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Foreword

*William Johnston, in his book **Silent Music**, characterizes Buddhists, Jews and Christians as lovers “foolishly in love with wisdom”. At this level at least, the great religions share the same quest for wisdom, so it would seem that a dialogue at this level should be a very fruitful one.*

*Such turned out to be the case at a recent conference held in Hong Kong which brought together Jewish, Christian, Confucian and Taoist scholars to dialogue on the wisdom which all alike are in search of. The raw-material for this issue of **Inter-Religio** was gleaned from some of the talks and discussions which took place during the conference.*

One part of that wisdom is to see all of creation as one integral, inter-related whole. Rabbi Andrew Goldstein explores Biblical and traditional teachings on this topic in the search for an underlying uniting principle which holds it all together.

Saints and Sages are people who seem to embody that unity of vision and the wisdom for which we all strive; yet each one arrives at their wisdom by a different path. Three short talks on the Confucian Sage, the Jewish Hasidic Sage and the Catholic Saint were given during the conference and it is interesting to see the points of similarity and the differences therein. These talks were followed in the conference by a short discussion and this is also published here to give a little of the flavour of dialogue in action.

A paper by Prof. John Wren-Lewis, not connected with the above mentioned conference, highlights another possible route to wisdom. Writing from his own direct experience and research, he examines what has come to be known as “near death experience” from the viewpoint of the change or transformation which occurs in a person's life as a result of such “mystical experiences” and suggests that the new wisdom and sense of detachment which often follows such experience might be a fruitful area for inter-religious dialogue.

Brian Lawless

Has Not One God Created Us All?

Rabbi Andrew Goldstein

Andrew Goldstein is a Rabbi at the Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue in Northwood, Middlesex, England.

Have we not all one Divine Parent? Has not one God created us?

A key thought of the Hebrew prophet Malachi (2.10) comes surrounded by verses that are quite puzzling - but this verse is there, a gem, and it expresses the essence of Jewish teaching on the integrity, the completeness, the wholeness of creation. There is one God who is the creator and guide and ruler of all that has, does and will exist. This being so, all that lives is bound in a unique relationship one to the other.

The mediaeval Jewish philosopher, Maimonides (1135-1204 Spain-Egypt) opens his *Book of Knowledge* in his code on Jewish law and belief as follows:

The fundamental principle and the pillar of all knowledge is to know that there is a First Being who brings everything into being and everything in the heavens and on earth derives from its existence.

Nothing can exist without this Being and everything depends on it for this Being can exist without the creatures of the universe but they cannot exist without this being.

This being is the God of the universe...

(Mishne Torah: Yesode Ha-Torah 1:1-5)

That God created all that exists is, of course, already made clear by the opening chapter of the Book of Genesis which also gives the clear impression that God intended to create the Universe—it was no mere whim—and that God considered creation to be good.(Genesis 1:31)

Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible a clear and beautiful picture is painted of a world in which each aspect of creation has its purpose and part to play

and that they are deliberately inter-related, e.g. Psalm 104 (the whole Psalm, but especially verses 10 to 24).

You make the springs gush forth in torrents;
they make their way between the hills,
giving drink to all the wild beasts;
the wild asses slake their thirst.
The birds of the sky dwell beside them
and sing among the foliage.
You water the mountains from Your lofts;
the earth is sated from the fruit of Your work.
You make the grass grow for the cattle,
and herbage for human labour
that we may get food out of the earth -
wine that cheers the hearts of human being,
oil that makes their faces shine,
and bread that sustains their life.

The trees of the Lord drink their fill,
the cedars of Lebanon, God's own planting,
where birds make their nests;
the stork has a home in the junipers.
The high mountains are for the wild goats;
the crags are a refuge for the rock-badgers.

God made the moon to mark the seasons;
the sun knows when to set.
You bring on darkness and it is night,
when all the beasts of the forests stir.
The lions roar for prey,
seeking their food from God.
When the sun rises, they come home
and couch in their dens.
Humans then go out to their work,
to their labour until the evening.

How many are the things that you have made, O Lord.

We get the clear impression that the Psalmist believed that if any aspect of creation be tampered with, this would affect the whole. The Psalmist did not know our deep anxiety at the way we live in the modern world, unknowingly or knowingly, destroy part of God's creation and so

already see the havoc this brings to other aspects of our environment.

We human being tend to see ourselves as the most important feature of God's creation. The Psalms, however, often picture the physical, inanimate features of creation as having life and the ability to give witness to God's glory: for example,

Let the heavens rejoice and earth exult;
let the sea and all within it thunder,
the fields and everything in them exult;
then shall all the trees of the forest shout for joy.

(Psalm 96:11-12)

Let the sea and all within it thunder,
the world and its inhabitants;
let the rivers clap their hands,
the mountains sing joyously together.

(Psalm 98:7-8)

Does it take only a poet to view the beauty and majesty of rivers and mountains and to realize their integral part in God's good world?

The Bible does see a definite order in creation and sees human beings as the pinnacle of God's creative act. As such we have power over creation, but also great responsibility for it: e.g.. Genesis 1:28.

And God blessed them and said to them: "be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth; subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the fowl of the air, and over everything that creeps on the face of the earth."

A Rabbinic comment on this verse pictures God showing Adam and Eve around the Garden of Eden, showing them all of its beauty. Says God:

"See how lovely and how worthy of praise are my works. They have been created for your sake. Take care not to spoil or destroy My world, for if you corrupt it, there will be no one to set it right after you."

(Midrash Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13)

Another Midrash (an early Rabbinic commentary) stresses the importance of all that God has created:

Even those things that you may hold superfluous in the world such as fleas, gnats and flies, even they are part of the creation of the world. God carries out His purpose through everything, even through a snake, even through a gnat, even through a frog.

(Genesis Rabbah 107)

Another charming Midrash sharply challenges modern world society that yearly allows the destruction of habitats and species:

Said the raven to Noah: "You hate me, for you did not choose to send a scout from the species of bird of which there were seven pairs in the Ark, but from a species of which there was only one pair. If the power of the sun or the power of the cold had overwhelmed me, would not the world be missing a species?"

(Talmud Sanhedrin 108b)

The Hebrew Bible believes that God's creation should be left as it is, and that we humans do not have the right to change it, for example:

"You shall not sow your vineyard with a second kind of seed, else the crop — from the seed you have sown and the yield of the vineyard — may not be used."

(Deuteronomy 22:9)

Such laws against cross-breeding we might find difficult to accept today and much of the modern agricultural world is based on "improved species". And yet our concern grows about where our ability to tamper with nature's gene pool will lead.

There are many references in the Hebrew Bible and Rabbinic Literature that could be used to urge us to conserve our natural resources, not destroy our environment; but the point we have been trying to make here is that in Jewish eyes there is an integrity in creation, a wholeness that was intended by God and that we should seek to preserve.

Samson Raphael Hirsch (the Orthodox Jewish theologian: Germany 1808-1888) summed up the matter as follows:

"One glorious chain of love, of giving and receiving, unites all creatures; none is by or of itself, but all things exist in continual reciprocal activity - the one for the all: the all for the one".

As a postscript to this section, we offer a prayer by the Hasidic Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav (1772-1811) that beautifully expresses the belief that in the integrity of creation, human beings can, through prayer and meditation, find a way to their and its Creator:

Master of the Universe,
grant me the ability to be alone;
may it be my custom to go outdoors each day
among the trees and grass, among all growing things,

and there may I be alone, and enter into prayer,
to talk with the one that I belong to.
May I express there everything in my heart,
and may all the foliage of the field (all grasses trees and plants)
may they all awake at my coming,
to send the powers of their life into the words of my prayer
so that my prayer and speech are made whole
through the life and spirit of all growing things,
which are made as one by their transcendent Source.”

*The Integrity of Creation in the affairs of human beings:
“Has not one God created us all?”*

To change the focus from the whole spectrum of creation to the variety of human beings and peoples; Judaism from its earliest stages made clear that the one God is concerned with all peoples, and not just with the Jewish people.

When Abraham is told of the imminent destruction of the wicked cities of Sodom and Gommorah, he pleads with God that they be saved. He does not plead only to save his relatives, Lot and his family, but that it be unjust to destroy the city if there reside in it righteous people. It is unjust to punish the righteous with the wicked (Genesis 18:23-33). The potential righteous of Sodom and Gommorah were not Hebrews, yet still Abraham pleads for them and the assumption is that in God’s eyes it would make no difference: Justice is justice, and this applies to all people, for all are the one God’s creatures.

The prophet Amos declared God’s equal concern for all peoples:

“Are you not as the children of the Ethiopian to Me, O Children of Israel?”
Says the Eternal God. “Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt.
And the Philistines from Caphtor. And Aram from Kir?”

(Amos 9:7)

Two passages from Rabbinic literature illustrate the belief that all people are equal in God’s eyes and that all are potentially precious to God. Individuals may look different, but inherently all human beings are God’s children.

For this reason a single human being only was created at the time of Creation: to teach you that whoever destroys a single life, Scripture reckons it to him as though he had destroyed a whole world; and whoever saves a single life, Scripture reckons it to him as though he had saved a whole world.

Also for the sake of peace among human beings, so that one person should not say to another: "My ancestors were greater than your ancestors."

And also to proclaim the greatness of the Holy One. If a human being stamps several coins with the same die, they all resemble one another. But the Supreme Ruler, the Holy One, stamps all human beings with the die of the first human being; and yet not one of them resembles the other.

Therefore every human individual is obligated to say: "For my sake was the world created!"

(Mishne Sanhedrin 4:5)

And each human being has the same value in God's eyes and rank or position does not make one more precious than the other. A favourite saying of the Rabbis of Yavneh (1st Century C.E.) was:

I am God's creature and my neighbour is God's creature.

My work is in the city and his work is in the field.

I rise early to go to my work and he rises early to go to his work.

As he does not pride himself on his work, so I do not pride myself on mine.

But should you think that I am doing more than he - we have learned:

"Do more, do less, it matters not, so long as one's heart is turned to heaven."

(Berachot 17a)

A key passage is found in Midrashnic Literature:

What was Deborah's character that she should have judged Israel, and prophesied to them at a time when Phinehas son of Elazar was alive? I call heaven and earth to witness that whether it be Gentile or Israelite, man or woman, slave or handmaid, according to the deeds which he or she does, so will the Holy Spirit rest on him and her.

(Tan.d.b.El. p.48)

Maimonides crystallises this universalistic view on the potential of all peoples:

The Pious of the Gentiles will have a share in the World to come.

(Hilchot Teshuvah 3:5)

Integrity of Creation: Relations Between Human Beings

If one Divine Parent created all human beings, all are this one God's "children", then surely it is clear that in this God's eyes harmony within the human family is the ideal state. This is beautifully expressed in a prayer by Rabbi Nahman of Bratslav:

May the will come from You
to annul wars and the shedding of blood from the
universe,
and to extend a peace, great and wondrous, in the
universe.
Nor again shall one people raise the sword against
another
and they shall learn war no more.
But let all the residents of earth recognize and know
the innermost truth:
that we are not come into this world for quarrel and
division,
nor for hate and jealousy, contrariness and bloodshed;
but we are come into this world
You to recognize and know,
may You be blessed forever.

(Likkutey Tefillot)

The one Hebrew word that most non-Jews know is *Shalom*. It is usually translated as *Peace* and does mean peace. But it signifies more than the mere absence of war. The root implies "wholeness, completeness" and so the ideal state in which the world, human societies, human souls should exist is with *Shalom* — with completeness, wholeness — another way of expressing the "integrity of creation".

Last Words...A Covenant

The second part of Malachi's statement with which we began provides a sharp retort to the first half.

Have we not all one Divine Parent
Has not one God created us?
Why [then] do you deal treacherously one against the other, by profaning
the covenant of our Divine Parent?

What is this covenant? Jewish and Christian traditions know clearly what is the covenant they believe God has made with their people (with Abraham, with Moses at Sinai, through Jesus); but what of all humankind? If we speak on the One God, Creator of all that exists, then surely this God must make a covenant with all humanity? Surely the answer is found in the covenant God made with Noah after the flood.

“I now establish My covenant with you and your offspring to come, and with every living thing that is with you — birds, cattle, and every wild beast as well — all that have come out of the ark, every living thing on earth. I will maintain My covenant with you: never again shall all flesh be cut off by the waters of a flood, and never again shall there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

God further said “This is the sign that I set for the covenant between Me and you, and every living creature with you, for all ages to come. I have set My bow in the clouds, and it shall serve as a sign of the covenant between Me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth, and the bow appears in the clouds, I will remember My covenant between Me and you and every living creature among all flesh, so that the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh. When the bow is in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures, all flesh that is on earth.”

The early Rabbinic commentators looked at this passage and pondered on the details of the Covenant that God made with Noah. They knew of the Covenant made with the Jewish people through Moses and had carefully counted the *Mitzvot* (Commandments) incumbent on a Jew, and calculated that there were six hundred and thirteen Mitzvot. However, from a careful reading of the Noah cycle of stories, they concluded that there were seven basic laws that applied to all human beings and only if they were kept could society exist:

The establishment of a system of justice, prohibition of blasphemy,
idolatry, sexual immorality or incest, murder, theft and devouring a limb
of a living animal.

(*Talmud Sanhedrin 56a*)

How Jewish to try to define God's relationship with all human beings in terms of Mitzvot, and how essentially Jewish to believe that God's concern is for all peoples, Jews and Gentiles. How many societies and individuals do not even keep the seven basic “Noachite” laws!

But to end, let us look at the plain meaning of the text of God's covenant with Noah. Surely it says that God's side of the covenant is not to bring destruction to life and the world. Our side is to see that we do not destroy each other, the balance of nature, nature itself, our environment, our planet. God's rainbow still appears in the sky: will humankind be responsible for putting out its brilliant promise? That is the challenge we face in the decade and the century to come.

The Sage in Chinese Tradition: Wisdom and Virtue Personified

Kim Sung-hae

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Introduction

The Sage (*sheng-jen* 聖人) is the Chinese symbol for a perfected human being with penetrating wisdom and all-embracing benevolence. The Confucian school adopted the ancient ideal of the Sage-king (*sheng-wang* 聖王), which appeared in *The Book of Odes* and *The Book of Documents*, and made it a universal ideal for every human being. The Taoist school interpreted the Sage as the person of *Tao* 道 who embodies non-action (*wu-wei* 無為) and thereby participates in the transforming work of *Tao*, the Taoists also used peculiarly Taoistic terms such as the true person (*chen-jen* 真人), the spiritual person (*shen-jen* 神人), the perfect person (*chih-jen* 至人) and the immortal person (*hsien-jen* 仙人). This is well shown in Chuang Tzu and Tao Hung-ching (陶弘景, 456-536), those two uniquely Taoistic characters. Actually in Lao Tzu it is 'the Sage' which is used consistently. Confucian terms such as the noble person (*chün-tze* 君子), the superior person (*hsien-che* 賢者) and the scholar (*shih* 士) are also subsidiary terms to signify people who have reached the lower stages of sagehood.

Even Chinese Buddhists adopted the symbolism of the Sage when they attempted to translate the notion of Buddhas and Bodisattvas. This adoption is clearly seen in Seng-chao's (僧肇 ca. 374-414) commentary on the *Vimalakirtinirdesa*. When the famous translator Kumarajiva translated the text in 406, Seng-chao held the brush and composed the Chinese text. When Seng-chao later wrote his own commentary on this sutra, he not only emphasized the original theme of the sutra, i.e., the Absolute cannot be known and the Bodisattva is not attached either to

samsāra or to nirvāna, but absorbed the Chinese concept of the Sage as well. In fact, in Seng-chao's mind the Bodhisattva and the Sage were the same: "Therefore, though the Sage is in reality, yet, in illusion, we enjoy the full benefit of his benign rule: without leaving the Supramundane realm the Sage is ever aware of what happens to us. This means that he belongs to existence and non-existence simultaneously and is never separated from either of them" (*The Book of Chao*, pp.107-8). While preserving the traditional image of the Sage, Seng-chao enriched its meaning by his inclusion of Buddhist enlightenment.

In this short article, however, I will not discuss the Buddhist view of the Sage. Rather I will focus my presentation on the two native traditions that represent Chinese insights on wisdom and virtue i.e., Confucianism and Taoism.

The Confucian Sage

When one of his disciples Fan Ch'ih (樊遲) asks about benevolence (仁) and wisdom (知), Confucius answers in *Analects* 12:22: "Love others" (愛人) and "Know others" (知人). The identical questions are repeated by the same disciple in *Analects* 6:22, but here Confucius' answers are richer and more direct. Confucius explains that in order to love others one has to face the difficulty of overcoming selfish desires. In other words, only after cultivating oneself, can a person give peace to others (修己安人, 14:42). Confucius says that knowing others is wisdom, for one has to perceive the worthiness of other people correctly in order to place the right person in the proper place. Moreover, keeping the right distance according to propriety both in human relationships and with the spirits is an essential part of the right ordering of society.

For Confucius, therefore, wisdom is not just an accumulation of much knowledge. He made known to his disciples that there is one single thread binding the way together (一以貫之, 4:15). Because this single thread is loyalty to oneself (忠) and extension of this loyalty to others (恕), which is the main method to attain benevolence (仁之方, 6:30), in fact wisdom is nothing but knowing the way of benevolence (仁之道). Therefore it is not surprising that two poles, consisting of the way of benevolence, knowing and practicing the transmitted propriety (知禮, 3:22; 7:31) and knowing and accepting the mandate of Heaven (知天命, 2:4; 16:8; 3:11) comprise

the constitutive structure of wisdom in the Analects. In a word, wisdom is for the attainment of benevolence and in reality forms a part of benevolence. This exhibits the practical and moral character of wisdom in the Confucian tradition.

Since the way of benevolence is not visible, it has to be embodied in a concrete human person. The Sage is the best embodiment of benevolence for Confucius (Analects 6:30; 7:34 etc.), even though much more frequently he presents the image of the noble person (君子) as a sojourner on the way toward benevolence. Confucius urges everyone to cultivate benevolence because people are all born with moral virtue (*te* 德) endowed from Heaven (Analects 7:23). This conviction of Confucius is theoretically systematized by Mencius in his theory of the four starting-points of the human heart (四端, Mencius 2A:16; 6A:6). And it was Mencius who not only popularized the image of the Sage but exalted Confucius as the Sage par excellence. Mencius commented that Confucius truly embodied all the necessary qualities of the Sage, integrity (清), harmony with others (和), taking responsibility (任), and timeliness (時). Actually the timeliness of sagehood (聖之時者, 5A:40; 5B:1; 6A:8) synthesizes the other qualities and makes a person able to discern when to proceed and when to withdraw. Timeliness or Timely Mean (時中) is the epitome of Confucian virtue because it requires both wisdom and virtue; wisdom leads a person in the right direction, while virtue offers strength to continue and reach the goal.

Hsün Tzu offers a progressive pattern of human maturity: the Scholar (士)-the Noble person (君子)-the Sage (聖人). Hsün Tzu describes the Sage as one whose emotions are stabilized in propriety and whose wisdom is as bright as his teacher's (chap. 2). Again virtue and wisdom are intimately related in the formation of the Sage. Hsün Tzu's unique contribution to the image of the Sage is his emphasis on cultural propriety. Culture is an integral part of human perfection in Confucianism, for it is conceived as the carriage through which the command of Heaven is transmitted. Hsün Tzu presents the concept of the Triad (三才), Heaven, Earth, and the Human, and links them with the concept of the Sage:

"Heaven has its time and so it is able to give birth to all things; Earth has its riches, so it is able to rear them; people have their rule and so they perfect what Heaven and Earth started" (chaps. 17:19). The Sage's participation in the nurturing works of the Triad is further developed in the Commentaries to the *I Ching* (易經) and later developments of Confucianism.

Chu Hsi (朱熹, 1130-1200), who elevated the concept of benevolence from the benevolent practice of life to a universal principle of the universe, presents the Sage as the very embodiment of the principle of Heaven (天理):

The Sage is truly a man who has become one with the law (of Heaven); he has become one with Heaven (Yu lei 61). The Sage is nothing but a piece of the principle of Heaven (Yu lei 61). The Sage is nothing but a piece of the principle of Heaven standing in blood and bones (Yu lei 31).

As the living personification of the principle of Heaven the Sage is able to help everything to grow as it is destined to be and thereby completes the works of Heaven and Earth. In spite of this unity, however, there is one distinction between the Sage and Heaven in their performances of transformation; the former works with heart (有心), the latter, without heart (無心).

The relationship between sagehood and kingship is subtly handled in Chu Hsi. The Classical image of the Sage was the ideal king, exemplified in Yao and Shun. But the Confucian Sage is not identified with the Sage-king; rather the ruler should employ Sage-like officials. The Sage and the king may co-incide in one person, which will bring about the ideal society of great peace. However, by the Sung period people were well aware that in fact, this seldom happens. As the universal appeal for sagehood has been recovered by the Neo-Confucians, Confucius and Yen-hui became the two favorite examples.

The stages toward sagehood which Hsün tzu first formulated were also revived by the Neo-Confucian scholars. Chou Tun-i writes: "The Sage looks up to Heaven; the worthy man (賢) looks up to the Sage; the scholar (士) looks up to the worthy man" (Complete works, p.145). Chu Hsi adds here two more steps: the ordinary person, the scholar, the worthy person, the noble person, and the Sage. Moreover, Chu hsi places three historical figures. Confucius, Yen-hui, and Mencius at three different levels: Confucius is the Sage par excellence; Yen-hui is near to the Sage, i. e., the Noble Person; Mencius belongs to the scholar or at best the worthy person. Chu Hsi's judgment on Mencius and Yen-hui offers a hint as to what kind of personality he had in mind for the Sage. Yen-hui's constant effort to practice the way of benevolence was the perfect model for Chu Hsi.

As Chu Hsi repeats, it is difficult to become a Sage and so one should place all his energy into doing it: "Even the Sage (Confucius) worried;

how much more a scholar should (take it to heart)?” (*Comm. to the Analect* 4:16). Chu Hsi emphasized the importance of effort, for he realized the duality of knowing and doing in human life: “To understand humanity and to make it a part of oneself are two different things. To understand it is to know it, and to make it a part of oneself is to possess it” (Yü lei 95). For the actual practice, Chu Hsi recommended a traditional Confucian method, i.e., extension from what is near (filial piety and brotherly respect) to the far (fulfilling one’s mandate). Consequently, Chu Hsi even warned his students not to make the Sage into a kind of target that one is anxious to attain. Even the highest goal, the Sage itself, can become a hindrance in the true progress of one’s life. Chu Hsi’s investigation of things becomes important, for investigation of things is in the end the same as extending one’s nature by knowing one’s mandate (*ming* 命) from Heaven.

Chu Hsi’s delicate and well-structured image of the Sage has continued to live in the hearts of earnest Confucian scholars. Though the rigorous method and duality of knowledge and action which Chu Hsi presented were attacked by the Lu-Wang School, the symbol of the Sage as the personification of the Principle of Heaven has remained in Confucian tradition.

The Taoist Sage

Since the *Tao* (道) cannot be defined with words, it is mainly through the figure of the Sage that the qualities of the *Tao* are portrayed. The concluding chapter of *Lao Tzu* makes a parallel between the way of Heaven and the way of the Sage: “The way of Heaven (天之道) benefits and does not harm; the way of the Sage (聖人之道) is bountiful and does not contend” (chap. 81). The Sage follows and takes over all the characteristics of the *Tao*, i.e., nurturing without words, and saving all people without partiality or self-interest. It is interesting to note that Lao Tzu’s Sage does not look intelligent but rather stupid and blockish. Lao Tzu says that he is like a baby that has not yet learned to smile (chap. 20).

The concept of knowledge in Taoist tradition is dynamic in its initial negation, and its subsequent elevation, of knowledge to a high level. Chuang Tzu divides wisdom into two categories; the small knowledge (小知) that distinguishes according to social standards and the great knowledge (大知) that follows the primal non-distinction of the *Tao*. One has to relativize the ordinary differentiation between the beautiful and the

ugly, the good and the bad in order to acquire the naturalness of the *Tao*.

Therefore Lao Tzu commented that only those capable of not knowing anything restore people to their original naturalness (chaps. 3, 20). This kind of not-knowing brings a higher stage of wisdom. Lao Tzu uses two antithetical terms, knowledge (*chih* 智) and enlightenment (*ming* 明), to signify the ordinary knowledge and knowing the *Tao*, since the *Tao* is innate in human nature, knowing oneself is the key to this kind of enlightenment: “he who knows others is clever (*chih*); He who knows himself has discernment (*ming*)” (chap. 33). To know oneself, is to understand what is constant, i.e., *Tao* within the self (chap. 55). Therefore the Sage knows the entire world without going outside.

The Sage in Chuang Tzu also has a foolish look, makes no attempt to leave a name, to achieve anything or realize self. A unique characteristic of the Sage in Chuang Tzu is playfulness (遊) or carefreeness. While Lao Tzu’s Sage is serious and participates in the suffering of people, Chuang Tzu’s Sage enjoys playfully the natural transformations of the universe. If Lao Tzu talks about the lastingness of the Sage, Chuang Tzu’s Sage transcends both life and death, and enjoys complete freedom from all attachments. However Chuang Tzu’s methods of cultivation, such as the “fasting of the mind” (心齋) and “sitting down and forgetting” (坐忘), show that the same total commitment and effort are needed to empty oneself as in other religious pursuits.

In a word, the Taoist Sage is a person of non-action (*wu-wei*) who negates all socially recognized values such as riches, beauty, success, good name, and propriety in the search for the absolute value/norm that embraces both the poor and the rich, the ugly and the beautiful, the bad and the good. In other words, the Taoist Sage aims at an equal society where everyone is accepted without differentiation and all live in peace. This Taoist social ideal is probably most concretely formulated in *the Classic of Great Peace* (太平經), written in the second century C.E. by the first religious sect of Taoism, which continues to provide social ideals for both rebellions and political stability.

Conclusion

The image of the Sage in china and East Asian culture has had paramount importance because the way of Heaven is conceived of as silent (天道無言). Since Heaven does not speak or give orders directly, people have to look at the examples and teachings of the Sages in order to know and

practice the mandate of Heaven. Both ancient Sage-kings and contemporary Sages embody one and the same principle. Hsün Tzu preferred contemporary Sages, for they are nearer to us and so easier to follow. The moral and social influence which Confucian and Taoist traditions attributed to the Sage is idealistically high. In short, a human community cannot be formed or maintained without the Sage, the very embodiment of truth, order, and humanity. This humanistic concentration on the Chinese Sage is perhaps a most distinctive character in comparison to the Jewish righteous person or Christian saint who always are seen as servants of a personal God, who is revealed through historical events.

Secondly, in the Chinese image of the Sage, poetic quality is usually subsidiary to moral quality. Wisdom is needed to be a Sage, but it has to be purified from secular values of riches, fame, power, and beauty. Ordinary knowledge and differentiation of values are challenged by the way of benevolence and the *Tao*. A similar negation or challenge can be seen in the prophetic condemnations by the prophets of Israel as well as in the beatitudes of Gospel. Poetic quality has to be transformed by the fear or love of God or total commitment to the *Tao*. Through this transformation, wisdom is incorporated into the moral formation of a person or a society. Therefore the Sage is a person who not only understands the way but has acquired it by moral cultivation. The righteous person and the saint are the same, except for the active role God plays in their transformation.

Thirdly, the concept of mandate holds the most religious character in the symbolism of the Sage. At first glance the Confucian Sage seems to be a self-made person with cultural help through education. But when we look in depth, the Sage's virtue is originally given by Heaven and their calling in life as well as all their success and failure, sickness and death are considered as the command of Heaven (天命). Therefore, a person cannot become a noble person or a Sage without knowing the command of Heaven. Even the Taoist Sage is said to be delivered and compassionately protected by Heaven (*Lao Tzu* chap. 67). Heaven or *Tao* is closely related to the life of Confucius, Chu Hsi, Lao tzu and Chuang Tzu. Here lies the biggest difference as well as common point between the Jewish and Christian understanding of the human relationship with God and Chinese understanding. In Jewish and Christian traditions, the righteous and the saint are seen as chosen and most favored by God; but in Chinese tradition the Sage just participates in Heaven or *Tao* that works without heart. In spite of these different conceptions of divine-human relationship,

however, we can perceive one converging point that the relationship between the human and the Absolute is fundamental.

Because of its strong emphasis on what is human, the East Asian insight and symbolism of the Sage should be much more appealing to our contemporary age. But it needs to be clarified and modernized in order to show its original shape which Confucius and Lao Tzu presented. The way of benevolence and the way of Heaven have to regain their proper position, if the authenticity of the Sage is to be safeguarded.

The Saint In Catholic Tradition

Monika K. Hellwig

Professor Monika K. Hellwig, a well known Catholic writer and teacher, is currently the Landegger Distinguished University Professor of Theology at Georgetown University in the USA.

I find myself always very profoundly moved by accounts of Chinese wisdom and Chinese life, partly because there is an extraordinary courage and simplicity in not presenting the Ultimate in personal terms. You are left with a far more radical challenge, very different from the Biblical way or the way of Biblical traditions.

I suppose that the simplest way of explaining what a saint is the Catholic tradition in to begin with Jesus. For us, Jesus is the Wisdom of God personified, but that has to be read in an inclusive and not an exclusive sense; that is to say, every creature, and particularly, every person is a Word of God, and that in every creature and every person God is to be met, apprehended, appreciated, and thanked. I think that when we look at the Gospel accounts of the things that Jesus himself said and did, the implication is not that people should focus so sharply on his person, but rather that people should be turned to the source of all being that Jesus calls Father, and that they should take their own experience seriously.

In the sayings of Jesus there is so much that directs people back to their experience of nature, their experience of family relationships, their experience of their own conscience and development and so on, and this is possibly an aspect that our more formal handing on of the tradition has neglected — that it has tended to focus on the person of Jesus in an exclusive, not an inclusive sense. I believe that one of the correctives of that is precisely the veneration of saints; that is, looking at people of different cultures and different periods in history and stations in life and seeing the Word of God in them.

There are three saying of Jesus of Nazareth that I think tend to define why we canonize certain people. When I say canonize, we have had,

particularly in the Catholic tradition, the habit of recognizing certain exemplary manifestations of wisdom and naming them as saints. In the early centuries this was spontaneous. In later centuries it became a very official institutional process which means that the later saints don't seem to have the same appeal or the same heart. The ones that have most appeal are the ones that are a response to popular recognition.

The first of the sayings of Jesus of Nazareth that I think are helpful is the story of the merchant who was selling pearls. He found one pearl of such great price that he went away and sold absolutely everything he owned to get that one pearl. I think we see the saint as somebody who will sacrifice everything for the truth...but what kind of truth; not speculative or abstract truth, not empirical truth or the logically inevitable; but the kind of truth the Bible speaks of; that has more to do with what can be relied upon — that which is faithful and trustworthy.

The truth that people we recognize as saints have sacrificed everything for is, in the first place, the truth of a relationship with God as source of being; and in the second place, the truth of solidarity of all human creatures, and indeed of all creation, of community and communion.

A second saying of Jesus of Nazareth is that if you have a lamp, it would be foolish to put it under a basket. You put it in the house where it can give light and I think that people that we have singled out as saints, as exemplary, as telling us something about our own possibilities, are people who share the truth of what they have experienced. They may share it very concretely in charitable and compassionate kinds of activities; or they may share it in a reflective way, teaching about it.

A third saying of Jesus — and I thought here of the extraordinary parallel with the Taoist sage that Sr. Kim mentioned — was that you can't really get into the Reign of God, the Kingdom of Heaven, unless you are like a child, unless there is a certain simplicity. What kind of simplicity? Well I think a kind of simplicity — and here's where the parallel comes in — that isn't impressed with status, or power, or wealth, or book-learning. The kind of simplicity that comes to the heart of the thing directly out of experience. There is something very odd about our traditional way of dealing with the things; As I look at specific examples of saints in the light of the critical historical information that we have about them, they tend in their own time to appear distinctly as disruptive, but in retrospect, we make them very contemplative and sanctioning of the status quo and unquestioning. It is an extraordinary dialectic that is going on there, that we

have again and again a kind of explosion of illumination and then we try to domesticate it and make it seem part of the same picture that we accepted before.

When Dr. Peter Lee asked me to talk about the Catholic saint, he had suggested taking a woman saint as an example. The fact of the matter is that we have actually canonized many more men than women, not because the men were more illuminated than women, but because they tended to be in positions where they attracted attention and the women were not. I have chosen six saints by way of example, three men and three women.

From the second century we have, in Justin the Martyr, a rather interesting example of someone who really does appear as a manifestation or personification of wisdom. This was somebody who traveled around in search of wisdom, exploring different philosophies and finally came upon Christianity as a philosophy - that's what he thought he was meeting. One of his contemporaries made the comment that for someone familiar with the pagan philosophies, it really was an extraordinary wrench to take Christianity seriously because it doesn't come from the cultured Greeks, it comes from the Barbarian Hebrews.

Having taken it seriously, Justin the Martyr hangs out his shingle, which of course in time of persecution, as it then was, was a very dangerous thing to do. He gives up everything for the one pearl. He wouldn't put the light under a bushel. He said: "No! I will tell anybody who comes all about this wonderful thing that I have discovered". You might say ultimately that he exemplifies the simplicity of the child, because having been convinced of the truth of his discovery he simply lives his life until he is arrested. He shares what he has to share with anybody who comes. He doesn't claim any particular status. Finally, he is arrested and executed.

A second example is that of a young woman named Perpetua of North Africa, a little later than Justin. She lived during one of the last persecutions of Christians in the Roman Empire; a person of exceptional education and culture, she also discovers Christianity and enrolls as a catechumen knowing that this is a very dangerous thing to do, but simply choosing the one pearl, saying "I've discovered wisdom, I'm going to pursue it". She did this at the time she got married and then, just after she had her first child, she was arrested. The story tells of two tremendous struggles that she went through. One was that she was terrified that the baby would die since she could not breast feed it; and the other was that her father kept pleading with her not to do this to him in his old age. It is told among the legends

about her that she went through a very difficult discernment process and decided to hold firm, no matter what arguments anybody would present to her.

The next two examples are of Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century and Catherine of Sienna a little later. Aquinas, probably much better known than most Catholic saints, was an Italian of noble birth, an infant prodigy of sorts, passionately interested in philosophy, fascinated by Aristotle when he manages to get to university in Milan, and under great pressure from his family who wanted him to be a Benedictine at a certain monastery because there he would become the Abbott, in that way he could have status, worldly power and a religious life. He refused and became a begging friar — an interesting, radical kind of choice, an oppositional stance in relation to the society of the time. Aquinas's work is well known and he has become a figure symbolizing establishment, but what is not so well known is that everything that he did was bought at the price of very radical choices. Even his acceptance of Aristotelian Philosophy into the presentation of the Christian faith was a very radical choice at the time, and was an oppositional one.

A little later came Catherine of Sienna, who died very young. She was an Italian girl of a merchant family in the very early stages of capitalism. She was expected to accept all the conventional piety and then do one of two things; make the marriage which her family arranged for her, which would be a bond between the mercantile houses; or she should go into a convent, also appropriate to the time.

The story of Catherine is that as a child she went into hiding in solitude for years in her own house, refusing to speak or mix with people in an ordinary relationship. She spent her time thinking, meditating, praying, getting a perspective on things, and then very suddenly, burst into public life and did all kinds of things utterly unsuitable for a young woman of a merchant family to do.

She began to consort with prisoners due for execution; she leapt into all kinds of tasks of reconciliation with warring cities and feuding families; she stepped out of line and travelled with a following of young people in quest of her wisdom (nicknamed the Catherini) and finally she travelled to Avignon to tell the Pope that "You as head of the Churches of the West are not doing your job. You are in Avignon where you don't belong. You are living the life of the leisured classes which is not what you are there for as Pope. Get back to Rome and start doing your job." In retrospect we

canonized her but certainly her actions were seen as horrendously inappropriate in her own time.

The next example is Ignatius of Loyola, a Basque courtier and soldier, injured in a battle. Lying in bed recovering, he read two sets of stories to take his mind off the pain and the boredom; One set of stories about chivalry and adventure, and another set of stories about Jesus and saints. He said that when he reflected back on the effect that the reading had on him, he had to acknowledge that he could get terribly excited about the stories of love and adventure, but that afterwards, he felt empty. When he picked up the other stories, it was a considerable effort and he read them only because there was nothing else to read.

In retrospect, he found he was getting to real wisdom, to what life was really about and to what puts it in perspective. Out of that, Ignatius of Loyola devised a kind of schooling of the mind and the heart to see things in perspective. He proposed that Christians go over their basic beliefs of where they stood in relation to God, history, other people, and the possibilities of their own lives; and having reflected on these in depth, to trust their own judgment. This was in Reformation times and from a Catholic perspective, it was a very radical and oppositional thing to propose. He called it 'Discernment of Spirits'. You look into your own experience. Don't expect the answers to be written up for you in history or in books. You really wrestle with the reality, coming back to the idea suggested in the beginning; that every person is a Word of God, every creature is a Word of God, and there is something very positive to be read in our experience.

The final example is a young French peasant girl who was a visionary in quite modern times, Bernadette Soubirous. She had a vision of Mary the Mother of Jesus coming and explaining things to her. What is explained is extremely simple: that you should turn back to God; remember that most basic reality is your relationship to God. The particular form of the image which she saw was Mary the Mother of Jesus going through an exercise that Catholics call the Rosary, a rhythmic pattern of meditating on the story of the life of Jesus. In utterly simple terms and very concrete representations she was saying that what you have to do is take Jesus as a basic model and look at it in your own life.

In conclusion, these examples of exemplary manifestation of wisdom tell us that Jesus of Nazareth isn't supposed to be somehow an exclusive manifestation of the Divine, an exclusive personification or incarnation of the Divine Word, but an inclusive, prototypical one.

The Hasidic Sage

Benjamin Ish Shalom

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While the study of Torah is of prime importance in the religious life of Judaism, it is also true that in the Talmudic literature there are other ideals which emphasize not the intellectual value but the moral value; not the *chokmah*, but the moral effort of man and his yearning for the nearness of God. These ideas were presented in the characters of the *Tsadik* “the righteous” and the *Hasid* “the pious”. In the Talmudic literature there is a distinction between these two types. The *Tsadik* is the person who fulfills the *mitzvot*, the commandments of the Torah. He is the man who has in his pocket more positive deeds than sins. *Tsadik* is almost a juridical concept which means justice, balance, acceptance of the law, acceptance of the norm. The *Hasid*, on the other hand, is not the balanced type. He is a person who aspires to a very high spiritual level and strives for it in a very radical and extreme way.

In the *Kabbala*, which are Jewish mystical writings and the source for hasidism, the concept of *tsadik* is understood in a different way; The legal element of the *Tsadik* is removed and the *Tsadik* is made a symbol of the Divine Sphere.

Tsadik has been described as a cosmic power and understood as the foundation of the world and the source of all souls. A *Tsadik* who, in the Hebraic thought, would represent loyalty to the law and conformism, was understood in the *Kabbala* as one who brings peace and harmony among the different elements of the cosmos. The *Tsadik* has been described as a pipe, through which the divine powers pass and give life to the world.

The concept of *Torah* has also been changed in the *Kabbala*. *Torah* is no longer just a holy book revealed from heaven, but a system of metaphysical principles which are the foundation of the world. These conceptions are based on a Platonic and Talmudic idea of the pre-existence of the *Torah*. According to this idea, God created the world in accordance

with the Torah; therefore, in the Kabbala, Torah is also understood as one of the Divine Spheres, or to be more exact, as two different spheres; the oral and the written. Torah is understood also as the whole corpus of God's names, a symbolic system which represents the infinite powers of God.

Hasidic thought expresses a significant change in attitude towards all these concepts. Hasidism no longer emphasises the metaphysical meaning of concepts of Torah and Hasid because it concentrates on man and his internal spiritual world. In the light of this it would be right to characterize Kabbalistic thought as mystical theology and Hasidic thought as mystical anthropology. In fact, I have to say that most of all, Hasidism is characterized by being not so much a theory as a popular movement.

The development of the Hasidic movement is dependent on the personality of the Hasidic saint. This is something entirely new. Personality takes the place of doctrine. The opinions particular to the exalted individual are less important than his character. Learning of the Torah and knowledge of the Torah no longer occupy the most important place in the scale of religious values. A tale is told of one of the Hasidim who said that he was going to the 'Magid of Mezorik', one of the most important leaders of Hasidism, not to learn Torah from him, but to watch him tie his bootlace. Of course, this story is not to be taken literally, but it expresses a very typically Hasidic conception of what a religious leader is. Another leader of Hasidism, Rabbi Menachim Mendel of Holtz said: "I became a Hasid because in my town there was an old man who told stories. He told what he knew and I heard what I needed." As we see, the new ideal of religious leader, the Tsadik, differs from the traditional ideal of Rabbinic Judaism, the Talmud Hakam, mainly in that he himself has become Torah. It is no longer his knowledge but his life which lends religious value to his personality. He is the living incarnation of the Torah. This attitude which considered the Tsadik as a medium of revelation and religious authority was influenced by Cabbalistic motives, but basically raised, not from a mystical theory, but from a religious experience.

The appearing of the Tsadik as a spiritual leader of mystical and prophetic powers raised a very sharp conflict with the traditional rabbinic leadership. In his followers eyes, the Tsadik, in his behaviour and way of life, fulfills the role of teacher and educator, father and consultant, and also as a mediator between God and man, who would facilitate the spiritual elevation of the Hasid. The Tsadik is a representative of God in the world, enabling the Hasid to have a religious experience of nearness to God.

One of the most important things concerning the place of the Tsadik and his role in hasidism relates to the paradoxical character of his status. The Tsadik is an exalted person of superior character who, on the one hand, lives in a very spiritual dimension without any connections and interest in reality; but on the other hand, as a real spiritual leader, he is acting to elevate his followers and even all his relations to a very high spiritual level. The Tsadik is not concerned just for the salvation of his own soul, but goes out to the street, to the market, to the very materialistic reality in order to elevate it to the highest degree of spirituality. He himself takes part in this reality by simple stories, simple speeches and deeds, and by his contemplative activity he raises all these speeches, simple deeds and stories to the level of pure spirituality. The Tsadik who is involved in the real life of his generation is a model for imitation for his followers; by being a living Torah, every deed and speech of his becomes a normative model for his followers.

There is another Hasidic tale that expressed what I have just said. When Rabbi Levi Isaac of the Dichev came back from his first journey to Rabbi Smelchi of Nicholsburg, after having gone there in spite of his father-in-law's objection, the old man was very angry and asked: "What lesson have you learned by him?" He answered: "I have learned the lesson that there is a creator of the world". The old man called one of the servants and asked him: "Do you know that there is a creator of the world?" "Yes" answered the servant. "Sure", shouted Rabbi Levi Isaac, "everybody says it, but do they also learn the lesson of it".

Saints and Sages

Discussion and Responses

Following on the presentations of the three panelists, the topic was then opened to the floor for a discussion which was all too brief.

Discussant: I want to ask whether, in the three traditions represented here, whether it is possible for wisdom to be personified not so much by the intellectual and cultured class, but by the masses, the ordinary suffering people.

Monika Hellwig: I think there are very strong strands in Christian tradition to that effect. Certainly in that kind of dialectic of Paul that David Tracy mentioned where Paul is not only saying the wisdom of God is different from the wisdom of human society, but that Paul is often saying: Look at who you are. You are not the kind of wealthy, well educated people that are respected according to the ways of the world. God has chosen to begin at the other end and this is the reality of it. In the contemporary Catholic scene, this has become very strong in the Liberation Theology of Latin America and in the theological thesis, not only the preferential option for the poor, but in what is called the hermeneutic privilege of the poor — the idea that the Christian Gospel is good news to the poor and those who are poor are more likely to understand it in so far as they are looking for good news and they know that something needs to change.

Sr. Kim: I think in the Confucian and Taoistic tradition too there is that aspect; actually that's the goal. The sage or the noble person is the *minj* but the starting point is self-cultivation. They have to educate the whole culture, the whole society, so that the ordinary people as a whole will learn propriety and know how to correct themselves instead of simply having the law imposed on them all the time. I think that social aspect has been very strong in Chinese tradition and East Asian societies.

B. Ish Shalom: The idea I try to express is really not personified torah within the individual; rather it is part of a wider perception of the world as a revealed torah lets say. Since God created the world and the torah, we have to consider the world at least as a torah, as a holy book. There is a very interesting mishne in a tract of the fathers in the Talmudic literature which

says: There is a person who goes on the way and studies. He is studying and watching the view. Then he says: "What a wonderful tree, what a wonderful field". The mishne says that this is as if he is guilty to death. There is a very typical hasidic commentary for this mishne which says: For the person to say what a wonderful tree of field is equivalent to ceasing learning, which means that watching the view, learning from nature, identifying with nature, trying to reveal the truth - God's Word - from nature is similar or even equal to torah learning according to the hasidic conception.

Discussant: When I heard that the torah was pre-existing in heaven, I find the same idea in some Taoist traditions. The texts are written in heaven and revealed to mystics, so it would be similar. As a question to Sr. Kim: In Confucianism there are two kinds of wisdom. One is the wisdom with which one is born - an innate wisdom. The other is the acquired wisdom which comes from studies, but is there any additional type between those two kinds of wisdom?

Sr. Kim: I don't think so. When we do a textual study of the last five chapters on the analects, we find there the more popular aspect of the time; in one quotation Confucius says that the best people are those who are born with knowledge...something like that; but I don't think that this is really in accordance with Confucius's own understanding of wisdom. It may be a question of how to translate *ren* which I translate as benevolence. Some people translate it as humanity in the sense of a *minjung* concept. There are four starting points of morality that are innate in the human heart: benevolence, knowledge, propriety and righteousness. But in Confucius' own understanding the *ren* is not the innate knowledge that is in every human being. What is innate is virtue and when the virtue is perfected, the perfected virtue is benevolence. When the virtue is perfected, it can give peace to others...it goes out to other people. In that sense, in a true Confucian understanding, the innate wisdom and the perfected wisdom are in continuity and the perfected virtue is the goal of innate virtue which is the starting point.

Discussant: Sr.Kim, I wonder if you could clarify a little more this very interesting transformation from the classical image of the sage as the ideal king to the Confucian sage who is no longer necessary identified with the king, because it seems that we find analogous transformations both in the Greek tradition from the Platonic idea of the king-sage and in the Bible from Moses, Joshua and the Judges, which are supposed to unite the spiritual and political. I would like to know a little more about it.

Sr. Kim: It is a little complicated to give all the texts about it. The sage-kings appear in the first written text of Chinese, from around tenth century B.C. until sixth century B.C. They are the ones who started the culture of China, so the history of China didn't start with heroes or the divinities, it started with sage-kings. These sage-kings are the ones who have received the mandate of heaven and have perfected the virtue, and because of their virtue, heaven gave them the right to rule the people. They have the right to rule the people as far as they keep the virtue and give the peace to people. Once you lose the virtue inside, you lose also the mandate of heaven. The mandate of heaven changes from one dynasty to another.

The ideal image of human beings in China began with a king; it was a very political image from the beginning and it has continued to be very political. The goal is always the people. But this idea of the sage has been gradually changed in the Confucian tradition from emphasizing the ruler to the ordinary people. This is because virtue is considered as given not just to kings, but given to everybody. Virtue is given to everybody, everybody has a right to discern what is right and wrong and cultivate it, but there has to be some learning, so learning becomes very important. The people of the ordinary class, once they learn how to become a sage or a noble person, then they can become a sage and can advise the kings, so that there is a gradual progress of what you are asking about.

Discussant: Prof. Hellwig reflected very shortly on the question of gender and I was wonder how Sr. Kim, who was very careful to talk about the wise 'person', could reflect on how gender makes a difference in the construction of the saint and the understanding of the saint.

Sr. Kim: In the later Confucius there is just one comment on woman and it is negative too: "It is hard to get along with the small person (not developed morally) and also with women. If you become too close they become without order and if you try to keep distance they become sad." So it seems to be quite negative about women but I think Confucius never excluded woman from the fact that every human being has received this virtue from heaven, so that even in Confucian society, women were expected to develop and become a sages. In a sense, I take the negative and the, as it were, silent comment of Confucius and develop it. In Neo-Confucian society the picture becomes much clearer and it is sad, as a woman, to see how it goes; but with a certain hermeneutical exercise, we can find something there to develop and I think it is possible to do that.

Mystical Awakening Through Close Encounter with Death

A Significant New Inter-Religious Spiritual Phenomenon

By John Wren-Lewis

Professor John Wren-Lewis, originally a native of England, now lives in retirement in Australia, where he is an Honorary Associate of the University of Sydney's School of Studies in Religion. He first became internationally known in the 1950s and 60s for his writings on the relations between science and religion, which played a major part in starting the so-called "Death of God" or "Honest to God" movement. At that time he was professionally engaged in scientific research and research planning for a major international corporation, but in the early 1970s he studied psychology and philosophy of religion, and held visiting professorships at several universities and colleges in England and the United States. Since 1983 he has been mainly engaged in research on the topic of this article, following his own close encounter with death on a bus in Thailand.

You will feel like one come back from the dead. This is true realization.

Bassui Tokusho (Rinzai Zen Master, 1327-1387)

In earlier centuries, tales of people being miraculously rescued from the brink of death and returning with strange reports of other dimensions of life were the stuff of legend, superstition and religious propaganda. Today the miracles of science have made such occurrences almost commonplace, and scientists themselves, professionally trained in skepticism towards legend and superstition, are being impelled to investigate what such experiences mean¹. The phenomenon has even acquired the dignity of an official medical name reducible to initials—"near-Death Experience" (NDE) and the 1980s saw the establishment of a prestigious International Association for Near-Death Studies, (IANDS) which publishes a first-class Journal of Near-Death Studies². I am calling attention to it here because I believe it is in fact an "inter-religious" phenomenon of the highest importance for the future.

One of the first facts to emerge from systematic study of the subject was that very large numbers of these experiences have gone unrecorded because skeptically-biased medical authorities had simply dismissed them as hallucinations produced by the brain under stress, or by the drugs used in surgery. Indeed, many people have admitted keeping quiet about their experiences for fear of being thought crazy. Detailed questioning by sympathetic investigators has revealed, however, that amongst the many thousands of people who are nowadays snatched back every year from the very last stages of heart attacks, electric shock, drowning and other traumas, about one-third insist they experienced something for which terms like “hallucination” are utterly inappropriate.

Individual descriptions vary enormously, and many are simply called “indescribable,” but there’s an almost universal insistence on “something rich and strange”, like the opening-up of a whole new dimension in consciousness, which has given the person a hitherto undreamed-of level of confidence, equilibrium and creative energy—all the symptoms, in fact, of sanity rather than craziness. Anxiety in general, and fear of death in particular, have been dramatically reduced or even abolished by the experience, along with the everyday manifestations of anxiety like boredom, restlessness, competitiveness, acquisitiveness and aggression. No fantasy due to brain aberration has ever been known to produce effects like these, nor any drug, and NDEs quite often occur when no drug is involved; Yet the effects can't be explained simply as *joi de vivre* after a close shave, because such changes aren't reported on anything like the same scale by the larger group of survivors who recall no special experience; on the contrary, such people often have greater fear of death precisely because the narrow escape has made them value life more.

And these are not just matters of personal testimony. Professionals like Dr. Kenneth Ring, professor of psychology at the University of Connecticut, and British psychologist Dr. Margot Grey in her PhD research at the University of London, have carried out batteries of tests to confirm these very positive characteristics of post-NDE lives³. Other investigators have shown that NDEs and their remarkable results are not confined to any particular sex, race, personality-type, educational level, religious background, or socio-economic class; and they can happen to people with almost any prior philosophy of life, or no articulated philosophy at all. IANDS(USA) has even documented some remarkable NDE accounts from children, which have been summarized in a recent book by Seattle pediatrician Dr. Melvyn Morse, along with fascinating

firsthand accounts of cases he has encountered in his own practice⁴.

The publication of such findings has started a snowballing effect as more and more people who have had NDEs in the past are emboldened to come out of the closet, while even skeptical doctors—probably still a substantial majority in the profession as a whole—are beginning to take the phenomenon seriously enough to contribute to the factual record of evidence. And at this stage of the game, skepticism has an important positive role to play, for two reasons:

A healthy discipline of skepticism is obviously essential in evaluating NDE reports, and it's equally important when looking for patterns in the data that might provide clues to what these experiences are really all about. The human mind has a tendency, even in the most sincere inquirers, to jump to conclusions and then ignore, play down or distort any evidence that doesn't fit. Five hundred years ago, Christopher Columbus saddled the native peoples of America with the name "Indians" because he'd set out to find a round-the-world route to the Orient and didn't realize he'd actually discovered a whole new continent. The same kind of mistake, which I've proposed calling "the Columbus Confusion", has occurred even in the most hard-nosed scientific investigations, and it's very likely to happen in studying NDEs because this subject touches on such deep human concerns.

The most obvious instance is the disproportionate amount of attention given to reports of people seeing their own near-dead bodies from above (usually from a point somewhere near the ceiling in the operating theater, or a few feet above the car that's just crashed) and/or tunnel to a heavenly light beyond. In the early days of NDE studies, in the 1970s, these two kinds of experience attracted the attention of many researchers, even though they occur in only a minority of cases, because they strongly suggest that human consciousness may be independent of the physical brain and might make a transition to some non-physical realm when the body dies, as claimed in one way or another by religious traditions from time immemorial. Today these images have become so established in popular mythology that the Monty Python team could satirize the tunnel trip in their movie *The Meaning of Life* — the heaven at the tunnel's end being depicted as a luxury hotel with a Hollywood-style Great Christmas Cabaret permanently in progress.

And this isn't just the outcome of sensational journalism, though NDEs have been subjected to quite a bit of that. Many serious researchers still lay special emphasis on the minority of NDEs which seem to indicate the independence of consciousness from the brain, most notably, cases where the famous flat line of electronic brain-monitors seems to prove that the patient really has died, and those special "out-of-body" experiences (sometimes call OOBes) where the person was apparently able to travel to a distant place, or to another room in the hospital, and bring back accurate information about things which couldn't have been known by any physical means⁵.

Of courses, these claims are important, and if in due course the evidence for cases like this stands up to proper critical scrutiny, science will have to revise some of its current materialistic concepts about consciousness as merely a brain-function. But this may be a complete red herring in terms of understanding what NDEs in general are about, comparable to Columbus noticing an American native who happened to look very like drawings of East Indian peoples. For the plain fact is that just as most Native Americans don't look like East Indians, so the great majority of NDEs don't really look like glimpses of the soul leaving the body and entering a literal Other World; they can be fitted into that model only by ignoring or fudging the evidence.

Many NDEs don't involve visions at all. Those who have experiences simply use expressions like "indescribably blissful peace", "a kind of dreamless depth that wasn't somehow unconscious", "an incredible sense of sinking into pure timeless love"; yet their lives are still changed in extremely positive ways, and they still lose their former fear of death. And even amongst experiences that do sound like other world visions, the vast majority can't seriously be accepted as literal glimpses of an undiscovered country beyond the grave, because they contradict one another in many significant details.

Some, for example, describe the heavenly landscape as a pastoral scene; others as a sci-fi-style Celestial City; others as an insubstantial cloudy space; and still others as human scenes almost justifying the Monty Python spoof. The much-publicised experiences of encountering long-dead relatives sometimes find them at the age they were when they died; sometimes as old as they would have been now if they'd lived; sometimes miraculously rejuvenated; and sometimes totally transfigured into shining angelic forms that are nonetheless recognizable. A very small number of NDEs include visions of hellish regions, reminiscent of the old Christian stories, yet the vast majority emphasize the total absence of

anything unpleasant, even though the subjects of the experiences are in many cases anything but saints⁶.

In fact it's obvious, when all the evidence is considered, that play of imagination must be involved to a considerable degree in most NDEs, hence probably in all — and this would still be true even if it could be proved that consciousness was functioning without the brain. Similarly, for every “out-of-body” experience that looks like an accurate psychic perception of real physical events, there are dozens that quite plainly are plays of imagination, however vivid they seem, since they involve definite non-events. A dramatic example of this was given by the great Swiss psychologist Carl Jung when he had a near-fatal heart attack in 1944, long before the term NDE had been coined⁷. He seemed to leave his body and soar high into space, getting a view of the earth's globe such as no human eye at that time and ever seen, though astronauts have since done so. But he also encountered an asteroid-type rock with a Hindu temple carved into it, manned by a swami sitting in lotus posture amidst flickering candles, and there certainly aren't any of *those* fifteen hundred kilometers up in real physical space! Even supernatural space, if there is such, is unlikely to contain anything like that in any literal sense, unless the universe is as silly as Monty Python proposes.

It is of course this obvious imaginative element in NDEs that has led many dogmatic religious authorities, who believe they already know from divine revelation what really happens at death, to join hands with materialists in dismissing the whole phenomenon as mere fantasy. Several cases are on record of hospital chaplains doing this, thereby driving patients who have had NDE's firmly into the closet. In marked contrast, however, experiencers themselves, while insisting that their experiences were utterly real, are usually resistant to dogmatism of any kind, *even if before their NED they had held a rigid faith*. This was discovered by Professor Ring in America, and has recently been confirmed in Australia by Dr. Cherie Sutherland in the course of a PhD research project at the University of New South Wales⁸. NDEs seem to have the effect of making people willing to acknowledge and affirm one another's experiences as valid even when they differ markedly in details or form-yet they all make statement like, “This was the most real thing that has ever happened to me.”

Clearly, the word “real” is here being used to mean something other than merely “literal-and-not-involving-imagination”, and over the past few years many NDE researchers (of whom I am one)⁹ have been coming to the conclusion that this is the essential clue to the “new continent” discovered

by travellers who return from the brink. Irrespective of whatever NDEs may prove, much further down the track, about the possibility of consciousness separating from the brain and surviving the body's death in some other realm, they are already discoveries of a hitherto unsuspected depth-dimension in consciousness itself (unsuspected, that is, except by those strange individuals usually called mystics); and this is experienced as "real alikeness", an intensity of living that makes ordinary worldly existence seem like a mere play of shadows.

Although the time at the brink during which the experience takes place may be only minutes or even seconds by the hospital clocks, the experience itself has a quality of *timeless* depth and intensity, bringing with it a feeling of utter well-being that's often called indescribable, though "peace beyond understanding" gives a faint hint of it. This is an almost universal feature of NDEs, it even comes at the end in most of those very rare ones that start off "hellish"; and it is shared both by experiencers who describe enormous "other world journeys" and by the many others, like me when I nearly died from poisoning in 1983, who report only the sense of an infinite alikeness, peace and wellbeing which seems altogether beyond time.

My personal hypothesis would be that the other world journeys (tunnel trips included) are the mind's efforts to express this inexpressible "extra dimension" in symbolic dream-style images, though I'd add that experiences are absolutely justified in insisting that they're more real than any dream, because ordinary dreams express only the feelings of ordinary life¹⁰, whereas NDEs involve this whole other order of "real alikeness" which mystics have usually called Eternity. I'd say, for instance, that the experiences who claim they met lost loved ones in heaven are in no way deluded, for although my own experience wasn't quite like that, its timeless depth seemed to include a unity of all beings every bit as real-indeed more real-than the relationships of everyday life I'd known beforehand.

Now even if there were no more to NDEs than the discovery that dying can be something like the ultimate mystical trip, it would still carry more importance for humanity's future than anything Columbus discovered; it would justify urgent research, for example, to find out why approach to death happens this way for some and not for others, and whether there's any way to make it universally available. But my own experience has convinced me there's an even more important prospect. While many experiences report that medical resuscitation brought them back with enormous reluctance from the heavenly "place" to the narrow ordinary world, I for some reason brought the timeless depth of

consciousness back with me, and I've been "simply living" with it in *this* world ever since. As a result, I've been, and still am, experiencing this world as anything but narrow, in a way I'd never have believed possible during my fifty-nine-odd years before the NDE (In those days I had no time for mystics.)¹¹

There's no space here to tell all the details of my story, but that's not my purpose in this article anyway. I'm mentioning it because my experience led me, once I'd acclimatized myself to living what I can only call a heavenly life right here on earth, to go into NDE research and question other experiences about their "lives after resurrection." I found that many of them agree, once asked, that their newfound confidence, vitality and sense of meaning sprang from the fact that they too were now living with a definite residual sense of what I've come to call Eternity Consciousness (though I've not yet met anyone whose change was quite as dramatic as mine seems to have been). And when in due course I caught up with Professor Ring's researches, I found he'd been coming to a similar conclusion, without any "bias" from an experience of his own. He'd found that the experiences he'd studied were living more fully, not primarily because they'd become convinced of immortality beyond the grave as he'd at first assumed (Columbus Confusion again!), but mainly because they'd undergone what he calls a mystical opening or enlightenment-experience during the NDE.¹²

The fact that this can happen to millions of quite ordinary people all over the world has to be a major discovery indeed, with shattering implications for all our ideas about what the good life consists of, what "mental health" really is, indeed about every aspect of human affairs, including art, ethics, religion and even science itself. For example, I no longer need any evidence about flat lines or psychic perception to disabuse me of materialism; I'm actually experiencing the whole universe, moment by moment, as an event happening within an all-encompassing field of infinite consciousness, as it were, of which John's personality is just one focus. I'm still interested in the research on how consciousness relates to the brain, and whether personal consciousness continues after the brain dies, but for me now these are just special scientific questions amongst many others. As far as my personal life goes, eternity consciousness here is quite

enough for the moment, and life after the grave can take care of itself, if indeed “after” is even appropriate.

The mother of all questions as I now see it, which I hope will become a main future thrust for research in this field, is : Can this astonishing intensity and depth of consciousness be opened up without dicing with death (and without getting bogged down in the mystique and mystification that has so often surrounded mysticism in the past)? The hypothesis I'm working with myself at the moment, based on my own experience, is that eternity consciousness isn't something new for humanity, some higher stage of evolution as current jargon would put it, but simply the normal human condition, from which I was somehow blocked out for my first fifty-nine-odd years, condemning me to so-called ordinary human life which is actually something like a universal neurosis, as mystics have always asserted. I have no clues (and am not bothered to speculate) about what could have caused the blocking to occur for our species sometime before history began. But I think I do have a clue to what the block is, and I've found it from considering the implications of our new discovery that unlocking so often occurs at the close approach of death.

I believe something like *a hyperactivity of the individual survival-mechanism* gives the human being a much higher anxiety-level than other species appear to have. In particular, the natural fact that every individual life must come to an end in time, to make way for new life, becomes imbued with an existential terror which has been taken for granted throughout human history, though it's really highly unnatural. As a result, living becomes for our species a kind of obsession with the future, which allows the luminous depth of real consciousness-in-each-moment to go quite unnoticed, until death is so close that the survival-mechanism “switches off”, as it were, revealing the true intensity of life. Then when the body is resuscitated by medical intervention, the spell of hyperactive survival-anxiety is at least partially broken; eternity consciousness is never again completely lost (though it may get temporarily obscured from time to time), but survival-functioning along the line of time is actually more efficient than before, because it is no longer neurotic.

If this hypothesis is correct, then humanity's greatest need is to find less dramatic ways of breaking hyper-anxiety's spell; today, this could be the only way of saving us from extinction by your own anxiety-driven technologies. Perhaps NDE research itself has already begun moving

society in that desirable direction, by gradually changing the popular image of death from the Grim Reaper to the “Great Light at the Tunnel’s End.” Perhaps, again, some of the ancient mystical disciplines of mediation and the like were originally meant as spell-breakers, and can be rediscovered in the right of our knowledge from NDEs; their success-rate in the past hasn’t been exactly encouraging, but maybe we can do better now by using a scientific approach to out through traditional mystique and mystification¹³.

Or perhaps readers of this article can think of still other possibilities. Exploration of this issue is now my main life-concern until my UDE (Ultimate Death Experience) removes me from the planetary scene.

Meantime, whatever becomes of my particular hypotheses, the study of NDEs surely has to be the most exciting new frontier both for science and for humanity, offering the best hope we have for a real New Age.

NOTES

1. For an excellent overview of the whole subject, see Zaleski, C., *Other World Journeys: Accounts of Near-Death Experience in Medieval and Modern Times* (New York & Oxford, Oxford University Press 1987.)
2. Obtainable from Human Sciences Press, New York; the editor is Dr. Bruce Greyson, M.D., Dept of Psychiatry, University of Connecticut Health Centre, Farmington, CT 06030.
3. See Ring, K., *Life at Death*, (New York Coward McCann & Geoghegan, 1980) and Grey, M., *Return from Death*, (Condon, Arkana 1985).
4. Morse, M. with Paul Perry, *Closer to the Light*, (New York, Villard 1990).
5. See for example, Sabom, M.B., *Recollections of Death: A Medical Investigation*, (New York, Harper & Row 1982). Dr. Peter Fenwick of London’s Institute of psychiatry has recently announced a project for seeking really hard evidence in this area.
6. For a discussion of this point, see Zaleski, *op. cit.*, Chap 7.
7. See Jung’s autobiographical study, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, (New York, Vintage 1961), Chap. 10.
8. See Ring, K., *Heading Towards Omega; In Search of the Meaning of Near-Death Experiences*, (New York, Morrow 1984), and Sutherland, Cherie, *Transformed by the Light*, (Sydney Bantam 1992).
9. See Wren-Lewis, J., “The Darkness of God: A Personal Report on Consciousness Transformation through an Encounter with Death,” *J. Humanistic Psychology*, Vol 28, No. 2, 1988, p.105.
10. For the modern scientific assessment of how dreams relate either literally or symbolically to unfinished emotional business in waking life, see Faraday, A., *The Dream Game*, (New York, Harger & Row 1984).
11. As long-standing readers of theological literature may be aware, my anti-mystical writings played a major part in inspiring Bishop John A.T. Robinson’s *Honest go God*, (London, SCM 1963).

My detailed analysis of mysticism as a form of neurosis was published under the title "Love's Coming-of-Age" in Rycroft, C. (Ed.), *Psychoanalysis Observed*, (London, Constable 1966) and in my book *What Shall we Tell the Children?* (London, Constable 1971).

12. See Ring, *Heading towards Omega*, ref. 8 above.

13. See Wren-Lewis, J., "A Reluctant Mystic," *Self and Society*, (U.K.) Vol. XXIX, No 2, 1991, p.4.

Events

Cardinal Arinze, head of the Pontifical Commission for non-Christian religions, paid a visit to the Nanzan Institute for Religion and culture in October. He was accompanied by his secretary, Rev. M. Shirieda.

The semi-annual EGSID was hosted at Nanzan and the Cardinal held a colloquium with representatives from Oriens, Sophia, Schweitzer Betsu-in, the NCC Center in Kyoto, and Nanzan.

A second EGSID meeting was held on 1 and 2 November at the Schweitzer Betsu-in on Seimei-zan in Kumamoto. A talk was given by Furukawa Ryowa on the following morning, after which the group traveled to the Ten-dai temple of Kiyomizu-dera in Fukuoka (Yame).

In the first days of September, the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture in Nagoya, Japan, held its eight Inter-Religious Symposium, this time on the subject "Interreligious Dialogue: Reflections and Perspectives." The event brought together scholars of religion and representatives of the Buddhist, Christian, and Shinto traditions, and focused on a series of papers prepared for colloquia held during the previous year. The proceedings will be published in the coming months in Japanese.

The Fourth International Buddhist-Christian Dialogue conference was held in Boston this past

summer. A contingent from the local Japanese chapter held its annual meeting in Japan in late July and continued on the discussion.

§ § §

The Gowing Memorial Research Center reports that the 17th annual summer session on Mindanao and Sulu Cultures was held from April 6 to May 2 with twenty three participants from different places in the Philippines in full attendance.

The 1993 annual summer session is slated for April 12 to May 2 1993. A new feature of the 18th. session will be the participation of Muslim and other tribal students, and the faculty in Mindanao to interact with the ministers, pastors, priests, seminarians and faculty of the Christian group. It is felt that it is not enough for Christians to "know" about the cultures of Muslim and tribal communities in Mindanao and Sulu. it is far more important to have interaction with the people of other cultures.

Muslim Christian dialogue has been going on in the cities of Marawi and Illigan and the provinces of Lanao Sur and Lanao del Norte. The aim is to ease the tensions between Muslims and Christians in these areas and to promote justice and peace.

§ § §

The NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions reports the following recent and upcoming events:

In July, the staff held an internal discussion meeting on the issue of dialogue between religions and mission at which Prof. Yuki and Dr. Martin Repp presented papers.

This year's seminar for foreign missionaries and other interested persons took place at Nishihongan-ji (Kyoto) in September on the theme, "Shinran, Jodo-shinshu, and our contemporary world".

A seminar (in Japanese) for pastors and interested persons took place in Tokyo in October at the headquarters of Chinnyoen, which is a new religion based upon the teaching of the esoteric Buddhism of the Shingon sect.

English lectures on Dogen-Zen will be given twice a month by Rev. Shohaku Okumura, a Zen-priest, from November 1992 until July 1993. The text upon which the lectures will be based is *Bendowa*.

Dr. Oda started in October to give a monthly series of lectures on Islam at our study centre.

Women and theology is a study group led by Ms. Akiko Yamashita, who holds regular meetings in the Kyoto area. This autumn there was a series of open seminars on "comfort women", women in the bible, the family unit system and the emperor system and sex.

Our center will also make renewed efforts in studying the ancestor worship/veneration issue.

§ § §

The Sogang Institute for Religion and Theology report that their monthly colloquia were held on the following topics: "Christianity from the perspective of Korean Shamanism" presented by Prof. Cho, Hung-yun of the Hanyang University; "Christianity from the perspective of Korean New Religions" by Prof. Kim, Yack of the National Institute for Korean Culture; "Christianity from the perspective of Secular Intellectuals" by Prof. Cho, Hae-in of Sogang University; and "Christianity from the perspective of Son Buddhism" by Prof. Kang, Kungi of the Chongbuk University.

§ § §

The Christian Study Center on Chinese Religion and Culture in Hong Kong, in conjunction with the WCC, organized a conference on *Wisdom* at the end of November. Distinguished Jewish, Christian and Chinese scholars attended. The conference moved to different venues in the course of the week, including one session at a Buddhist Monastery. It was possibly the first Jewish-Christian dialogue to take place in an Eastern setting with local input.

The Study Center also had a part in planning a series of weekly Buddhist-Christian dialogue meetings on religion and life which were held at the Dharmasthiti College of Cultural Studies during December 1992 and January 1993. Peter Lee, the Director of the Christian Study Center was among three Christian theologians who took part in the interreligious dialogue with their

Buddhist counterparts. The other two were Luke Tsui of the Catholic Institute for Religion and Society, and Edward Chau of the Holy Spirit Seminary. Each session involved a two hour dialogue between a Buddhist and a Christian. The topics included: "One dimensional existence - The plight of the contemporary person", "The lonely soul - Interpersonal relationship in modern society", "Whom can we trust - Is there a fulcrum for faith?", "How to transcend

death - Vision of the world beyond", "Where is our home - Can we feel at home in the universe?" "Time and eternity - The dual dimension of existence". The meetings had an audience of sixty to one hundred, mostly younger adults who paid to attend. The series of dialogue meetings has proved that there is interest in serious discussion on religious subjects among younger intellectually inclined working or professional people.

News and Communications

The Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture reports that this fall, Paul Mommaers of Antwerp University in Belgium has held a series of seminars on the natural mysticism of Jan van Ruusbroeck.

Sulak Sivaraksa, currently in exile from his native Siam, is residing at the Nanzan Institute this fall to work on some papers awaiting a change in conditions that would make it possible for him to return home.

Jan Swyngedouw, a fellow of the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture will be away from Japan annually to teach in the Philippines and Cameroon. He will be in residence at the Institute from April to July for the foreseeable future.

From 12 to 13 of June, William Johnston came to the Institute to hold seminars on the first three chapters of a work on mystical theology now in the making.

The Institute of Oriental Studies at Sophia University reports that its new director is Fr. Matsuoka Koji.

§ § §

The Gowing Memorial Institute reports that Dr. Lela Noble of San Jose State University, California visited the Campus at the end of October. Also, a new Director to head the Center is being recruited and is expected to assume the post by mid-1993. Meantime, President Fedelinda B. Tawagon of the Dansalon College Foundation assumes the responsibilities of the Director with assistance of the research and administration officers effective September 1992 until the arrival of the new Director. Mr. Moctar Matuan, former Center Director, resigned from his post at the end of August 1992 in favor of a teaching post in the local university.

§ § §

The Sogang Institute for Religion and Theology reports that the Pastoral Research Institute under the National Bishop's Conference in Korea offers this year monthly colloquia in the inculturated understanding of God.

Kim Sung-hae presented "The Silent God as an East Asian Concept of the Divine" in September. Keel Hee-sung presented "Jesus the Boddhisattva" in the October conference.

§ § §

The NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions reports that Mr. Morten Munch, pastor of the Danish Lutheran Church, is doing research on ancestor worship and Japanese Buddhism (in connection with Aarhus University in Denmark) at our Center until mid-December 1992.

Prof. Sheila Fling, Clinical Psychologist (Southwest Texas State University), affiliated with the Center from April until June, focused her research (and practice) on Buddhist meditation and psychology.

Ms. Hayashi Midori attended a CCA meeting on "Women's consultation on Militarization" on June 19-25. The meeting was held at Okinawa Christian Peace Center and

women from Japan, Korea, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Taiwan participated.

Ms. Yamashita stayed in Korea from July until September to study the Korean language and Korean Shamanism.

Prof. Take and Ms. Hayashi attended the 8th symposium of the Nanzan Institute for Religions and Culture (Nagoya) on "Reflection and Vision on Interreligious Dialogue." Also in September Prof. Yuki and Ms. Matsuoka attended a CCA meeting in Bangalore, India, on the topic of fundamentalism, where Ms. Matsuoka presented a paper on "Zen and Fundamentalism."

As usual we have had many interesting visitors coming to our study center; here are some of them: Prof. John England of the CCA visited us in October. Rev. Marten Werner from Sweden, who was previously a member of parliament and is presently working for the international organization "Our Right to Die", dealing with ethical problems created by life-support techniques paid a visit to our Center in October. Prof. Alfred Bloom from the institute of Buddhist Studies in Berkeley, California also honored us with a visit in September. Rev. Kazuyoshi Tanaka, Director of Rissho Kosei-kai in Frankfurt came here in July.

Publications

The annual summer double-issue of *The Japanese Journal of Religious Studies*,

edited and published by the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture,

treated “Archaeology Approaches to Ritual and Religion in Japan”

A special fall edition of *The Eastern Buddhist* is devoted entirely to Nishitani Keiji, the celebrated Kyoto philosopher who passed away three years ago.

Articles about the ongoing battle between Nichiren Shosha and the lay Buddhist Soka Gakkai are featured in current issues of Japanese Religions (NCC Center in Kyoto, 17:2) and the *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* (Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, 19:4)

§ § §

From the NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions comes *Japanese Religions* and *Deai* (in Japanese); both published twice annually. In the July issue of *Japanese Religions* there is one article by Dr. Brian McVeigh on “The Master Metaphor of Purity: The symbolism of Authority and Power in Sukyo Mahikari”; another one is by Dr. Ulrich Dehn on “Towards a Historical Consciousness of Japanese Buddhism - Uehara Senroku (1899-1975). “The Empire Strikes Back: Korean Pentecostal Mission in Japan” is written by Prof. Mark A. Mullins and finally Trevor Astley contributed with a report titled “Nichiren Shoshu and Soka Gakkai”, which deals with the current turbulence in the relations between the Nichiren sect and its lay organization Soka Gakkai.

The last issue of *Deai* contained articles on how different religions regard nature and the environment.

§ § §

The Gowing Memorial Research Center continues to publish its *Dansalan Quarterly*.

§ § §

The chief publication of the Oriens Institute for Religious Research is the *Japan Missionary Bulletin* which tries to introduce the Catholic scene in Japan to people living in Japan, but also to interested people throughout the world.

§ § §

The Sogang Institute for Religion and Theology reports that its *Encyclopedia of Theology Vol I* is being prepared for publication next year.

§ § §

The Christian Study Center on Chinese Religion and Culture, Hong Kong, has published *Struggling for Survival: The Catholic Church in China 1949-1970*, by Chan Kim-Kwong (HKD40.00)