed that the institutional forms of the church are maladapted to Filipinos, whose culture has been destroyed by Western institutions in the past, and who now seek to rediscover their cultural roots. Thai Buddhists have no institutional church; each village has its own

community, which can dismiss its monks. Such a structure might be more suited to the Philippines also. Gomez agreed that Filipinos were developing a similar indigenous "grammar," parasitical on official structures, as on Holy Week, when a colorful street liturgy marked by self-flagellation steals the show from the liturgy in the church. This is a source of inspiration to the people, but the church cannot give it its official sanction. Seri felt that the depth-grammar of Filipino culture lay deeper than this Hispanic phenomenon and that the church should make a greater effort to decipher that grammar.

In reply to Sr. Kim's remark that the sects reflect a basically Christian culture, Gomez said that the sects are intentionally Christian, but have been left in the lurch by the church in terms of education, and do not know how to express their Christianity. McDonagh suggested, to the contrary, that the basic paradigm behind the sects is that of tribal religion. The introduction of Christianity in the country failed to acculturate it to the shamanic, animist context, indeed celebrated a triumph over this context prematurely, and its alien clerical structure, cosmology and dogmatic system failed to take seriously the culture of the people. The cult of the Holy Child, for instance, has more in common with animist belief than with any traditional Christology. To be successful as a priest in the Philippines one must become something of a shaman. Gomez agreed that the radical animism of the Malayan races had infiltrated not only Catholicism but every religion imported into the Philippines. Priests and nuns are seen as shamans in touch with the supernatural. Jan Swyngedouw felt that a similar animism existed in all the Catholic countries of Europe at the folk level. Kim suggested that animism was something essential to every religion. Langdon Gilkey recalled how the Japanese guards in his Chinese prison had feared to search Catholic priests; the idea of the holy person is universal. Thomas Immoos described the parallel folk liturgies springing up beside the official ones in Switzerland, and the disastrous effect of the Vatican II reforms on this religious culture.

McDonagh noted that the official church interacted creatively with indigenous religiosity in Europe at least until the ninth century; but nothing like this happened in the Philippines. The sects express the yearning for a reconsideration of the repressed indigenous religion. O'Leary suggested that instead of the classical Roman approach to "pagan" religiosity which the church had inherited, namely, one of absorption within a clearly defined canonical system, we should cultivate a wider method of integration, integrating psychic phenomena into the pneumatic, and allowing pneumatic experience to be governed by the biblical logos (as in the charismatic movement). Heisig noted

that intellectuals and social activists in the Philippines, unlike their Western counterparts, are not ashamed of their religious involvements. Often interreligious dialogue is happening at a pre-reflective level in everyday practice (the Holy Week worshippers shuttle between two worlds) and the task might be not so much getting the sects to talk to one another as to give Christians the freedom to talk about what's already going on under the surface. Gomez said that the sects expressed a protest against something and for something, a quest for brotherhood and equality, and for the absolute; their sharing in a common experience was a dialogue of facts, whose ideological content will, one hopes, be purified in the future; in this explosion of human reality (in opposition to materialism) God was revealing his presence. Richard Wentz said that we must simply accept the fact that these movements exist as a manifestation of religion alongside of or complementary to the church; if we start saying that sects are an indication that the church has failed, this does not advance dialogue very much. In reply to a question of Swyngedouw about the situation in Islam, Moctar Matuan and Bishop Tutud told of tensions between the people and the scholars about the practice of celebrating Mahomet's birthday. Gilkey attributed the vitality of fundamentalist religion to the insecurity of the times (apocalyptic revival) and resistance to the dominance of technology (creationism); this movement towards wild forms of religion was common to the U.S., Japan and the Philippines. But what about Europe? O'Leary pointed to the upsurge of Marian apparitions in Ireland, Yugoslavia, Italy. Sullivan suggested that local, divisive, sectarian manifestations were perhaps the norm of religion in practice, and that the overarching orthodoxy of established churches largely existed only on paper. If this is so, then sects are not exotic phenomena but exemplify common patterns of all religion.

Seri Phongphit: Dialogue and Development

In his paper (EAPR, pp. 368-78) Seri Phongphit spoke of the part religion has played in the shift in third world liberation struggles from macro analysis, one-way conscientization, and violent revolution to the micro level, where the people themselves can participate fully in the process of development, and where intellectuals can become organically part of this process. Renewed consciousness of their religious and cultural heritage is essential if people are to become self-respecting subjects of their history and of the society they live in. In Thailand more and more monks have put Buddhist principles into practice in socio-economic terms, and Christians have joined them in

the search for alternative models of development. The Catholic Council of Thailand for Development (founded 1973) gives priority to a cultural approach to development, working with non-government organizations to rediscover the cultural values of the communities. This year, fifty members of the CCTD immersed themselves for a week in the culture of three Buddhist villages (including the practice of meditation) and discovered that the simplicity and poverty of the three Buddhist community leaders they met were a powerful criticism of the consumerist way of life. It is in this context of integral human development that “Buddhist philosophy” and “Christian theology” are being most fruitfully developed in Thai society.

Seri began his talk by dwelling on the problem of finding a model of development appropriate to Thai culture. Since the 70's the five year plans aimed at modernizing Thailand have focused on economic growth; in the 70s revolutionary models came to the fore; in the democratic period from 1973 to 1976 students worked hand in hand with peasants to found the Federation of Farmers of Thailand, which numbered one million families; after this movement was crushed thousands of students went into the jungle to fight with communist guerrillas; now, in the 80s, there is a return to small-scale village activity, aiming to allow people to be more self-sufficient not only in terms of economic welfare and political participation, but culturally as well. Folk and Buddhist religion is integral to culture in Thailand, and the local monastery is at the disposal of the people. Eight years of working with Buddhist groups for development, and especially his experience of the unity of principle and daily life in the three Buddhist community leaders described in his paper, had shown Seri that an alternative model of development could only come from the grassroots. He saw international contacts through Alternative Tourism, and through such meetings as the present one, as important in strengthening the movement.

Michael Sastrapratedja's response focused on similarities between the Thai, Indonesian and Filipino situations. In each country the government, obsessed with the issue of development, has adopted capitalistic models of economic growth, and these have failed. Some intellectuals and religious are now trying to find models stressing basic human needs, self-reliance and ecological conservation. A second similarity is that the church uses social analysis in its promotion of justice and seeks a structural change in the country; now it is generally realized that this social analysis must be completed by religio-cultural analysis. A third similarity is the close relation between religion and culture in these societies. Close cooperation between primal, cosmic religion and the metacosmic religions is

developing. The former provides the basic attitudes, symbolism and categories of the culture, and the latter cannot flourish unless supported by this cosmic religion, which is the prior condition of the acceptance of any other religion. It provides the basis of dialogue between religions. Its cultural ethos is now better appreciated by the church. Popular religiosity, the socio-economic context, and the cultural tradition thus combine to form the hermeneutic horizon for a South East Asian theology. (These points are developed in "Popular Religiosity as a Basis for Interreligious Encounter" EAPR, pp. 362-67.) Sean McDonagh agreed that the enormous range of animistic rituals which governs every aspect of the South East Asian peasant's life is the substratum of religious experience in the region.

Jan Swyngedouw said to Sastrapratedja: "In one sentence, you have abandoned the whole secularization thesis worked out by theologians who see Christianity as destroying cosmic religion" Langdon Gilkey, too, expressed his fascination at the idea of seeing cosmic religion as the common ground of all religions (like natural theology in the past) rather than as something to be transformed and overcome. "This idea is so radical that perhaps we should think about it twice; it undercuts not only the Apostolic Fathers, but the prophetic movement against the Ba'alim. Though in actual fact religion in Europe and America has been a blend of cosmic animism and the gospel message, this was always against the explicit intention of the churches, as expressed, for example, by John Calvin" Sastrapratedja said that his views expressed primarily a cultural rather than a theological imperative; the theological upshot would be that Christian theology should not use the cosmic religious categories only to express Christian doctrine, but should learn to respect the integrity of cosmic religion. Thomas Immoos noted that cosmic religiosity is so alive in Switzerland that the Protestant peasants of Bern and Fribourg go to the Catholic priests to have their farms blessed etc. Joseph O'Leary recalled Chesterton's idea that the early church had reacted violently against a cosmic religion which had become idolatrous and that Francis of Assisi has been a healer of this violence and reinstated nature. (Perhaps something analogous still needed to be done in regard to sex.) The reaction against Aryanism in the fourth century had sharply stressed the distinction between creation and creator and perhaps Calvin took this desacralization of the cosmos still further. Gilkey pointed out that the doctrine of creation certainly excluded indifference to the cosmos, and allowed one to think of God as immanent in the world. O'Leary doubted if this model was quite adequate, recalling how Heidegger opposed the splendor of the Greek sense of cosmos to the medieval stylization of the world as *ens creatum*. Perhaps earlier strata of the Bible had a

more open-ended notion of creation, avoiding the strict dualism of later definitions. Sr. Kim spoke of the rich cosmic symbolism of Second Isaiah and of the community between humanity and nature expressed in Romans 8, where the whole creation groans together in eschatological hope. In the Bible God's presence in history combines with God's presence in nature, in a transformation of cosmic religion. Thomas Immoos felt that theologians needed to retrieve the cosmic vision of Colossians 1. Gilkey agreed, but felt that the proposals heard today were more radical than this.

In reply to a question from Sullivan about how the search for authentic Thai religiosity converged with the issue of development, Seri told of the erosion of old traditions and mythologies among the young. To retrieve the vital contact with nature and the world of spirits was essential to the integrity of Thai culture; this should not be appropriated by Christians as merely a gloss on Christian teaching, but should be integrated into the liturgical expression of the faith (though this posed great difficulties to the Catholic church in Thailand). The Thai structure of apprehension of reality is not the semitic- hellenic one, and it should be allowed to express itself, so that people can remain in continuity with their past and renew its values. In this way, hill tribe people, who are regarded as second class, can regain self-confidence. Tsuchida Tomoaki warned that Thailand would soon be inundated with technological gadgets, and to prevent this talk of traditional religiosity from being merely verbal, concrete methods must be developed for keeping it alive. He pointed to the models of Zen and Pure Land meditation. He asked Seri how his work as a professor of philosophy of religion related to these questions. Seri answered that he tried to discuss issues common to Buddhism, Christianity and Thai religious traditions. Western philosophy of religion, which takes the notion of God for granted, is largely irrelevant to the Thai context. One of the causes of conflict between Christianity and Buddhism in Thailand is superficiality of our efforts at inculturation (Buddhist styles of church building; one-sided theological interpretations of Buddhism in light of Aquinas or the New Testament, published without consultation with Buddhists). Just as one cannot create a theology viable for the modern world, without experience of that world, so we have to expose ourselves more fully to Buddhism before a dialogal theology will be possible.

Jim Heisig asked are there not two different histories going on together; just as technological consumerism is beginning to take hold in South-East Asia at a rapid pace, the Church is rediscovering the older, slower world of tribal religion. Despite the sects, technological gadgets have more appeal to the people of the region than their

traditional religious practices. Seri felt that a religious and cultural resistance to this trend, and the development of more local self-reliance, was not impossible. Roland Chagnon said that the real challenge emerging in the discussions was that of the encounter with tribal religion. The Filipino flagellants undermine our rational, conceptual, theological approach to religion. We are at ease with others who are as serious and conceptual as we are, but when we meet people who like to play, we are ill at ease. For dialogical theology, we may need first of all a theology of play; we need to be paganized to enter into good dialogue with primal people. Larry Sullivan said that we know how to dialogue with our own pre-technological past because of the written word; we need a more subtle method of dialoguing with tribal cultures, a sense of the sacredness of action, so that the clear message of their vocabularies of praxis and play would not be missed. Seri agreed that the Christian-Buddhist dialogue in Thailand affected only the upper level of Thai culture. Study of daily life and its practices reveals older layers. The purified account of Buddhism found in a thinker like Buddhadasa Bikkhu might not do justice to the riches of the religion as practiced at a popular level. Gilkey felt that the real challenge is the dialogue between religion and technological culture; it is not true that Western religion is acosmic; it accepted Newton's cosmos and has been struggling ever since with the new cosmic religion provided by modern science, without any great success. Yet one cannot go back from consumerist and technological culture; Japan and Thailand now have a second chance to adopt the technological world and deal with it more creatively than the West has done. The great question is: how do we, as religions together, deal with the creative, demonic monstrosity of modern science and technology?

Kim Sung-Hae: Partners for Dialogue in Korea

In her paper (EAPR, pp. 346-51) Kim Sung-Hae claimed that in order to start and carry on a religious dialogue one has to represent a community, and that the detached historian of religion cannot be a partner of dialogue in the strict sense. In South Korea no religion claims more than half the population; lasting and fruitful dialogue between the two most active and respected religions, Christianity and Buddhism has not yet begun; the Korean Protestant churches are negative towards non-Christian religions; Catholic dialogue with Confucianism is largely confined to Catholic efforts at inculturation (e.g. recognition of ancestral rites). The 150 to 350 new religions include the Donghak, the Dan-gun, the Jeung-san-kyo, Won Buddhism and the

Unification Church. In the search for norms for dialogue the classical approach which judges a religion by its fruits, its durability and its numbers is of only limited validity for the new religions.

The Old Testament norm for distinguishing true from false prophets, that is, genuineness of faith, and the attitude of Gamaliel (God is the only judge of this genuineness), may be useful. Six norms for dialogue may be specified: (1) Its motive is the common search for truth and deeper mutual understanding. (2) The social and individual fruits of a religion are the index of its authenticity. (3) When no such index is clearly apparent, careful study must precede dialogue: "When we suspect we are being used in some way, it will be best not to become actively involved but to wait with careful observation" (4) Traces of pseudo-religion must be examined to see if they are confined to a few followers or mark the entire group. (5) Dialogue should be carried on in mutual respect and trust and we should help one another in living up to our ideals. (6) It should be inspired by confidence in the work of the Spirit in human hearts and in history. "The religious leaders in Korea generally are too self-sufficient and negative toward other religious groups"

Shamanism is the most ancient but socially the least respected religious tradition in Korea. Sr. Kim cited two women shamans who made the following points: (1) Buddhists should not destroy altars dedicated to the spirits. (2) Shamans aim to restore family peace by soothing ghosts, and thus contribute to society. (3) A woman who served a spirit went to church, but now had reverted to the spirit; the spirit always wins in the end. (Nonetheless, the speaker showed ambivalence in expressing the hope of going to church before she dies.) (4) Shamans are prouder now of the fact that they represent the root of Korean religiosity, and would like to be respected as religious practitioners and partners in dialogue. Sr. Kim concluded by saying that the main obstacle to such dialogue was the negative Christian view of shamanism: "Dialogue is a two-edged sword, for not only have we to look out to the possible partners of dialogue, but also we have to look into our own presuppositions and understanding of others."

In his response, Raymond Renson suggested that, to make the six norms of dialogue more concrete, we should differentiate carefully between the various forms dialogue takes: casual everyday contacts; assistance at ceremonies of other religions; cooperation among religions on peace and other social issues; dialogue among individual believers, among scholars, among official representatives. Different norms could be worked out for each of these. Different partners invites different kinds of dialogue. Norms 5 and 6 are attitudes necessary in all these forms of dialogue. Norm 1 begs the question,

“What do we understand by truth? Buddhists are not interested in “objective truth” in our sense. This norm needs to be refined, perhaps in the sense of ‘!sincerity’ as a norm. Kim agreed one can distinguish the levels of (1) everyday contact, (2) observation and waiting, (3) active personal encounter and cooperation in social works, (4) sharing of ideas in the dialogal quest for truth. She had asked Korean Buddhists what they thought of “sincerity” as a substitute for “truth” here, and she felt the notion was too subjective and did not match their conception of true reality. Joseph O’Leary suggested that in Buddhist-Christian dialogue the challenge is to a basic reconsideration of the underlying notion of truth itself. Buddhist *prajna* is a critical instance over against our Greek notions of objective and subjective truth and perhaps also our biblical notions of personal and pneumatic truth. It might be argued that the Buddha was the most radical truth-seeker, more so than even Socrates or the Prophets, teaching a purification of mind at a deeper level than the surface one at which dogmas and objective truths are formulated. To say that Buddhists are not interested in objective truth was the ultimate dismissal fifty years ago when scientists and Christians were secure in their possession of objective truth; but since then we had come to suspect that this notion of truth was a limited, Western one. Heidegger’s phenomenological critique of the various notions of truth prevalent in the Western philosophical tradition could perhaps be taken as a model of the critical radicality required here.

Seri queried the Christian language of norm 6, and asked for “the secular meaning of this gospel:’ Kim replied that her norms were formulated from an explicitly Christian standpoint; the basic trust expressed in norm 6 was necessary to persevere in the uncharted and easily misunderstood course of interreligious encounter. Seri also queried the stress on theological sophistication in dealing with shamans; it reminded him of a remark of Hans Kong to the effect that dialogue with Buddhists was difficult because they lacked systematic thinking; theologians usually remained at cross purposes with their Buddhist partners in dialogue, because unable to step outside their Western thought-forms. Kim replied that the trend of sophistication had been set by the anthropologists and other students of shamanism, and that, unlike Shinto, it was not a tradition with a scholarly literature of its own, regrettably. Tsuchida Tomoaki asked if, in dealing with shamans, we were not in danger of over-stressing verbal, conceptual understanding, missing what they had to teach us about the neglected dimensions of body and action. Under the good name of dialogue might we not be imposing something alien on people in Asia and Africa? Kim agreed we need to have first-hand experience of

shamanism and its rituals, and lamented the fact that the years of study of shamanism by anthropologists bypassed direct dialogue with the shamans themselves. Jan Swyngedouw repeated Tsuchida's question: "Aren't we imposing our own verbal-doctrinal style of dialogue on the other religions?" He found that students in new religions seminaries did not at all understand the necessity for such doctrinal dialogue, for doctrines are not central to these religions. The heritage of Christian exclusivism lies behind the imposition of such criteria of dialogue. Edward Khong demurred, pointing out that in the Chinese context dialogue had the connotation of seeking harmonious co-existence.

Jim Heisig wanted to add one more principle to the six norms: "In dialogue you do not attempt to absorb the other (as in the Christian missionary movement inherited from the nineteenth century), but you admit that the world would be a poorer place if the other tradition was lost" In the case of pseudo-religion, at what point does one cross the critical threshold and set out to undo a religion aggressively? Kim thought we could not become persecutors of a religion, but of course we could take a stand on definite ethical problems, such as cults inducing suicide. The Gamaliel policy of see and wait was particularly apposite in the case of the Unification Church. Langdon Gilkey asked how one knew a pseudo-religion. What objective measuring-stick could be found? Have not all our traditions at one time or another had all the marks of a pseudo-religion? Kim agreed we are all in some way pseudo, but in the case of some new religions extreme forms of deviancy raised unmistakable questions about their authenticity. Larry Sullivan observed that violence seems to be an intrinsic part of religion, so that it is hard to disqualify a religion on the grounds of its violence or destructiveness. Kim said we have to distinguish different kinds of violence, and referred to the travail of initiation in shamanism or of death-resurrection in Christianity.

Hakan Eilert suggested that W. C. Smith's term "colloquium" has a warmer and more intimate ring than the term "dialogue," which had a flavor of detachment. He cited S. Rosenzweig's view that one of the most important functions of religious communities today is to allow people to move from one cultural environment to another and to experience in their own body the reality of cultural and religious difference. Sweden had invested in such cross-cultural exchange of scholars, thus grounding academic dialogue in grassroots encounter, without any hasty demand for measurable results. Kim defended the term "dialogue," pointing to its historical overtones (Socrates, Confucius). Sullivan suggested that the ordered ritual behavior accompanying verbal dialogue, body-language, placement, action, should be taken more consciously into account especially in the Asian context.

Sean McDonagh felt that too great a stress on universal values as norms for dialogue could lead us to overlook the fact that religions did not exist apart from the pluralism of their local manifestations. In discerning norms the concrete local context must remain a central reference, for it is here, rather than on the level of general ideals, that a religion showed its negative or positive effect. Thus Southern Baptist fundamentalism might be a valid religion in its original local context, but in the southern hills of the Philippines it was a destructive force, threatening the organic survival of local culture. One concerned for the future of the local people would have to resist these incursions of fundamentalism. A school for shamans might be a better religious contribution to their needs at the present moment (though in another twenty years the context and the criteria might again have changed).

Jan Swyngedouw: The Search for Discriminating Norms

In his paper (EAPR, pp. 339-45), Jan Swyngedouw focused on the question of norms for dialogue as it arose in connection with participation in events organized by the Unification Church. He expressed a fear that the present Vatican concern about the activities of sects might bypass or oversimplify the question of dialogue with them. He also noted a less open attitude to interreligious dialogue generally in recent official pronouncements, as in the Pope's teaching on the "essential difference" between the non-Christian *religions*, which "are above all the expression of a quest on man's part," and Christian *faith*, 'based on Revelation on God's part.' All this looks different in a country where Christianity is a minority religion, much as sects are in the West. Nonetheless, it is well to reflect critically on the danger that Christians can be used by the groups with whom they enter into dialogue. Shinto representatives are not afraid to display political aspirations to be the spiritual support of the State, and have even on one occasion tried to involve the Vatican in the promotion of nationalistic ideals. The "courting" of the Christian churches by the new religions, and their eagerness to get into direct contact with the Vatican, bypassing the local episcopacy, should prompt us to consider the question, "what makes a dialogue a success?" A factor generating tensions is the dual nature of interreligious dialogue: we are considered if not so much *official representatives* of the Christian Church, at least spokespersons for it, while at the same time our research activity includes academic encounters with non-Christian religions. "It is nearly impossible— and I would think, not even desir-

able—to abstract from our specific Christian character even where pure academic matters are concerned.’ But this does not imply that in our academic engagements we are “official representatives,” and this distinction ought to allow us more freedom in contacting various religious groups than official representatives could afford. The application of discriminating norms becomes stricter to the degree that our activities directly engage our churches.

In his talk, Swyngedouw suggested that it is impossible to establish universal norms for dialogue in advance, and that our choice of partners is largely defined by particular situations. We have been struggling with this problem in Japan for a long time, if largely in an unconscious way. The recent Vatican warning against any participation in or collaboration with the activities of the Unification Church had heightened awareness of the issue. This warning could be seen as part of a wider change in attitude to other religions, perhaps occasioned by the rapid growth of sects in Europe and Latin America.

There is no danger of manipulation in the dialogue with Zen Buddhists, which has been the chief form of dialogue pursued by the Japanese Institutes, no doubt because of the theoretical attainments of Zen scholars and the appeal of its spirituality to Westerners. Perhaps this dialogue is too polite; it seems that the Christians are much more open to being changed by this dialogue than the Buddhists are. Shinto is the primary religion of Japan, and is based on the unity of government and worship; now they have recovered a position similar to that which they enjoyed before the post-war debacle, and are more and more associated with the industrial rather than the rural community (blessing the foundations of new company buildings etc.). There is some danger of being used by Shinto for their own purposes. The new religions are famous for their interreligious engagement and their movement for peace, but their search for respectability can have a manipulative aspect, as when their leaders boast of their encounters with the Pope (suggesting that they are the Eastern equivalent of this Western religious leader). Soka Gakkai refuse all dialogue, except on a very personal level. They wish to be on good terms with Christianity, but cannot pursue this for internal political reasons. Then there are the “new new religions” which also have developed the habit of running to the Vatican, as in the recent scoop of the seven-year-old Agonsha, who presented themselves to the Vatican as the authentic representatives of Japanese Buddhism. In the controversial case of the Unification Church, we should apply a situational approach to norms, taking into account the way our partners in dialogue see us and the degree to which our individual activities involve our Institutes or our churches.

Yves Camus, in response, asked if the Vatican warning on the

Unification Church was as stringent as it appeared to be, and regretted that it had not motivated its ban on dialogue in more theological terms. Discrimination can amount to incrimination in practice, and this has perhaps happened in this case. "Discernment" might be a better word than "discrimination," more suited to the intimate relation into which diverse traditions have now been thrown and more expressive of the self-critical aspect of religious dialogue, as illustrated in Paul Knitter's recent book. Interior dialogue with other traditions, and sharing of spiritual experience, is the prior condition without which it is impossible for Westerners to see how conditioned they are by their culture—to say "I am an Aristotelian, a Platonist, a Cartesian"—with the result that their efforts at dialogue remain academic constructions. In reply to a question from Camus about the content of the dialogue with Shinto, Swyngedouw mentioned a conference on the universal and the particular in religion, which had proceeded on the rather misleading assumption that Christianity was a "universal" religion, and Immoos spoke of discussions on the emperor system (on which there seemed to be very different views), the relation between Shinto and folk religiosity at the village level, and the theme of transcendence and immanence (Shinto representatives had been surprised at the immanentist dimensions of Christianity). Swyngedouw said that Shinto now looked up to Christianity and Buddhism as models for the development of doctrine whose lack they have begun to feel.

Sr. Kim related how generally unpopular the Unification Church was among Christians and also among historians of religion in Korea. Thomas Immoos argued that one should not engage in dialogue with groups whose religious aspect is a front for activities of another kind. C.I.A. documents state that the Unification Church is a front for the Korean C.I.A., an anti-communist movement under the guise of religion; its main spokesperson in the U.S. is a colonel in the Korean C.I.A. It is hard to understand the logic whereby Catholic theologians who supported liberation theology also flocked to Unification events, giving the movement legitimacy. Langdon Gilkey agreed that invitations to Unification Church conferences should never be accepted, because of the political implications. There is no danger of the right wing fundamentalists in the U.S. joining hands with the Unificationists, but both of them share the same fascist reaction against communism, and a hostility to every basic liberal conviction. Theological dialogue with them is not objectionable, as long as they are not the organizers, but to attend conferences under their auspices is another matter entirely. Larry Sullivan asked how this distinction could be justified. Can one not go to such conferences as a client rather than as a

patron, as a participant observer in the sense of anthropology? The loss of control implied in going to a meeting under *their* auspices could be a salutary and instructive condition in which to undertake this observation. Gilkey maintained that the conferences are designed to win whatever respectability the participants can confer. Camus quoted the Chinese proverb: "Two may share the same bed, but their dreams are different"

Jim Heisig argued that "the Moonies are not cut of a single cloth" and that reporters on religion for the C.I.A. might be as "religiously naive" as participants in Unificationist events were alleged to be politically naive. The Unification Church is experiencing a tremendous split between the people with the money and the political aims, on the one hand, and those with high religious intentions, on the other. The latter are struggling to divert funds from political activities for such religious purposes as the theological conferences. Politically, too, many younger members are arguing for openness to socialism and say they would leave the movement if the allegations against it were proven true. The case calls for a more differentiated judgment. Gilkey said that acquaintances of his had run into a stone wall on this precise issue of the political ideology and its authoritarian imposition. Joseph O'Leary asked for a comment from Gilkey on the book *Restoring the Kingdom* in which Christian theologians compared the Unificationist doctrine of Indemnity with the Pauline doctrine of justification or the Anselmian doctrine of satisfaction. Gilkey found the idea silly, but relatively innocuous; it is the combination of the religious and the political that raises the most serious problems. Swyngedouw objected that one can never exclude the political aspect in interreligious debate. Gilkey agreed it was a question of degree. He also agreed with Jim Heisig that Christians, in light of their long tradition, might lead politicized sectarian movements to a more reflective stance. Sean McDonagh queried Heisig's policy of looking on the bright side of the Unification movement and encouraging it, though admitting that there is a bright and a dark side to all religion. In the Philippines one could not dialogue with groups whose religious anti-communism, politically exploited, had led to murders and cannibalism. Bishop Tutud said that if the strongest and the intended dimension of a movement is political rather than religious it is not a suitable partner for dialogue. Gilkey and Immoos added the qualification "fascist" to "political:"

Church and State in China

The remaining sessions focused on China, and served as orientation for

those who were to set off on a two week visit to China immediately after the Conference.

Edward Khong spoke of the relations between the Catholic Church in China and the Vatican. The CCPA (Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association) is not the national or patriotic church, but sees itself as the same traditional Catholic Church introduced to China by Matteo Ricci. The Association was set up in 1957 to take over the leadership of the Catholic Church. They appointed and consecrated some bishops. They see themselves as an association of believers who felt that the hierarchy at that time forbade them to love their own country. Their quarrel is with the Vatican, not the Papacy, and they attempt to maintain the distinction, not always easy to draw, between the political juridical power of the city-state (a foreign power whose interference is resented) and the doctrinal authority of the Bishop of Rome (which they do not question). In 1966 the Cultural Revolution branded all religions as superstitious, and even the CCPA members suffered. In 1980 the system was restructured: after the third meeting of the CCPA, an unprecedented Catholic Representatives Conference was held, which set up a Church Affairs Commission, responsible for the internal affairs of the church (liturgy, publications, seminary formation, catechesis) and the National Episcopal Conference (including non-CCPA members), responsible for doctrine and relations with other churches. This restructuring left the CCPA with the function of a bridge between church and government. Some suspect these new bodies are United Front structures completely dependent on the political authority. This remains to be seen. Chinese Catholics are anxious to remain in communion with the Catholic Church worldwide, and moves are being made to bring their worship and seminary formation into line with Vatican II. A vernacular hymnal and liturgy is likely to be created soon and the importation of theological publications from abroad allows new priests to be educated in the current philosophical and theological approaches.

The so-called “underground” churches continue to exist. When the institutional aspects faced suppression, communities began to meet in small house-gatherings, of many different forms and appearances, sometimes uniting whole villages for evening or morning prayer. Priests are rare, and fall into two groups, the few who have joined the CCPA and the rest. These are not on bad terms with each other, very often working and living together. Release of more and more church properties which had been appropriated for other uses has created a need for more and more clergy and non-CCPA members are often asked to re-open churches. Some clergy refuse to cooperate with the CCPA for fear of being exploited politically, and such priests usually

take some secular work and serve as ministers to more remote areas; the CCPA is found only in major cities. The present open door policy allows more news of religious developments in China, news that shows that faith and piety are still strong.

Relations with the Vatican have been problematic. Between 1952 and 1958 Pius XII issued three letters condemning persecution of the church and the illicit consecration of bishops. It is inaccurate to say that he explicitly excommunicated the CCPA. John XXIII used the word “schism” in 1958 but later promised not to do so again (1962). Paul VI between 1963 and 1970 made conciliatory gestures to China, supporting their entry to the U. N. and sending messages of good will to Mao. John Paul II followed the same line, declaring that there is no contradiction between love of church and love of country. Diplomatic relations with Taiwan remain a point of dissension. The release of Archbishop Dominic Deng from his 22 years’ imprisonment in 1980 was greeted as a step forward; he was re-installed in his bishopric in Canton; but when the Vatican unilaterally elevated him to the archbishopric, the Chinese were infuriated at what they saw as interference in their internal affairs (details in *The Month*, February 1982). Meanwhile, John Paul II has reasserted the Vatican’s understanding of papal primacy, and this too has been taken as a direct attack on the Chinese Catholic church. Nonetheless, indirect contact is maintained with the Vatican; three cardinals have visited the country on their personal initiative and Bishop Wu of Hong Kong was invited officially by the National Bureau of Religious Affairs. These are signs of a breakthrough in Chinese- Vatican relations.

In his paper, “The Coming and Going of Protestant Christianity in China Today,” Peter Lee recalled that the great majority of the church people in China were not prepared to face the political changes that came their way since 1949. Y. T. Wu and the National Christian Council in China accepted the leadership of the new government in opposing imperialism, feudalism and bureaucratic capitalism. The Three-Self Patriotic Movement (TSPM) also initiated a political Christianity which met opposition from such representatives of the evangelistic majority as Wang Mingdao. The United Front strategy followed by Mao sometimes focused on religious groups as reactionaries to be eliminated. Given the goal of the state to deal with certain contradictions, the Party works with the progressives and wins over the moderates, by persuasion or education, and then isolates and finally crushes the reactionaries. In the TSPM some leaders are progressives and many more are moderates. We can see how they function in the context of the United Front strategy. The test of the integrity of the TSPM is its success in maintaining its transcendent

loyalty while thus cooperating with the state. The institutional channel through which religions are brought together under the United Front Work Department (UFWD) of the Chinese Communist Party is the system of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Councils (CPPCC) in which religious representatives can work side by side with other groups for the common good.

"Three-Self" refers to self-support, self-government and self-propagation, terms already used by nineteenth century missionaries. Christians in China customarily associate love of country and love of church. After China became a unified sovereign state, Christians who could break down the wall separating the Church from the world were willing to participate in national reconstruction on a socialist model. The patriotic fervor of those days is no longer so much in evidence, but most Christians have no thought of changing the present regime for another. The churches in China today, no longer dependent on rich, foreign bodies, and with clergy who live in a relaxed financial equality with their parishioners, enjoy freedom and self-sufficiency. Their participation in nation-building has made Christians more accepted and given them opportunities to witness to their faith. Now they are ready to enter into partnership with churches overseas who can treat them as equals in sharing resources and personnel.

The experience of voluntarily working together across denominational lines in TSPM has ushered in a post-denominational era in Chinese Protestantism. The China Christian Council aims to unite all Protestant Christians, a high priority for pastoral and political reasons. A simple common creed sets the boundaries of theological difference. Fundamentalists pose a particular problem to this unity based on mutual respect and toleration of differences. Informal groups meeting in places other than church have played a significant role in building the Protestant population from 900,000 in 1949 to the present 3,000,000. These "house churches" are also being drawn into the new unity. The unity already attained is as good as anywhere else in Christianity today.

Creative theology has not been developed in China, but there is a fresh and thoughtful reaffirmation of faith which has some interesting emphases, notably a Pauline rejoicing in the *divine folly*, a theme of *resurrection* resonating with the recent experience of Christians, a keen sense of the theology of the secular and of spirituality.

Hideo Yuki, in a response to Lee's paper, related that the Protestant missions had brought Western denominational divisions to Japan in the nineteenth century. There were some unsuccessful efforts to unite these denominations, but the first effective unification of all of them in the United Church of Christ was imposed by the pre-war

Government. The Protestant churches had always been very obedient to and cooperative with the Government, supporting it in the Russo-Japanese war, the undeclared war with China and World War II. In case of war maybe there is no other way to act; the individual can protest, but the church as a system may not be able to do so. The Chinese experience shows we are not abstract persons but belong to particular countries. The U.C.C. was expected to split apart again after the war, but has survived to this day. The discussion still goes on as to whether this unification is merely a government imposition or part of the historical struggle of Protestants to overcome denominationalism. The old denominational ties continue informally in practice.

Lee, in reply, said that the Chinese success in overcoming denominationalism was the result of external circumstances. By renouncing support from the U.S., where denominationalism thrives, the churches were freed from the strings attached; they were also forced to come together for economic and pastoral reasons; furthermore, they were forced to work together for the betterment and modernization of society, and this was a corrective to their too inward-looking attitude in the past. But not all churches had responded creatively to these constraints. Sectarian, individualist groups had found it particularly difficult to adjust. As for the problem of church/state relations, it took the church quite some time to accept the revolution; in Taiwan they still do not; this acceptance is the minimum required of Chinese Christians; the more positive content of patriotism, especially the commitment to socialism, also rules out any advocacy of a return to feudalism or capitalism, or even of a co-existence of capitalism and socialism under one flag (this is acceptable only for the unique case of Hong Kong). The churches sometimes voiced criticism of the government, notably in a successful campaign (in which the Buddhists also took part) to eliminate a clause in the constitution giving the freedom to propagate atheism. But one could wish that they were more outspoken on social issues, such as the one-child policy forced on Chinese couples (two children would be a more acceptable norm, especially given the traditional preference for male offspring).

Swyngedouw asked if the overcoming of denominationalism was not incompatible with the Protestant principle; Lee replied that it did not eliminate the denominational heritage, but made it secondary to the greater unity. Swyngedouw asked why the government did not rather pursue the classic policy of *divide et impera* in regard to the churches? Lee said that this was a colonial policy, and that the aim of the Chinese government was not to destroy the churches but to have them cooperate in the task of nation-building. In reply to a question

from Sr. Kim he clarified the relationship between TSPM and CCC: the former is the necessary political arm of the church in dealing with the government; the latter is more pastoral; the CPPCC is a government organization which is interested in relating religious and civic organizations for the sake of national unity. Bishop Tuftud asked if the general population supported the government in China; Lee answered that while young people in Canton might, as individuals, hanker after the bright lights of Hong Kong or New York, very few people can conceive of a revolutionary alternative to the present government. Langdon Gilkey asked if the differences between denominations seemed to be so much Western nonsense, of no interest at all to Asians, and if this was a factor in overcoming denominationalism. Lee agreed, but noted that the different Protestant traditions were all felt to have valuable contributions to make.

Specific questions on what the group visiting China could expect and how they should behave were met by assurances of the ecumenical openness of both Catholics and Protestants in China and of the liberalism of present government religious policies. The good relations built up over the years would ensure a warm welcome for the group.

Finally, Lee spoke on religious studies in China. In the early 50s there was little attempt at a theoretical understanding of religion, and it was generally assumed that religion was backward and the phrase “opium of the people” was in common use. Yet it was also felt that religion was a social reality the government had to deal with. Religion as a private, harmless matter of personal belief was distinguished from the reactionary tendencies religion exhibited as a social force. A policy of religious freedom allowed private belief and cultic practice, but persons holding religious convictions were not (and are not) allowed to be members of the Party. The government at this time pursued a policy of “unite and attack” The moderates thought religion could better be overcome by educational means, and that in the meantime religious people could be united for the good of the nation. This approach prevailed in the 50’s; in the 60s the hard-line approach gained the upper hand, reaching an extreme in the Cultural Revolution, and very few people went to church in this time. Since the fall of the Gang of Four in 1976 the religious policy began to improve. The Protestant churches began to resurface in 1979, followed by Catholics and Buddhists. An institute for the study of world religions was set up in Beijing in 1977 to educate the Chinese people on the objective laws of the origin, development, decline, and disappearance of religion. The institute aims to develop a Marxist science of religion which (1) opposes fideism and obscurantism in order to remove obstacles to the modernization of socialism; (2) provides a theoretical basis for the

Party's religious policy; (3) studies the history and present position of the world's religions with a view to international solidarity; (4) critically studies theology for the light it sheds on the history of philosophy and literature, and on world history. Unfortunately, the actual work of the institute has remained within traditional Marxist limits. Document 19 on religious policy (1982) shows the effort of the government to revive the liberal religious policy. It does not use the phrase "opium of the people" and it is free from polemic and clichés. Today religion is seen to be a very complex set of phenomena. Religion is not seen as the source of ethics, but it is recognized that religious people have something to say about morality and social improvement. "Has there then been a change in the Marxist understanding of religion?" asked Sr. Kim. Lee cited, as an example of the new departures in Marxist theory, a writer who held that the class basis of religion no longer existed, but that there must now be a new basis for the existence of religion, which would permit religion to be a creative force; the patriotism shown by Chinese Christians was seen as the foundation for this.

Yves Camus: Christians in Taiwan and the Mainland

Yves Camus said that the period in the early 80's after the release of Bishop Deng was also experienced as a time of liberation for Catholics in Taiwan. Presbyterian and other Protestant churches, whose members are largely local Taiwanese, and who had many difficulties and tensions with the Taiwan government, were not interested in the same degree in their sister churches in the mainland. Trips to the mainland in recent years had given Taiwanese Catholics first-hand knowledge of the church in the mainland; they had been heartened to discover how alive the faith was despite, or because of, the hardships Catholics had suffered there. The crisis of ecclesiology faced by the Catholic Church in China has been addressed by the Archbishop of Taipei in a pastoral letter. In late 1983 there was considerable anxiety that the Holy See might downgrade its diplomatic representation in Taiwan. When the bishops met the Pope in Rome in February 1984, the Pope said: "It is to you Catholics of Taiwan and the diaspora that is entrusted this wonderful task of being a bridge-church for your mainland compatriots" The expression "bridge-church" created tension between the bishops and the government. At present there was a slowing down of exchanges between Taiwan and the mainland, as the mainland authorities feared spiritual pollution and the Taiwan authorities feared that the open policy was lessening people's commitment to

strict nationalist ideals. The authorities asked the bishops not to send so many people to the mainland and not to speak about the notion of the bridge-church. However lectures on what Taiwanese Catholics could do to be a bridge-church continued; see Jerome Heyndrickx, "China and the Bridge-Churches," *Japan Missionary Bulletin*, 39:2, Summer 1985, pp. 40-49.

Heisig recalled Peter Lee's remarks about a new "theology of the secular" in China. In Taiwan it seemed that new efforts in theology focused on folk religion, in contrast to the political coloration of theology elsewhere in Asia. Camus said he had noted many articles on inculturation, chiefly with reference to Buddhism (Taoist studies worldwide are still only getting off the ground). Secularization in the local society, which has progressed very rapidly in recent years, is also a focus of concern. (Oddly, the head of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith has cited Taiwan as a place where liberation theology is getting out of hand!) In reply to a question from Sr. Kim about the cultural and social position of Catholicism in Taiwan, Camus said that while the Protestant churches focused more on the local Taiwanese population, the influx of Catholics from the mainland had colored the Catholic Church. Catholic and Protestant influence cannot be measured numerically; Presbyterians in particular are very much inserted into the local communities, and their churches are self-supporting and well endowed. The Catholic community has not the manpower or resources to publish a widely circulated magazine, but it influences public opinion through newspapers, and through its members who are university professors. Jan Swyngedouw suggested that the bridge-church idea implied support for the unification of Taiwan with the mainland in opposition to the aspirations of the Taiwanese themselves. The Protestant churches' lack of interest in the mainland might show that they are more in favor of the Taiwanese. Camus did not think this was the right way to look at the question. O'Leary asked about a Presbyterian statement in 1975 in favor of a separate, independent Taiwanese state. Camus said we must distinguish Taiwanese intellectuals who might join the Taiwan Independence Movement, from influential Taiwanese in the banks and companies who would hesitate to shake the boat. O'Leary suggested that the repressive and reactionary elements in the political life of Taiwan might have influenced the Catholic Church also. Perhaps the laity of Taiwan were the sleeping giant of the Catholic Church in Asia, and could find in the church a voice for their aspirations. Camus cautioned against judging the Taiwanese church from a distance, and referred to recent articles in *Le Monde* which described the repression of political opposition in Taiwan.

Camus noted that Chinese religious policy, despite recent liberalization, remains very evidently Marxist. We should beware of going *plus vite que la musique* in this matter. The aims of the new policy are the traditional Chinese one of controlling religious groups and the classical Marxist one of creating the conditions for the disappearance of religion. The more recent thinking of some Shanghai writers who abandoned the goal of eliminating religion might be no more than a private point of view. A questioner inquired if there was room for a revival of religion in China in association with the current revival of capitalism (for pragmatic reasons in both cases).

Jan Swyngedouw asked what were the themes of interreligious dialogue in Taiwan. Camus said that representatives of different religions meet for scholarly or for political purposes. For instance, they worked out a common stand in regard to the abortion law. Interreligious dialogue was a matter of personal endeavor and not as advanced as in Japan. O'Leary recalled how Yves Raguin tried to put his Catholic students back in touch with their inherited Chinese religious sensibility, often buried at a subconscious level. Might not catechesis in Japan proceed on the same principle?

In reply to a question about the relation between self-support and other-support in the Chinese churches, Lee described the Amity Foundation, set up by Protestant churches to receive contributions from overseas and to facilitate coordination of activities between Chinese Christians and church bodies who see them as equal parties. The Chinese churches have achieved autonomous selfhood and are now willing to work with their brothers and sisters. Interestingly, the funds channelled by the Amity Foundation are used for educational and social activities, not for direct evangelical or church-building work. The Chinese churches also cooperate willingly with the World Council of Churches. Edward Khong said that Chinese Catholics were anxious to expose themselves to the Church elsewhere; the Bishop of Shanghai, for example, always brings a seminarian with him on his travels; they seek cooperation on an equal basis with Catholics elsewhere.

A Personal Reflection

This thumbnail sketch has not captured all the nuances of the conference debates, which were extremely lively and marked by a high degree of mutual understanding, and of "openness and humility" to quote Bishop Tutud's homily at the Sunday liturgy. Those more familiar with the *Sitz im Leben* of all the participants must have been aware of many more nuances. In addition to the debates there was a

constant flow of informal discussion at the coffee breaks, the breakfasts in the Aichi Kaikan, the Chinese dinner on the last night of the Conference, the university reception, not to mention the sequel experienced by the fortunate majority of the participants who set off on their Chinese tour the next day.

I was struck by the many theological questions surfacing throughout the discussion, and by the fact that these questions were not academically generated, but emerged directly from the experiences of everyday Asian life. It was also clear that Western theology had not worked out the answers to these questions and that they could not be worked out except in an indigenous East Asian theology, working *in situ* and pursuing the interaction with all the “partners,” good and bad, who determine the way the scriptural word is heard and practiced throughout the region. These partners include not only the classical Buddhist, Confucianist, Taoist, and Islamic traditions, but also the abundant shamanistic, animistic or cosmic heritage of “people’s religion,” including its more recent forms in the proliferation of sects.

Every step in our dialogue with these partners has cultural, political and ecological implications, varying from place to place and constantly altering. Every step also rebounds on the self-understanding of Christians whose tradition has shaped and been shaped by Western philosophy, science and technology. This encounter of East and West is not merely the consummation of a theologico-philosophical dream which has been with us since antiquity; it also concerns “the fate of the earth” and the liberation of peoples from political oppression, cultural despoliation, and spiritual impoverishment. Nor can the encounter be mastered in general theologico-philosophical reflections, for it takes place essentially in particular local contexts; a dialogal theology is one at the service of this grassroots interaction, an auxiliary to the work of those basic communities which Harvey Cox describes as “the germ cells of the next era of our culture, Toynbee’s internal minority, bearing our common future”

Christian theology has learnt, over the last centuries, to live with the tensions between its traditions and Western modernity. Now it finds itself obliged to face a new set of tensions which make necessary a new round of learning and adjustment. These tensions are created by the recognition of cultural pluralism, and of a “rough parity” between the great religious traditions; by the crisis of technology and the concomitant realization that the once despised tribal religions and cultures have much to teach us, and perhaps provide the essential basic climate of all religion and religious encounter; by the relativization of Western canons of reason and scientificity both through an internal self-critique and in face of the spiritual wisdom of

other cultures. The tensions of the new situation can be lessened by the rediscovery of buried and repressed elements in the Jewish and Christian traditions, as for instance the cosmic or animist sensibility of Francis of Assisi. The apparent contradictions between Buddhist “atheism,” “Pelagianism,” reincarnationalism and the Christian notions of God, grace and immortality, between tribal animism and the secularizing thrust that runs from the prophets to Calvin, Barth, and Bonhoeffer, between the doctrine of Christ as unique savior and the countless mediators in Asian traditions, can be softened if both sides are willing to criticize their own inherited religious representations in every case. One of the effects of the contemporary encounter is to make all parties realize how much these representations are the product of cultural circumstance, and concomitantly, how near we are to one another when we focus on our common quest for truth—or for the unconditioned which somehow underlies every struggle for justice, peace, and full liberation. Thus the shock of difference can lead to a deeper experience of unity, a unity not imposed by the Western Logos but lived as the way of dialogue, to be recovered again and again.

But discernment in dialogue requires, not only the good will to recognize what we have in common, but the patience to live with our differences and with the ethical conundrums and theological surds these differences create. These surds are of the kind that catalyze creative breakthroughs in every area of thought, and to brush them under the carpet in order to reach dialogal or intellectual harmony quickly, or in order to allay the increasingly widespread puzzlement caused to ordinary religious people by the fact of pluralism, is to lose the thread that can guide us in this labyrinth. We appreciate all the more the core-experience which unites religious humanity—Vatican II names it the Spirit moving in all hearts—if we bear in mind that our authentic access to that core can be maintained only through fidelity to our own tradition and through the travail of difference experienced when our tradition is drawn into dialogue with another one. Talk of the transcendent unity of religions has often led to the hasty unification of radically diverse historical traditions under some threadbare philosophical rubric, and to a loss of both fidelity and difference. The doctrine of the divinity of Christ is the thorniest crux presented by Christians in the interreligious encounter. Recently there have been a spate of efforts to rethink this doctrine in light of the quasi-divinization of Shakyamuni or of Amida in Mahayana Buddhism. Certainly the doctrine must be rethought and broadened, but it does not appear possible to treat it as a mythologoumenon, equally applicable to other founders of religions, without introducing a suicidal contradiction into Christian tradition. Here is a point where comparativist

harmonization and relativization runs aground on irreducible fidelity and difference. Dialogue should bring us to discern more clearly between such irreducible claims and what can be jettisoned cheerfully.

Discrimination need not be the enemy of dialogue. It can ensure that we dwell with the *koan* that pluralism presents, letting it truly baffle us, until such time as enlightenment unmistakably dawns. The desired enlightenment is surely not to be found in a rehash of any of the schemes of reconciliation of religious diversity worked out by Western thinkers since Voltaire and Lessing. When it comes, it should light up quite a new picture, marked by categories and differentiations, not predictable in advance, whereby the central convictions of each faith are illuminated and justified from a new angle, while at the same time exposed to ongoing purification through dialogue with other traditions of religious questioning. Dialogue is a plunge into empathetic engagement in the worlds of our neighbors and in their ways of acting out their “ultimate concern” Consequent on this first generous movement, and secondary to it, is the lucid discriminating assessment of what is at stake. It is regrettable if authoritative interventions reverse the order of these two procedures. Discrimination may discover flies in the ointment of tolerance, may even at times bring to light the Intolerable, but it also generates that critical lucidity without which the most challenging theological problem of the late twentieth century will remain unsolved. The participants in the Inter- Religio Conference are advancing so vigorously into the second moment of the dialectic of dialogue, without going back on any of the commitments they have made in the first, that it may be permitted to hope that some future Conference will be able to celebrate the attainment of the third moment, the moment of luminous resolution.

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EVENTS

The Institute for the Study of Religion and Theology at Sogang University in Seoul has been sponsoring a series of special monthly lectures. Lectures this fall have included Jae-Sik Chung on "Weber's Sociology of Religion and its Application to Korean Religions" and Sa-Moon Kang on "The Yahweh War in Near Eastern texts and the Old Testament." From 1986 the theme of these lectures will focus on Christian-Buddhist dialogue in Korea.

§ § § §

The East Asian Pastoral Institute of Manila has featured courses this year by Aloysius Pieris on "The Asian Religious Ethos" and Felipe Gomez on "Religion in China"

§ § § §

In June of 1985 the Catholic Bishops Conference of Japan published a statement regarding the Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity (Unification Church), stating that they do not consider the Association to be a Christian church and therefore not an object of ecumenical efforts. A translation of this statement, together with an explanatory article by P. Nemeshegyi, appears in the Autumn 1985 issue of the *Japan Missionary Bulletin*. (See also pp.83ff of this issue of *Inter-Religio*.)

§ § § §

Raymond Renson, director of the Oriens Institute for Religious Institute in Tokyo took part in a two-day meeting conducted in October of this year by the Joint Roman Catholic-Anglican Commission of Japan to discuss the final draft of a report they have been preparing. Later that month he addressed the annual meeting of the National Commission for Ecumenism on "Ecumenical Formation" A symposium exploring various forms of collaboration followed.

§ § § §

The NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions conducted two seminars as part of its ongoing formation program in interreligious dialogue. The first, in Japanese, centered on the now controversial theme of ancestor worship for Christians in Japan and was held from 2 to 4 September. The second, designed primarily for church workers, was held in English at the Ise Grand Shrine from 15 to 17 October and focused on Ise Shinto and folk religiosity. Participants took part in the Kanname festival.

§ § § §

Takeda Ryusei of Ryukoku University, a Shin Buddhist priest known in Japan and the West for his work in interreligious dialogue, addressed a recent NCC Center study seminar on “Whitehead and Nagarjuna.”

§ § § §

The Tao Fong Shan Ecumenical Center of Hong Kong held a conference from 4 to 14 November for pastors from Sweden. Hakan Eilert of the NCC Center was present to deliver a paper.

§ § § §

“The Implications of Interfaith Dialogue for Theological Education Today” was the subject of a special WCC Conference held at Kuala Lumpur from 20 to 26 June. Yuki Hideo of the NCC Center was in attendance and will report on the meeting in a future issue of the Center’s journal.

§ § § §

The Religion and Culture Research Center in Bangkok held a seminar for teachers on the theme “Dialogue in Contemporary Thailand” in October. During the two days of the seminar a series of difficult issues such as obstacles to dialogue, guidelines for participation in Buddhist ceremonies, and the benefits of Buddhist meditation for Christians were taken up one after the other. Plans are currently underway to prepare an intensive, ten-day training session in Buddhist meditation for Catholic teachers in the Buddhist monastery of Suan Moke.

The Research Center has also participated in a series of monthly meetings on “Religion and Peace” organized at the Dharma Center of Chulalongkorn University by Prof. Kirti Bunchua (see *PUBLICATIONS*). The University also hosted a meeting of International Interreligious

Youth on December 11 to study the same topic. Participants were welcomed by Bishop Thienchai in Siracha at the conclusion of the conference.

§ § § §

In the first week of September, the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture in Nagoya held the first of what it plans to make an annual series of interreligious seminars for seminarians. Some twenty participants from around the country took part in the three days of talks, discussions, religious “practice” with Okumura Ichoro (Catholic), Ogaki Toyotaka, and Hozumi Gensho (Zen Buddhist) focused on “Prayer in Buddhism, Shinto, and Catholicism.” The provisional topic for the 1986 seminar will be “Dialogue with Esoteric Buddhism.”

§ § § §

In collaboration with the Nanzan Institutes for Social Ethics and Latin American Studies, the Institute for Religion and Culture sponsored a lecture and discussion on 2 December with Gustavo Gutierrez on “The Meaning of Liberation Theology Today.” Dr. Gutierrez’s works have recently been translated into Japanese and begun to attract the attention of the religious world of Japan. Prior to the Nanzan Conference, Dr. Gutierrez had joined Aloysius Pieris for a similar conference at Tokyo’s Sophia University.

§ § § §

In the third week of August, the University of Wisconsin hosted a U.S.-Japan Conference on Japanese Buddhism on the theme “Religious Experience and Doctrinal Discourse.” The Nanzan Institute, one of the sponsors of the event, chaired the third day of the conference on “Buddhist-Christian Interaction.” James Heisig of the Nanzan Institute presented a paper on “Interreligious Dialogue: Enterprising on an Ethos.” The conference proceedings are currently being edited for publication by Buddhist Books International.

§ § § §

The Nanzan Institute has been conducting a series of bi-weekly in-house seminars on the theme “The Crisis of Religious Acts in the World’s Religions.” The seminar has been organized around the visiting scholars currently at the Institute: Joseph O’Leary (Ireland), Lawrence

Sullivan (University of Chicago), Richard Wentz (Arizona State University), Nam Key-Young (Kyung Hee University), and Tsuchida Tomoaki (Tokyo and Harvard Universities).

§ § § §

From 14 April to 9 May of 1986, the Gowing Memorial Research Center of Marawi will host the “Twelfth Annual Summer Session on Mindanao and Sulu Cultures.” The course will consist of three sets of lecture on Islam (Saaduddin Alauya), Islam in the Philippines (Bishop Bienvenido Tadtud, David Hamm), and The Muslim Filipinos (Mamitua Saber, Aifredo Tiamson, Desmond Hartford, Mactar Matuan). The lectures and field trips of these summer sessions are designed for professional church workers engaged in or preparing for ministries in countries where Muslim peoples and culture predominate. Further information is available directly from the Institute.

§ § § §

The Japan Chapter of the Hawaii-based East-West Religions Project (secretariat, Nanzan Institute) will hold a three-day conference from 24 to 25 December of this year. The Conference will feature lectures by Nishitani Keiji on “Points of Contact for Buddhism and Christianity.” The proceedings of these annual conferences are regularly published in Japanese in *Daijozen*. Resumes are prepared for the official journal of the East-West Religions Project, *Buddhist-Christian Studies*.

§ § § §

The Institute of Oriental Religions in Tokyo, in collaboration with the Jung Club of Japan, held a series of open lectures on the “The Depths of the Soul: Depth-Psychology and Religious Experience” in May and June of this year.

In commemoration of Heinrich Dumoulin’s 80th birthday, a “Dialogue between Buddhism and Christianity” was held on 16 November, featuring lectures by Professors Dumoulin and Koshiro Tamaki.

§ § § §

In addition to holding a training course in Zazen for beginners during the summer, Kadowaki Kakichi, the Institute’s current director, organized an Exhibition of Zen Calligraphy from 1 to 3 November. A forthcoming lecture on the subject by Yanase Yuzen is being an-

nounced for 11 January.

On January 12 Thomas Immoos, outgoing director, will deliver a lecture on “The Mass and Noh Drama-Contact through Symbols,” to be followed by a liturgical celebration combining the two traditions.

PUBLICATIONS

The Fall 1985 issue of the *Japan Missionary Bulletin* features an article by Peter Knecht (Nanzan Anthropological Institute) on 'Funerary Rites and the Concept of Ancestors in Japan.' The Winter issue will include several essays on the various aspects of wedding ceremonies arguing in favor of the Catholic Church's policy of performing these rituals for non-Christians in Japan.

§ § § §

Kirti Bunchua, a professor of Bangkok's Chulalongkorn University engaged in interreligious seminars (see *EVENTS*), has published two recent articles on "The Christian Church in Thailand," *Asia and Christianity* (Bombay), and "Mutual Understanding in Thailand," *Thai Studies* (New Delhi).

§ § § §

The Religion and Culture Research Center in Bangkok has issued a book entitled *New Theology: 50 Themes*, edited by Manat Chuabsamai and based on Rahner's *Concise Sacramentum Mundi*. In January of 1986 it plans to inaugurate a monthly Bulletin aimed at the formation of Catholic leaders.

The Catholic Newspaper of Thailand, *Udomsarn*, has recently initiated a new section entitled "Dialogue News," which it plans to include as a regular feature.

§ § § §

Francis X. Clark of the East Asian Pastoral Institute in Manila is preparing a book on *The Catholic Church in Asia*, which promises to be a mine of useful information based on his long years of experience, study, and travel.

§ § § §

Volume 26 of the collection *Theology* published by the Institute for

the Study of Religion and Theology in Seoul has appeared recently (in Korean) under the title *The Church in History*.

§ § § §

In October, the Institute of Oriental Religions in Sophia University, Tokyo, published a book on interfaith dialogue, *Beyond Death*. The work was edited by Kadowaki Kakichi (in Japanese). Prof. Kadowaki is also publishing a series of articles under the title “Introducing the Theology of *Do*” in the Japanese monthly, *Seiki*.

Thomas Immoos of the same Institute published two books in Japanese this past year as a result of his researches in depth- psychology and ritual: *Encounter with the Archetypes* and *The Well-springs of Japan*.

§ § § §

In addition, attention is drawn to the following recent publications:

- * Tissa Balasuriya, *Third World Theology of Religious Life* (available from the Center for Society and Religion in Colombo, Sri Lanka).
- * Wesley Ariarajah, *The Bible and People of Other Faiths* (World Council of Churches, Geneva, 1985).
- * Kim Sung-Hae, *The Righteous and the Sage: A Comparative Study on the Ideal Images of Man in Biblical Israel and Classical China* (Seoul: Sogang University Press, 1985).

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The Ricci Institute for Chinese Studies in Taipei announces the publication of three new volumes in its series *Variétés Sinologiques*: Wang Pi, *Philosophie du “non avoir”*; Matteo Ricci, *The True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven*, trans. by D. Lancashire and Peter Hu Kuochen; and Jean A. Lefevre, *Collections of Oracular Inscriptions in France*.

The Institute’s director, Yves Raguin, has just issued two new books *Leçons sur le Taoisme* and *Leçons sur le Bouddhisme*, both based on courses delivered at the Faculty of Theology in Fu-Jen University and the Pastoral Center in Taipei.

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The second edition of *Seeds of Peace*, which recently replaced the

former *TICD Newsletter* as the formal English-language bulletin of the Thai Interreligious Commission for Development, is a tribute to both the vigor and strong social conscience of interfaith collaboration in Thailand. (For further information, see *INTER-RELIGIO* No.7, p.56.)

NEWS AND COMMUNICATIONS

The NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions in Kyoto has increased its of research workers. Yamashita Akiko, who recently returned from 18 months in India and Sri Lanka where she was doing research on minorities, is now engaged in writing up her findings. Michael Newton, after completing an M.A. at Tsukuba University, is working on translations of Chinese texts. Roald Kristiansen, a doctoral candidate at Emory University in the United States, is spending a year at the center to study the Kyoto School of philosophy and its interpretations of the Buddhist notion of “emptiness.”

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The Catholic Bishops Conference of Japan decided formally in June of this year to establish a documentation service for data relating to the Chinese Church in the hopes that it may serve as a bridge for future relationships.

At the same meeting, it was decided to work towards providing the Vatican with guidelines for receiving groups and leaders of Japan’s “New Religions,” which has raised some problems over the last years.

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Ernest Piryns will be absent from the Oriens Institute for Religious Research in Tokyo until February of 1986 in order to teach at the Oriental Religions and Culture Institute in Manila, Hong Kong, and elsewhere.

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The Institute of Oriental Religions in Tokyo welcomes to its staff Oshima Akira, a specialist in Chinese thought and currently Asst. Professor at Sophia University. Thomas Immoos of the Institute will be on leave for one year, beginning February of 1986, to lecture on Japanese Religions at the Theology Faculty of the University of Vienna.

Bishop Bienvenido Tudtud was appointed Consultant on Muslim- Christian Relations at the Gowing Memorial Research Center in Marawi. His new responsibilities will include supervising the summer programs, the organization of conferences, and assisting in editing the *Dansalan Quarterly*. Bishop Tudtud replaces Michael Diamond who served the Center since 1983.

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The East Asian Pastoral Institute in Manila welcomes John Packiaraj, an Indian Jesuit, to its regular staff.

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Mr. Sulak Sivaraksa, former chairman of the Thai Interreligious Commission for Development and currently chairing the Commission's Administrative Committee (see also *INTER-RELIGIO*, No. 6, pp.72-77), was invited to Germany in November to speak on Buddhism and Buddhist-Christian dialogue.

TICD Vice-Chairman, Seri Phongphit, visited Japan in December for special lectures at Sophia University in Tokyo on "Theravada Buddhism and its Role in Changing Thai Society Today" and "Relations between the Catholic Church and Thai Society from the 17th Century to the Present." From there he travelled to Nanzan University in Nagoya to speak on "Tourism and Development"

§§ §§

Peter Lee of the Tao Fong Shan Ecumenical Centre in Hong Kong has submitted the following brief statement on the participation of organized religions in efforts to draft a Basic Law for Hong Kong:

Ten years' experience of interreligious relations has registered in the Hong Kong public's consciousness that there are six great religions jointly carrying out activities at various levels. For example, the leaders of the six religions—Catholic Christianity, Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam, Protestant Christianity, and Taoism—meet two or three times a year to address themselves to community problems and issue a joint "pastoral letter" to all the citizens on Chinese New Year. The representatives of the six religions also hold interreligious discussions to explain their religious beliefs to one another and promote greater understanding. The frequent appearance of the term "Six Great Religions"

in the Hong Press signals an accepted social phenomenon.

At the time when Britain and China began negotiations for an agreement on the future of Hong Kong after the Crown colony returns to the sovereignty of China in 1997, the religious groups were quick to express their concern for religious freedom in the future.

Since the announcement that a Basic Law for Hong Kong as a Special Administrative Region (with a high degree of self-government) under the sovereignty of China would be drafted, the several religious bodies have formed committees of working groups to study the issues involved. Of the 60 members appointed to the Basic Law Drafting Committee, 2 of the 25 members from Hong Kong (the rest being from the People's Republic of China) are religious leaders, namely the Rt. Rev. Peter Kwong of the Hong Kong and Macau Diocese of the Anglican Church, and the Most Rev. Kwok Kwong, President of the Hong Kong Buddhist Association.

Later it was announced that a parallel Consultative Committee for the Drafting of the Basic Law would be formed as a channel for gathering reasoned public opinion on the subject. Of the 150 anticipated members, 5 places were originally allotted to religion (not 6, because Confucianism is not considered to be a religion in the People's Republic of China). The 6 religions which have cooperated over the years in Hong Kong immediately expressed their wish for 6 seats, and the suggestion was readily accepted. The 6 religions then chose their representatives, and all have been accepted on the Consultative Committee.

It is indeed a unique social phenomenon in Hong Kong that the several religions not only get along amicably but are given opportunities to make their opinions heard on so important a matter as the drafting of what amounts to a Constitution.