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Foreword

At the end of January, six of the “core” groups of the Inter-Religio Network gathered at the Seton Center for Interreligious Research in Seoul to discuss the future of our little network and its semi-annual bulletin.

The Network was originally set up 14 years ago as a loosely organized entity to promote effective communication, consultation, and co-operation between the various centers and institutions in East Asia who were involved in interreligious dialogue. For some of the groups, the Network has proved very fruitful, with plenty of communication, cooperation, exchange of scholars and students and so on. Others have remained at the periphery and a few have all but disappeared from view. After lengthy consultation, it was decided to restructure the membership, while maintaining the Inter-Religio Bulletin and the biennial international conferences.

*The new structure will distinguish between **Sponsoring Members** and **Affiliated Members**. The former category is meant to include Institutes specifically focused on promoting interreligious research and dialogue, and will share the duty of hosting international conferences and managing other organizational details of the network. Affiliated membership is meant to include bodies that work in the area of interreligious research or dialogue, but without the staff or facilities to assume the responsibilities of full membership.*

The foreword in the first issue of Inter-Religio expressed the hope that in the future the network could be expanded to include non-Christian institutions involved in interreligious research and studies. With Affiliate Membership this is now possible, and there is no objection to affiliated members becoming sponsoring members in the future.

The co-ordinating secretariat of Inter-Religio will remain in the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture in Japan, and for the time being, the bulletins will continue to be published from the Chinese Study Centre in Hong Kong. Current Sponsoring Members include the following:

*Seton Interreligious Research & Spirituality Center, Seoul
Institute of Religion & Theology, Seoul
Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion & Culture, Hong Kong
Institute for Oriental Religions, Tokyo
Oriens Institute for Religious Research, Tokyo
Nanzan Institute for Religion & Culture, Nagoya
NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions, Kyoto
FABC Office for Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs, Bangkok*

The two feature articles in this this issue were delivered as papers at a recent conference sponsored by the Office for Ecumenical and Interreligious affairs of Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference, organized by the Taiwan Bishop's Conference and hosted by the Tienti Chiao, a new religion in the monotheist Taoist tradition. The theme of the conference was “Taoist and Confucian Contributions to Harmony in East Asia:

Christians in Dialogue with Confucian Thought and Taoist Spirituality.”

The conference brought together a great mix of people from different religions, backgrounds, cultures and languages, united by a common desire to listen and to dialogue with each other. The final statement of the conference, also published in this issue, gives some idea of the scope and breath of topics covered.

Sr. Kīm’s paper on “The Kingdom of God as the Christian Image of Harmony” provides proof, if any were needed, of her skill and insight where it comes to drawing comparisons between different religions.

The response to Sr. Kīm’s paper, given by Dr. Michio Shinozaki of the Rissho Kosei-Kai Buddhist School, is a paper in itself and complements the first article rather well. I’m sure you will enjoy them both immensely.

Brian Lawless

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The Kingdom Of God as the Christian Image of Harmony

KIM Sung-Hae S.C.

Dr. Kim Sung-hae teaches in the Department of Religious Studies at Sogang University in Seoul, Korea. She is also director of Seton Interreligious Research and Spirituality Center in Seoul. Her major field of study is Chinese religious tradition with a comparative perspective. This paper was delivered at an FABC Colloquium (BIRA VI/4) on the theme "Taoist and Confucian Contributions to Harmony in East Asia: Christians in Dialogue with Confucian Thought and Taoist Spirituality," held at Lei Li-O, Taiwan in April 1996.

When I began to get ready for this talk, I tried to find some previous works on the Christian understanding of harmony. First I looked it up in the most recently published *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (1992, 5 vols), but to my amazement there was no item entitled 'harmony'. Even though I kept looking for 'harmony' in four or five other encyclopedic dictionaries of the Bible, the only reference that I could find was a tiny item called "Harmony of the Gospels" which explains the interrelatedness of the three synoptic or the four Gospels. It began to dawn on me that 'harmony' is not an important theme in the Christian Scriptures. *The New Topical Concordance* (Lutterworth, 1974) quotes four verses in the Bible (Ps 133:1; Am 3:3; Rom 12:18; Eph 4:3) where the blessing, condition, and desirability of harmony are mentioned. Other Bible Concordances offer at the most eight or nine instances where the idea of harmony occurs, and ask us to refer to its synonyms such as agreement, compatibility, concord, and peace, among which last is probably most comparable to harmony in Christianity in its importance.

Then I took my search into theological dictionaries. *Sacramentum Mundi: An Encyclopedia of Theology* (1968, 6 vols) does not have an item on 'harmony', nor do *New Catholic Encyclopedia* (1967, 14 vols) and *The Modern Catholic Encyclopedia* (1994). Interestingly enough, the 1910 edition of *The Catholic Encyclopedia* (15 vols) deals with 'harmony' (Greek and Latin harmonia) as a concord of sounds, "several tones of different pitch sounded as a chord" and gives a short history of how harmony was used in Church music (pp. 139-140). This treatment of the notion of harmony solely as a musical concept is repeated in the 13th edition (1926) and 14th edition (1929-73) of *The Encyclopaedia Britannica*, while *The New Encyclopaedia Britannica* (1993) drops the item 'harmony' itself. *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Macmillan, 1967, 8 vols) does not mention harmony either.

This unintended search through most representative Western encyclopedias to get some initial information for a Christian understanding of harmony convinced me that harmony is neither a theme in Christian theology, nor a Western philosophical topic. Probably ‘harmony’ became the central theme in this colloquium because the Christians in East Asia try to dialogue with the Confucians and other East Asians at large. In other words, here we are trying to interpret Christian teaching from the perspective of East Asian traditions. I think this is only fair, for East Asian thought has been perceived from the Western viewpoint for several decades. If this cross-cultural exchange of perspectives proves to be fruitful, Christian theological reflection will continue to be challenged and enriched by the East Asian world view as much as it can challenge and enrich East Asian heritage. As far as the concept of harmony is concerned, East Asia has a lot more to offer than the Christian tradition. While in Christian theology harmony is regarded as a technical musical concept, the East Asian thought expanded its meaning for 2500 years from its original sense of musical concord to a notion of personal perfection (*Mencius* 5B:1; 6A:8), natural ordering of family and society according to the Tao (*Lao Tzu* 18 and 55), and participation in cosmic transformation (*I Ching* 52 and 60).

In Part 1, I will present basic elements of harmony shared by Confucianism and Christianity: first, the self-cultivation which brings about a personal level of harmony; second, social reality as relational and institutional harmony; third, an understanding of cosmic harmony between humanity and Heaven and Earth. I should add that among East Asian traditions, for the sake of comparative clarity I will concentrate on Confucianism and refer only occasionally to Taoism. In part II, I will bring out some differences between the two traditions and illustrate a few possible contributions the Christians can make to contemporary reconstructions of the image and practice of harmony in East Asia. In part III, I will try to interpret the central biblical image, the “Kingdom of God”, as the Christian image of harmony.

I. COMMON FOUNDATIONS FOR CONFUCIAN AND CHRISTIAN NOTIONS OF HARMONY

In the Analects of Confucius we find an interesting saying that even though harmony is something everyone values, insisting on harmony alone would not work to make a human society run harmoniously:

Yu Tzu (one of Confucius’ disciple) said, “Of the things brought about by ritual propriety it is harmony that is prized. Of the ways of the former

Kings this is most beautiful, and is followed alike in matters great and small, yet this will not always work; to aim always at harmony without regulating it by the rites simply because one knows only about harmony will not, in fact, work.” (1,12)

The above quotation juxtaposes harmony (*ho*) and ritual propriety (*li*) as mutually dependent. Chu Hsi, the 12th century synthesizer of Neo-Confucianism, wrote in a commentary on this verse that “the substance (*t’i*) of ritual propriety is concentration in reverence, while its function (*ying*) is valued as harmony.” “Concentration in reverence” or “abiding in reverence” is one of the two pillars of moral cultivation in the thought of Chu Hsi. Even though he gave sequential preference to knowledge because he taught that first we must know what is right in order to orient ourselves in the right direction, he gave a priority of importance to “abiding in reverence” over knowledge. One has to set his/her goal to become a sage; and abide in reverence as if one lives before the Lord on High both in solitude and active public affairs. He stated that if a person honestly abides in reverence all the time, he/she will perfect the heaven-endowed virtue and become a benevolent sage which is the final goal of Confucian study. Harmony according to Confucian tradition, therefore, is the ability one gains as a result of self-cultivation.

The old Han and T’ang commentary tradition on the same verse of the Analects adds the notion of rightness as the basis of harmony by saying that without discerning whether the content we try to keep is right or wrong, we cannot expect to maintain harmony, for harmony is the result of correct relationship. Since, justice or the right balancing of relationship is the prerequisite of harmony, social propriety helps to enact justice in concrete situations, for propriety directs us to follow the golden mean by cutting what is too long and strengthening what is too weak. Only through the effort of constant reshaping by this discerning balance, can we maintain harmony. Harmony in this social sense is a creative formation of various relationships. That is the reason why Confucius said that “the matured person is in harmony with others without accommodating, while the immature person is accommodating without being harmonious” (*Analects* 13,23). This short statement of Confucius was immediately understood by Confucius’ contemporaries because the difference between harmony (*ho*) and accommodation/agreement (*t’ung*) was well explained in the *Tsochuan Commentary to the Spring and Autumn Annals*.

In the year 522 B.C.E. when the ruler of the State Ch’i praised one of his flattering ministers, his advisor Yen Yin tried to teach his ruler how to discern the difference between true harmony and simple agreement.

Quoting the old poems from the *Book of Odes*, Yen Yin explains harmony by the analogies of food and music. In order to cook a delicious soup, we need to put different flavors, so that what is lacking will be supplemented. In music likewise we need the different sounds of various musical instruments to bring about a beautiful harmony. Harmony, therefore, is not adding to what one has already, but rather supplementing what one is lacking or balancing off what one has too much of in order to reach a perfect proportion, which is in touch with *Tao* (the way or principle of Heaven). Just as with one taste or one sound we cannot make a successful cooking or music performance, a harmonious society cannot be formed with one voice or perspective. An ability to deal with diverse opinions without sacrificing fairness comes only from personal maturity, i.e., perfection of virtues. That is the reason why Confucius said that only the virtuous person can be harmonious without agreeing all the time; and Tzu Kung, one of the most distinguished disciples of Confucius, commented that whenever Confucius moved people, there was a harmony (Analects, 19,25). Unless harmony is achieved within a person, he or she can not form and maintain a harmonious relationship with others.

This primary personal level of harmony based on virtue and justice is found in the Christian tradition as well. When the tax collector Zacchaeus declares that he will voluntarily repay fourfold what he has taken illegally and give to the poor the half of his property, he recovers a harmony not only with other people, but also in his own personhood. Jesus said to him that salvation, i.e., the Kingdom of God has come to him who is a son of Abraham (Lk 19:9). Harmony starts within oneself and expands to other people from those who are near to those further away. The formation of relationships has to be rooted in the justice of God, from whom the very universe derives a certain harmony, that is, a proportionate peace (Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on the Divine Names*, 336).

Psalms 85, which is identified as a prayer for rain and prosperity (*The Anchor Bible*, 286), sings that “righteousness and peace will kiss each other” (v.11). Here peace and justice join together as partners in the blessed life. Actually in the Bible it is the notion of peace (*šālôm/eirene*) which takes the primary position as the original order of creation and the effect of righteousness: “Peace is both a restoration of the divine plan of creation and the harbinger of the completion of life to come” (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary V*, 207). *Šālôm* denotes wholeness, health, completeness; greeting peace to one another is wishing prosperity to have physical and spiritual resources sufficient to one’s need.

Peace encompasses a relationship of equity which is not only a divine gift but takes effort, as the peace maker is highly praised (Matt 5:9). This

integral relationship between peace and justice was firmly established by the prophets of Israel, such as Amos. Amos lived at a time when the gap between the rich and the poor was widening and it was very strong in his contention that apparent peace and harmony not founded on justice, are only fakes and illusions which will be blown away in the day of divine judgment. Amos advocated the notion of social justice as the primary command of God and thereby offered the validity and power to challenge the existing order when it takes advantage of the poor.

The concept of justice as the foundation of harmony is not exactly same in the Judaeo-Christian tradition and East Asian tradition, while its functional importance is comparable. In the case of the former, justice is embodied in the law of God as the revealed corpus, while in the case of the latter, it is concretized in the ever changing interpersonal relationships according to the ritual propriety formulated by the sages. What safeguards justice from being identified with social convention, is in Christianity the sovereignty of God, while in Confucian tradition it is an orientation toward the interest of all people (*kung*, public as the principle of Heaven) against the egoism of individuals and groups. Justice, then, integrates two conflicting notions of socially regulated inequality in function and of basic human equality, encompassing the task of the hierarchical order while safeguarding the existence of everyone without privileging some at the expense of others (Heiner Roetz, *Confucian Ethics of the Axial Age*, 115). Whether the image of harmony is based on the egalitarian ideal of ancient Israel or the hierarchical integration of China, it is the notion/norm of justice which directs and unifies human existence.

Now we will focus on the second level of harmony which is social and institutional. This is the most commonly understood meaning of harmony, and we have abundant examples in both Confucian and Christian traditions, although Confucianism among world religions has probably concentrated most strongly on the relational aspect of human life. Confucius clearly stated that doing politics starts from forming right family relationships between the parents and the children, and among brothers and sisters (*Analects* 2:21). His famous definition of politics as “to govern is to correct” (12:17) actually points to all the interpersonal relationships. Every relationship entails a particular responsibility, which is mutual and reciprocal. The ability to be responsible has to be initially learned within family situations, so that Confucius emphasized virtues in kinship relations, such as filial piety and parental affection. The virtue of benevolence learned in the family, however, should not be limited to that, but expand in ever larger circles into the world.

I was delighted to find that Confucius was, in fact, very much concerned with the accumulation of wealth, which he conceived as a main cause harming social harmony. In his dialogue with Jan Ch'iu, one of his politically successful disciples, Confucius stated thus:

What I have heard is that the head of a state or a family worries not about underpopulation but about uneven distribution, not about poverty but about instability. For where there is even distribution there is no such thing as poverty, where there is harmony there is no such things as underpopulation, and where there is stability there is no such things as overturning. (*Analects* 16,1)

Here Confucius is pointing out that we should be afraid of unjust distribution of wealth and disharmony either of a family or a state. Ordinarily people are concerned with poverty and failure, but do not pay much attention to fairness and discontentment within. But what really allows human persons to be satisfied and live harmoniously is fair and just treatment in economic and social terms.

Confucians have been well aware of the strength of social harmony which enables humanity to form a community and develop cultural progress: "Heaven's favourable weather is less important than Earth's advantageous terrain, and Earth's advantageous terrain is less important than human unity" (*Mencius* 2B:1). Climate and natural resources can be cultivated for the benefit of people only when there is harmony among people. In a word in Confucian tradition, it is human beings who complete what Heaven and Earth have given birth to. One chapter of the *Book of Rites*, the *Doctrine of the Mean* which became one of the basic texts for the development of the Neo-Confucian thought, explains the connection between personal harmony and social harmony thus:

When the feelings of joy, anger, sorrow and happiness are not elicited, this is the state of equilibrium (*chung*). When these feelings become elicited and properly regulated, this is called harmony (*ho*). Equilibrium is the great basis of the world, harmony is the way whereby an order of all things is attained. (section 1)

Chung is what is given, a priori norm, while *ho* is a social concept, something to be achieved. When we concentrate on the oneness/principle in our heart, we can maintain harmony in our feelings, relationships, and social activities. Harmony at various levels has been so important in the Confucian tradition because they want to run a society or a state primarily by ritual propriety which is occasionally supplemented by institutional laws.

The Biblical notion of peace most frequently describes a social reality, a state of reconciliation and wholeness among a group living in peace. Psalm

133 saw the abundant blessings of life in harmonious community living: “How very good and pleasant it is when kindred live together in unity!” (v.1). St. Paul presents stronger directives how to preserve harmony among people: “Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them... Do not repay anyone evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If it is possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all” (Rom 12:14, 17-18). Here St. Paul advises not only to keep peace among disciples of Christ (1Th 5:13), but to preserve harmony even with the persecutors by characteristically Christian behavior of forgiveness. The Christian notion of harmony, therefore, contains the dialectic of letting go and then being transformed by the experience of the divine forgiveness.

This expanded concept of Christian harmony is based on the faith that all humanity has received the same Spirit, forming a new kind of family: “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near in the blood of Christ. For he is our peace, who has made us both one, and has broken down the dividing wall of hostility ... for through him we both have access in One Spirit to the Father”(Eph 2:13-18). The doctrine of creation that all things and all people are created by one God is strengthened by the fact that this God took the form of the human and shared the same life in order to heal and transform broken relationships. The Kingdom of God is the symbol of a new world where a perfect harmony which transcends kinship, race, social status prevails. In the sense that the grace of reconciliation is given already, the Kingdom has come, but in the sense that we are still waiting for the perfectly harmonious world where the leopard lies down peacefully with the kid (Is 11:6), the Kingdom is an eschatological image, manifesting the sense of completion.

Edward Farley, a professor of theology at Vanderbilt Divinity School, presents a Christian interpretation of social harmony thus:

The early Christian movement understood itself as a community, an ecclesia, in just these terms. Like all human communities, its actual life was rent by alienations. But the criteria which guided its criticism of these alienations were the universal criteria of agapic relations, not the specific criteria of worth and beauty which defined Roman or Greek culture, masters and slaves, or men and women. This is not to say these criteria were absent from the ecclesial community. Patriarchalism and other ethnocentric criteria abounded. At the same time, it is clear that the ecclesia refused to define communion in those terms. (*Good and Evil*, 246-7)

Compared to the Confucian tradition where the social notion of harmony has developed into a politically structured institution with ordered

hierarchy, the Christian tradition maintained the ideal of a universal church, a community of people of God drawn from all cultures and political boundaries. While social harmony is something concrete and always remolded in the case of the former, in the case of the latter, it is conceived on the level of spiritual heritage and has a tendency to remain as an ideal.

The third level of harmony is the cosmic one, i.e., the relationship between Heaven, Earth, and Human. Cheng Chung-ying, one of the leading Chinese philosophers at the University of Hawaii, has presented the Confucian understanding of harmony as ‘transformation’, drawing paradigms from the *Book of Changes*:

With an analysis and critique of the Heraclitean concept of strife and his implicit thesis of “disunity” of opposites, we may advance into the philosophy of the *I Ching* as a source for formulating and providing a comprehensive theory of harmony and strife, in which harmony is metaphysically founded and fundamentally illuminated and yet strife can be given a proper place and clearly explained. The very importance of the *I Ching* philosophy consists in its recognition of change and transformation (called *p’ien* and *hua*) as constitutive of as well as in its insight that change and transformation primarily take place because of unity instead of disunity of things. (*Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 16,148)

He states that according to Confucian tradition, reality is harmonious and all disharmony or strife is seen as mere transition because yin and yang, two major principles of movement, are based on one unity, *Tao*. He asserts that this unity is not static, but creative as “the basis for producing and strengthening harmony as a system of integration of differences” (140).

When we talk about transformation (*hua*), it is the Taoists who first introduced the cosmic vision and constant movement of *Tao*. The cosmos is formed by the harmonious union of the yin and the yang (*Lao Tzu* 42); and life and death, success and failure, health and sickness are relativized and accepted as various aspects of transformation, the movement of *Tao* (*Chuang Tzu* 6). The *Tao* is depicted in *Chuang Tzu* as the Lord of transformation or the Great Potter upon whose skillful production humans have to trust completely.

The *Book of Changes*, in fact, synthesizes Taoist and Confucian thoughts and presents the harmony of the triad, placing the weight more on the role of humans as the moral subjects. It is in the concrete image of the sage that the way of human participation in the cosmic harmony is well depicted: the sage harmonizes the triad by perfecting his/her innate virtue; the heart of the sage embodies the heart of Heaven and thereby gives life to all things in the world; by enacting ritual propriety, the sage incarnates the life of Earth,

nurturing all people with compassion; by attaining interpenetrating knowledge of things, the sage completes the works of Heaven and Earth. In this Confucian ideal of cosmic harmony, the boundaries of the triad are not dissolved, nor completely united. Heaven, Earth, Human are interrelated and have a particular responsibility, as Hsün Tzu has envisioned: "Heaven has its time through which it bestows life; Earth has its riches through which it nourishes all living beings; Human has its political rule through which it brings about community." It is a perfect harmonious communion on the cosmic level. One party should not try to take over the role of others, nor intrude into the areas of others. It is only when we humans do our best in our responsibility in social affairs, that we can participate in the transforming works of Heaven and Earth. Contemporary ecological effort has a lot to learn from the Confucian and Taoist vision of the harmonious triad. It is a vision that by respecting and preserving nature much as it is, people are most benefitted by it.

The image of cosmic harmony in Christianity has not been as strong as in the Confucian tradition. We can find some fragmentary visions in the prophets and apocalyptic writings. Probably it is brokenness of harmony which has been more focused on from the beginning of the Bible. When Adam and Eve sinned against God, the harmony between them was harmed as well as the harmony between the natural world and human world was distorted. Though it was very short, still it is important for us to remember the original harmony enjoyed by human beings with each other, nature, and God, as the beautiful scene of the garden before the fall portrayed in Genesis 2:8-24.

Among the prophets of Israel the Second Isaiah (chapters 40-55) most clearly brought back the mythic understanding of nature of the Ancient Near East and used it in a poetic imagery for the restored Israel after the people have endured the judgment of God and the suffering of the exile:

Remember these things, O Jacob, and Israel, for you are my servant; I formed you, you are my servant; O Israel, you will not be forgotten by me. I have swept away your transgressions like a cloud, and your sins like mist; return to me, for I have redeemed you.

Sing, O heavens, for the Lord has done it; shout, O depths of the earth; break forth into singing, O mountains, O forest, and every tree in it! For the Lord has redeemed Jacob, and will be glorified in Israel. (Is 44: 21-23)

Harmony is restored between the people of Israel and God, and in this new redeemed state, heaven and earth and everything in it rejoice. In a word, the cosmic harmony is reinstated.

This prophetic vision of restored harmony is seen by the early Church as reenacted in Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God with a wider perspective which overcomes not only the very distinction of the chosen people of Israel and the gentiles but the cosmic brokenness: "He(Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; ... and through him God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross" (Col 1:15-20).

In our age the same vision is again restated, especially by the feminist theologians:

Feminist theology argues, alternatively, for a view of nature consonant with a view of a God who takes the whole of creation seriously, and a view of creation which does not see predatory hierarchy as the basis of order. Nature, in this view, is valuable according to its own concrete reality, which includes an interdependence with embodied humanity... Human intelligence and freedom are not barred from addressing nature, but measures for understanding and just use are lodged both in nature itself and in ethical requirements for relations among persons. (M.A. Farley, "Feminist Theology and Bioethics," in *Feminist Theological Ethics*, 201)

The redeemed state should not be seen as a exclusive reconciliation between an individual sinner and God, but the whole of humanity, indeed the whole creation is included in an interdependent web of life. This Christian vision of interrelated relationship of God, Earth, and Human shares the basic tenets with the Confucian triad of Heaven, Earth, and Human. We human beings are dependent upon the life-giving force of Heaven and Earth, but at the same time we have a grand responsibility to complete the work and attain harmony within, with others, and with cosmic world.

II. CHRISTIAN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CONFUCIAN PRACTICE OF HARMONY

I have mentioned already that, theoretically speaking, harmony is the conceptual term of Confucian and East Asian tradition. While searching for a similar understanding in Christian tradition which is comparable to the Confucian scheme of self-cultivation, ordering of society, and transformation of the cosmos, I have focused up to now on the common elements. Human maturity, fair distribution of wealth and power, and responsible relationship with nature and humans appear to form the common foundations of harmony in both traditions. But when we look more carefully at the processes by which harmony has been enacted, immediately we can notice major differences between Confucian and Christian traditions.

Robert Neville, a Comparative theologian of Boston University, who

has been taking Chinese philosophy as the major counterpart to his Christian theology, has commented thus:

Perhaps the sharpest contrast between the Christian contract model and the Confucian consists in this. Whereas the Christian tends to see social roles or semiotic codes as external, and identifies the self only as a token in those roles, the Confucian identifies the person as much with the relevant codes as with the token activity within them. Thus, whereas it is conceivable on the contract model to see oneself as other than the social roles, as a self-definable individual, on the Confucian model the person simply cannot be individuated over against the socially located codes. Therefore, for the Confucian, much of any perception or action is joint with the actions and perceptions of others. A person is essentially and personally participatory with others according to coded structures. (*Behind the Masks of God*, 136)

Neville is arguing that Christians have a covenantal identity with a double layer: the ideal identity of the covenant with God and the material identity of actual life in social contractual relations. Because of this doubled identity, an individual has a stronger assertion and a power to challenge the social order which he or she thinks is contrary to the ideal. On the other hand the Confucian tries to develop codes, i.e., ritual propriety (*li*), fine and subtle enough to constitute the perfection and excellence of human life. Neville even states that “Attaining to codes, or having propriety, is an ontological matter for constituting the human” (135). He asserts that because of total identity with the coded ritual structure of the society, the Confucians have found it hard to envisage radical social change even when it was necessary, contrary to the idealism at its heart (140-1).

I think Neville’s critique is historically accurate as a whole, especially after Hsun Tzu identified propriety with the *Tao* which humans have to follow. However, when we look back to the Analects itself, Confucius carefully differentiated propriety from the *Tao* of benevolence. While *Tao* has permanent value, transcending time and space, propriety as an expression of the *Tao* of benevolence, can and should be changed in each period (2:23; 9:3). In spite of the fact that the Confucians have the basis for overcoming coded structures, since it has been a 2000 years Confucian practice, the Christians probably have something to offer in East Asian society to bring about impetus to form a flexible notion of harmony based on justice.

Even in the area of the notion of justice, the Confucian concept is more relational and situational while the Christian understanding of justice means following in concrete actions the revealed will of God which is concretized in the laws. Because of this difference, both sides can learn from each other to gain a holistic understanding of justice. Here I will just point out two possible areas where Christian stimulation may be beneficial for the

attainment of true harmony of East Asian society and spirituality: 1. women and family 2. concern for the poor and political equality.

1. Ideological oppression of women and sociological inequality of wife have been practiced both in Christian and Confucian traditions. The Christian understanding of family structure is based on the New Testament Codes of household ethic found in 1 Peter, where wives are exhorted to be submissive to their husband just as slaves are to be submissive to their masters. A similar, more complete code is found in Col 3:18-4:1 and in Eph 5:21-6:9, where six social classes are involved, and they are arranged in three pairs of relationships:

wives be subject to husband	—————	husbands love your wives
children obey parents	—————	fathers do not anger children
slaves obey masters	—————	masters treat slaves justly

These same pairs are found in Greek tradition, especially in Aristotle, and historical studies have shown that the Christians as a minority religious community were forced to follow this hierarchical Greek and Roman household ethic to avoid accusations and social tension (David L. Balch, *Let Wives be Submissive*, 63).

1 Pet 3:8-12 is constituted with the exhortation not to return evil for evil stressing harmony in the household. In 1 Peter the harmony sought is primarily domestic harmony between husband, wife, and slaves, and the 'harmony' between husband and wife is especially emphasized. However, the absolute harmony typically demanded by a pagan master or husband was rejected by the newly converted Christians. Christianity brought a new understanding of personhood to wives and slaves by teaching that they had a right to choose their own God. At the same time doing good is stressed, for good conduct is an apologetic response to the slanders against Christians. By obeying their husbands, that is, by being virtuous women as that was understood in the Greek world, the wives addressed in 1 Peter hoped to lead their husbands to virtue and to God. "The goal of the wife's behavior as stated in 3:1 is missionary: the author of 1 Peter hoped that the wives' conduct would convert their husbands" (Balch, 105).

Even though the New Testament household code apparently exhorted wives to be submissive to their husbands and so continued the social inequality of women, the task of critical reconstruction is possible because a view of human relations characterized by equality and mutuality can be found at the core of Christian teaching. I think the same statement can be made concerning Confucianism because it has been taking the ideal of the sage as the goal which can be attained both by women and men regardless of their social, intellectual, emotional differences. In some periods this

universal call for sagehood was taken more seriously by various sectors of people, while in other periods its ideal was mainly concentrated on the rulers and at the most on the scholars. The methods of Confucian learning and cultivation of virtue contain a radically equalizing effect, and that is the reason why I think Confucian tradition can be profitted by the experience of Christian feminist theology:

What emerges in feminist theology (in relation to Christianity, but here a harbinger of systematic development in relation to other historical religions as well) is an analysis of what are judged to be oppressive patterns of relationship and ideologies which foster them. These patterns of oppression are identified not only in relations between men and women but in every human relation where the pattern is one of domination and subjugation on the basis of sex or race or class or any other aspect of persons which is used to deny full humanity to all. (Margaret Farley, 196)

The key to open up the inequal household Confucian codes is first to distinguish and separate between the reciprocal code of the “Five Relations” and the onesided code of the “Three Bonds.” The idea of the Five Relations is the natural development of the famous socio-ethical principle presented by Confucius: “Let the ruler be a ruler, the subject a subject, the father a father, the son a son” (*Analects* 12:11). The Three Bonds of Tung Chungshu, however, distorted the fundamental mutuality and conceived the wife, the son, and the subject as the yin which is inferior and has to be always subjected: “the ruler is the norm (*kang*, literally a major cord in a net) for the subject, the father is the norm for the son, and the husband is the norm for the wife” (*Ch’un-ch’iu Fan-lu* 52). Superficially the three submissive relationships of the Confucian Three Bonds sound similar to the New Testament Codes of household, but while the latter is encouraged as a strategy to avoid social scandal and to convert the pagan husband, the former functioned as the ethical backbone of East Asian class societies. Because of its onesidedness and the oppression it has exercised on the inferior parties, it is imperative to throw the image of the Three Bonds away completely. Since it was a later historical development designed to meet the needs of the imperial ethos of China during the centralized Han period, we do not lose anything crucial in Confucian tradition if we eliminate the unbalanced notion of the Three Bonds which, after all, has been proven harmful for interpersonal harmony.

The contemporary challenge facing us is how to interpret the image of the Five Relations (affection between father and son, rightness between ruler and subject, distinction between husband and wife, precedence of the old over the young, and fidelity between friends) in a buyable way. Here I will deal only with a possible reconstruction of the image of “distinction

between husband and wife” in the Five Relations of *Mencius* 3A:4. In a traditional society distinction was conceived as the differentiation between men’s roles, ascribed to the public affairs, and women’s role inside the household. This kind of division of social roles between public and domestic has been recognized by the feminists as the primary cause which has perpetuated the cyclical pattern of inequality of men and women. Susan Moller Okin presented the four points: 1. power is of central importance in family life; 2. the domestic sphere is itself created by political decisions; 3. the family is undeniably political because it is the place where we become our gendered selves; 4. the division of labor within the gender structured family raises both practical and psychological barriers against women in all the other spheres of life (*Justice, Gender, and the Family*, 111). In order to restore equality of women, she appeals for minimization of social differentiation between the sexes (174). Shall we then, throw away the Confucian image of “distinction between the husband and the wife”?

The traditional image has such a unifying power and deepening effect on our personality that I prefer to save it unless it is helplessly inhuman by peeling off the historical layers which limited the activity and the development of the talents of women. The notion of ‘distinction’ (*pieh*) in Confucianism is closely connected with ritual propriety which regulates and maintains the right, harmonious relationship. Even though the relationship between parents and children has to be characterized by affection and closeness, Confucius did not show any partiality and instead maintained a proper distance from his son (*Analects* 16:13) by teaching him exactly the same things which he taught to his other disciples. Propriety presupposes respect for another person and so secures a lasting relationship. Confucius praised a minister of the State Ch’i, Yen P’ing-chung, who always maintained the same reverence toward his friends even after a long period of acquittance (*Analects* 5:16).

The fundamental respect or reverence toward another person does not exclude familiarity or comfortableness. Rather respect is an indispensable prerequisite and impetus for creative understanding and enduring love which deepens relationship. Once fundamental respect and trust have been built firmly between two persons, in this case, the husband and the wife, their differences as well as common elements will be appreciated and the concrete working structure of a household can be devised with flexibility as the need changes throughout their lives. In order to achieve a free atmosphere at the household level, of course, social consciousness in general and institutional legal system have to support this reconstruction. If a household and a society can recognize the distinction of men and women

as valid and valuable without exploiting that difference or feeling threatened by it, then we can say that a true harmony is achieved between sexes and in family life.

2. Just like the inequality of women, the challenge of poverty remains an as yet insoluble problem for both Confucian and Christian traditions. Both traditions possess the ideal of a society where distribution of wealth secures social stability and peace. However, it seems to me that the Christian tradition has developed a stronger concern for the poor because it has always tied the poor directly to God. From Genesis and Exodus to the Prophets, God is understood to listen to the cry of the poor and bring about the divine deliverance: "When the poor and needy seek water, and there is none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the Lord will answer them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them" (Isa 41:17). The poor (*'anāwîm*) and the needy (*'ebyônîm*) came to be used as technical terms in post-exilic Israel, signifying not only the economically destitute but the pious faithful who kept the covenant.

In the same vein the teaching of Jesus is understood in the New Testament as good news for the poor. When John the Baptist sent his disciples to confirm whether Jesus was the Messiah to come, Jesus replied not by yes or no, but by his actions: "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, ... the poor have good news preached to them" (Lk 7:22). The first beatitude announced by Jesus was "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the Kingdom of God" (Lk 6:20). As far as we can gather, Jesus did not want to separate his mission from the poor and this ideal stayed with his followers throughout centuries. In this sense the poor become the central focus in Christian teaching, ministry, and vision of the Kingdom of God.

This primary concern for the poor is intrinsically tied up with the political equality enjoined within a transformed community, the people of God. In the New Testament, even though family values are validated with a relative value, new priorities and new forms of solidarity were established by the coming of the Kingdom: "This new covenant community is understood as the eschatological family of Jesus constituted, not on the basis of inheritance and blood ties, but on the basis of active obedience to the will of God" (Stephen C. Barton, 122-3). Because of this primary commitment to the Kingdom, the ordinary human values such as family, filial piety, loyalty, riches, long life, etc. are initially rejected. Only after all ordinary human affiliations are relativized, they are accepted back in a transformed way. Confucianism also has some of this kind of dialectics, but the obvious intensity of this tension is much greater in Christianity.

The Liberation Theology and Korean Minjung Theology in our age try to focus the primary option for the poor by identifying the poor with Jesus and analyzed the structural cause of poverty both economic and political. As Minjung Theology stimulated the rise of Minjung Buddhism in the 1980s Korean political environment, Christianity can be a spearhead for social movement. On the other hand, however, Minjung Theology has a lot to learn from Confucian tradition to overcome its intrinsically dualistic outlook and establish a holist structure of human liberation. The issue at stake in our age is not only material poverty, but poverty of culture, values, and identity as well. In this regard, Christian Churches in East Asia have a lot to learn from the Confucian vision of social harmony, while challenging some of its historical practices.

III. THE CHRISTIAN IMAGE OF HARMONY

The image of the Kingdom of God/Heaven stands at the very center of the message of the historical Jesus, but because its vocabulary is derived from a world of oriental monarchies, some say that it is in need of reinterpretation. Historically the Kingdom has been envisioned variously as the future state of the resurrected, the Church, the state of mystical ecstasy, the progressively redeemed society, the future transformation of this world, etc. (*The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, 1992). All these interpretations, however, never exhaust the full meaning of the Kingdom of God, and it remains as an open-ended symbol possible of further interpretations. And I would like to try another hermeneutical reconstruction from the perspective of the Confucian understanding of harmony. I think it is worth trying because, as we have seen, there are some fundamental commonalities between two traditions in the conception of harmony as well as remarkable differences, from which both sides can learn and profit. At the same time I have to caution that however much we might learn from each other, the Christian image of harmony will remain as characteristically Christian, and the Confucian image will maintain its Confucian character.

Since I am focusing on the theme of harmony which is an integrated pattern of change, giving its components balanced importance, I will analyse how Jesus in the Gospels established harmony in his relationships with other human beings, the natural world, and God.

1. Unlike the later imperialistic missionary attitude of the Church, Jesus never forced people to receive him or his teaching or even his forgiveness. His attitude toward social sinners most clearly exhibits his harmonious and respectful approach to others. He waited until the tax collector Zacchaeus approached him first by climbing up the tree to see him passing by; he

allowed the notorious woman of Magdala to weep at his feet and defended her before a self-righteous Pharisee who despised her. Through the ordinary interpersonal contacts such as dining together or sensitive appreciation of gestures, Jesus healed brokenness and social alienation. It is crucial to observe that Jesus maintains a respect, thereby protects the freedom of the other person. Because of this reverence conversion was experienced as an integrating restoration to the person involved, thereby safeguarding a harmonious relationship. If I may use Neo-Confucian vocabulary, Jesus practiced reverence both in quietude and in movement which enables a person really to listen to what the other person is searching for.

Jesus maintained the same reverential attitude toward the righteous people of the society such as the respected scholar Nicodemus who initiated his visit with some reservations, the well to do women who supported his missionary journeys, and the friendly household of Martha and Mary. Each person chose what he or she was inclined to do and Jesus respected their calling, preserving interpersonal harmony. The Kingdom of God was incarnated in this harmonious community, centering around Jesus but including all people in every scene.

Gordon Kaufman's wider interpretation of Christ will apply even better in the case of the Kingdom: "To say God is incarnate in Christ, then, is not to say simply and directly that God is incarnate in Jesus; rather, God is incarnate in that larger, more complex human reality, surrounding and including and following upon the man Jesus: the new Christian community, with its spirit of love and freedom, of mutual sharing and forgiveness of one another. It is in this new order of interpersonal relationships that the incarnation of God is to be found" (*In Face of Mystery*, 383). Kaufman concludes that this new communal order has provided the defining paradigm for the reconciling community, in support of which heavy demands are laid upon Christian adherents (390). In other words, as they claim, the Christian Churches have a responsibility to live up to the social ideal of the Kingdom of God. According to the degree the Christians and their communities truly maintain a reverential attitude toward others, they will contribute to the formation of harmonious societies in East Asia.

Jesus' attitude toward the pharisees and the gentiles is interesting and much more complex. His criticism, which was sometimes harsh, of the hypocrisy of the priestly and scholarly class of his time was to peel off the artificial covering and come to the core of the matter. It is another way of respecting the truth and letting the people come to their sincere selves. Harmony cannot function when justice/rightness is not attained in human relationship. Jesus' concern for justice as the foundation of right harmony is

most vividly seen in his encounters with the pharisees. His attitude toward the gentiles such as the Samaritan woman (Jn 4:23), the Syrophenician woman who asked to heal her daughter (Mk 7:26), and the Greeks who approached Jesus almost at the end of his ministry (Jn 12:21), shows a mixture of reservation waiting for the divinely ordained time, openness filled with compassion, and surprise at the expansion of his mission. If we borrow a Confucian technical term, I would like to call it a kind of 'timely mean', a discerning mind weighing the total context of one's life situation, including human relationships, moral responsibilities, and one's mandate of Heaven. It is beautiful to see in the life of Jesus that he had a room of wonder before the mystery of God: "But about that day or hour no one knows, neither the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father" (Mk 13:32).

2. Jesus enjoyed a harmonious relationship with the natural world. He loved and saw the glory of God in the lilies of the field, the caring providence of God in the birds of skies, and the value of patient waiting for the growth of the wheat until the time of harvest. He freely and sensitively used the images of mustard seeds, leaven, a net, and a pearl of great price in his parables on the Kingdom of God. Some biblical scholars comment that Jesus used the metaphors which can be easily understood by women and men, so that both can get the meaning behind the stories. In Jesus vision of the Kingdom of God, there is no distortion or exploitation of nature by human beings; both the natural world and the human world are to manifest the glory of God. As he drew most of his parables from natural imagery, he was probably sure that the natural world is more in tune with its creator without hypocrisy. But it is we humans who have to watch for the coming of the Kingdom (Mt 25:1), and exert our energy and discernment (Mt 25:14), so that the Kingdom may dwell within our community (Lk 17:21). One can almost sense the same fragrance of Confucian cosmic harmony of Heaven, Earth, and Human in the image of the Kingdom of God.

3. The Kingdom of God is embodied not only in Jesus' relationship with other people and the natural world, but paramountly in his relationship with God. If I apply the Confucian perspective of the Mandate of Heaven to Jesus' understanding of his relationship with God, we can perceive both the active and the passive aspects of the Mandate. Actively Jesus had a strong sense of mission, that he was sent by God: "I do nothing on my own authority but speak thus as the Father taught me" (Jn 8:26); "As the living Father sent me, and I live because of the Father" (Jn 6:57). Because of this sense of mission, the norm of his life was doing the will of God (Mt 11:27).

Jesus drew the value of human work from God's creative maintenance of the cosmos: "My Father is working still, and I am working" (Jn 5:17). This intimate relationship between Jesus and God the Father also contains a passive aspect of unavoidable destiny. At the garden of Gethsemane Jesus prayed: "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this cup from me; yet not what I will, but what thou wilt" (Mt 14:36). This sense of passive acceptance is portrayed in the Gospel of John in a more willing tone: "I go to the Father; for the Father is greater than I" (Jn 14:28); "The hour has come" (17:1). Throughout Jesus' active and passive relationship with God, it should be observed that he encompassed his disciples and the whole community, reaching out to all humanity. "My Father" becomes "Your Father" (Jn 20:17), and whoever does the will of the Father joins in the solidarity of new community (Mt 12:50).

The Kingdom of God is the completion of harmony between God and all creation including humanity. It is a 'harmony', not an 'identity' or 'absorbedness' as in the case of Indian tradition. In this regard, Confucianism and East Asian thought with its harmonious triad is much closer to the Christian vision of fulfillment. What the Christians are looking for as a final note is a loving community with creative harmony, which is called beatitude. The poor, the meek, those who hunger for justice and work for peace will inherit the Kingdom. Jesus taught his disciples to seek first the Kingdom of God (Mt 6:33). Whenever the contemporary Christians pray to God "Your Kingdom come!" (Mt 6:10), they are envisioning the community of just and integrated harmony, the East Asian image of the Kingdom of God.

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Response to “The Kingdom of God as the Christian Image of Harmony”

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Before I comment on Professor Sung-Hae Kim’s paper, I want to mention that my background is in Japanese Buddhism so I am neither a Christian theologian nor a Confucian scholar. My perspective is partially from a Japanese Buddhist point of view influenced by Confucian morality and it is both critical and appreciative of the Confucian ethic of harmony in contemporary society. Even though I know there is a difference between what the holy scriptures say and what people do, my main concerns are with the ethic’s practical social implications. Professor Nobuyuki Kaji says that Confucian morality tends to be seen as a suppressive and coercive ethic, but it is a prejudiced view which has been distorted under the historical and social conditions.¹

I feel that I am not the person to judge the complexities of Professor Kim’s argument. The paper illustrates her deep understanding and special care for Confucianism. Having said this, I feel that Professor Sung-Hae Kim’s paper provided me with valuable insight. Her thesis focussed on an interpretation of the Christian image of harmony in the “Kingdom of God” and a discussion of its relationship with the Confucian image of harmony.

First, she presented parallels between the notion of harmony in Confucianism and Christianity. Even though the notion of harmony in the Western philosophical and theological tradition is less important than in the Confucian tradition, she made the comparison on three levels: the personal level (harmony through self-cultivation), the social level (social reality as relational and institutional harmony) and the cosmic level (an understanding of cosmic harmony).

1. Nobuyuki Kaji, *The Silent Religion: Confucianism* [沈黙の宗教—儒教] (Chikumashobo, 1994) p.193

Second, she illustrated some differences between Christianity and Confucianism, and suggested the need to rehabilitate the image and practice of Confucian harmony.

Third, she interpreted the Kingdom of God as the Christian image of harmony.

I want to discuss the following seven points:

- * First, the possibility of rehabilitating the Five Relations and the Three Bonds in terms of fundamental respect or reverence.
- * Second, the positive and negative value of the Confucian ethic of harmony in a liberal democratic society .
- * Third, the importance of decision making and accountability and their absence in traditional Confucianism.
- * Fourth, the possibility of extending altruistic reciprocity in a small community to a much larger community.
- * Fifth, the Confucian ethic of harmony from the perspective of ecological feminism.
- * Sixth, re-appreciation of ancestor veneration.
- * Seventh, the ethic's compatibility with Buddhist ideals.

1. THE PROBLEM OF AUTONOMY AND HETERONOMY

Professor Kim points out that we need to reconsider “the one-sided code of the ‘Three Bonds of Tung Chungshu.’” I think that “The Five Relations” (the affection between father and son, the relationship between ruler and subject, the distinction between husband and wife, the precedence of the old over the young, and the fidelity between friends) needs to be reinterpreted.

First of all, we have to appreciate the concept of *jen* (benevolence) as the fundamental virtue of human relationships within the family, community and society. *Jen* is one of the ‘Five Relations’ and, in this context, shows us that the codes do have a positive contribution to make. However, the ‘Five Relations’ are usually understood as negative and authoritarian and most often seen as suppressing people. Despite this, the ethic can work and have value in an intimate and durable community. In the absence of major conflict within a community, harmony is always present and unconsciously presupposed. It is maintained and relied on in a community where altruistic reciprocity is more predominant than the conflict relationship. People also take it for granted that it is their duty to help others who are in trouble and serve others in everyday life.

This traditional ethic of harmony has contributed to stable and durable relationships in families and communities where ideals, behavior,

and moral norms are transmitted via word and ritual from father to son, mother to daughter, generation after generation. Diligence and thrift are respected as virtues of success but they are not for the sake of the individual's aspiration (ambition) or security. They are for the service of others or the community. Here people identify themselves with the community and therefore do not feel self-sacrifice to be a burden. In order to realize harmony individuals must sacrifice their egoistic desires to some extent and yet they feel that the pursuit of harmony is identical to the pursuit of altruistic duty. In reality humans are not individuals but social beings. Any society, community or a family needs altruistic reciprocity and humans genuinely want to make some contribution.

However, the issue we are facing now is the problem of autonomy and heteronomy. Professor Susumu Shimazono says, "The ethic of harmony is gradually moving from obedience to the established authority to the recognition of individual autonomy which fosters one's own judgement and effort. However, in many cases the harmony of the whole is not disturbed. However, whether the harmony of the whole is justifiable or not is the matter of argument."² Heteronomous conformity appears when an order or purpose is not justifiable, yet the individual conforms his/her action to it. Alternatively, autonomous individuality appears when the individual questions the established authority for the sake of higher harmony.

The submissive character of the Three Bonds can be understood in this context but to what extent can women be autonomous and heteronomous? There is no question that the static and traditional understanding of the Three Bonds is inadequate in contemporary society.

Benevolence is the source of the Five Relations and the Three Bonds. Put simply, it signifies a considerate heart between people and, through its cultivation, people can live harmoniously. The important point is that when we reinterpret these codes, we have to find the original spirit or the fundamental perspective from which the Confucian tradition springs. In this context, it is important to note Professor Kim's suggestion of a "fundamental respect or reverence toward others" (Kim:16) because, in my understanding, it is nothing but the concept of the benevolence (*jen*). These codes are dynamic, not static, and need to be reinterpreted in the spirit of the benevolence. By returning to *jen* we can reexamine concrete expressions of human relationships and, with the spirit of the fundamental respect or reverence, find a true equilibrium (*chung*) between the sexes. In doing so, we

2. Shimazono Susumu, ed., *Sukui to Toku: shin-shōkyō Shinkōsha no Seikatsu to Shisō* [救いと徳：新宗教信仰者の生活と思想] (Kōbundō, 1992) p.48

would also be balancing the creative tension between autonomy and heteronomy. In my opinion, Professor Kim is not necessarily wrong when she says, "it is imperative to throw the image of the Three Bonds away completely." (Kim:15) If these bonds do not express the true spirit of *jen* in our world then there is a need to correct the distortions which have accumulated over time.

2. THE AMBIGUITY OF THE CONFUCIAN ETHIC OF HARMONY IN A LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY

Today, Confucius' moral virtues must face the challenges of democratic society. Confucius' famous saying, "Let the ruler be a ruler, the subject subject, the father a father, the son a son" (*Analects* 12:11) maintains (or preserves) an already existing order in East Asian countries where each individual is required to observe his or her own "*bun* 本[分] (duty)". The 'duty' refers to the duties, responsibilities and behavior that correspond to his or her own social class. If someone observes "本" or is obedient to "本" then he or she respects harmony. Thus, the respected virtues are the basic concepts such as *chung* (忠 loyalty) and *hsiao* (孝 filial piety). Class is passed on from generation to generation and so the basic concept of maturity means to adopt the parents' mode of behavior. Above all, the most important duty is to be obedient to the established authority and to restrict individual autonomy to within prescribed boundaries.

The book, *Habits of the Heart*, says;

Taking our cue from Tocqueville, we believe that one of the keys to the survival of free institutions is the relationship between private and public life, the harmony in which citizens do, or do not, participate in the public sphere.³

A democratic society needs all citizens to participate in the decision making process. We can not let the professionals administer by themselves. The relationship between ruler and subject which was previously based on power needs to find a better fit with modern society. Making this transformation will mean a shift away from relationships based on power to ones grounded in virtues such as experience. True authority is found in long term public approval and can stand the test of history. In the long run, a democratic society appreciates and believes in the common sense of the people. The question is how can the Confucian ethic of harmony help people have meaning in public and private life. In other words, to what extent

3. Rover N. Bellah, and Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California, 1985), p viii

can the Confucian ethic of harmony give moral support for those in public life as well as those pursuing personal fulfillment?

3. THE IMPORTANCE OF DECISION MAKING AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE PEOPLE IN MODERN SOCIETY AND IN THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.

Harmony in society is “the creative formation of various relationships” (Kim:5) It is not a static law, but “justice or the right balancing of relationship is [a] prerequisite.” (Kim:5) It is essential if we are to achieve harmony in the family or in a democratic community. Professor Kim mentions that the notion of harmony is not homogeneous, but a balance among diverse opinions and values. “An ability to deal with diverse opinions without sacrificing fairness comes only from personal maturity, i.e., perfection of virtues.” (Kim:5) He quotes from *Analects*:

the mature person is in harmony with others without accommodating, while the immature person is accommodating without being harmonious. (*Analects* 13,23).

This corresponds with Aristotle understanding of *phronesis* (practical wisdom). Aristotle says a wise person can judge rightly in a concrete situation. This means that a sage can attain harmony with others without accommodation. Confucius makes the same point when he differentiates between true harmony and simple agreement.

This differentiation is also at the core of democratic society. In a democratic and liberal society the decision-making process is important. It is not so much a matter of the result of governance **for** the people, but the democratic process of decision-making **by** the people. So, how we can evaluate the Confucian ethic in the light of this?

Takeshi Umehara maintains that “the spirit of ‘harmony’ is at the same time the spirit of Reason. In other words, if there is ‘harmony,’ i.e., a mutual feeling of trust, between superior and subordinate, there is room for discussion. Active discussion produces well-founded ideas and theories which, when implemented, bring the difficult within the realm of possibility. ‘Harmony’ is thus not a compromise but a catalyst for discussion.”⁴ In this

4. Takeshi Umehara, “Junanajo Kenpo to Wa no Seishin” [十七條憲法と和の精神] *Nippon no Kokoro 1: Bunka to Dento* [日本の心1. 文化と伝統] (Tokyo: Shin-Nippon Seitetsu Kabushiki Kaisha Kohoshitsum [新日本製鐵株式會社広報室], 1992. Translated by Richard Foster. “According to the *Nihonshoki*, Japan’s oldest historical record, the Constitution of Seventeen Articles was written by Crown Prince Shotoku in the 12th. year of the reign of Empress Suiko (604 A.D.).”, pp. 34-7.

sense we find that the Confucian ethic of harmony does not contradict democratic processes.

Thus, the ethic of harmony may foster a democratic atmosphere and we cannot say that a certain communal trust necessarily leads to a denial of the democratic ethos.

I agree with Umehara in the sense that open and free discussion can be an occasion for the birth of reason. Yet, it is not necessary for this reason to become a principle or rule. To quote from Professor Kim:

The concept of justice as the foundation of harmony is not exactly same in the Judao-Christian tradition and East Asian tradition, while its functional importance is comparable. In the case of the former, justice is embodied in the law of God as the revealed corpus, while in the case of the latter, it is concretized in the ever changing interpersonal relationships according to the ritual propriety formulated by the sages. What safeguards justice from being identified with social convention, is in Christianity the sovereignty of God, while in Confucian tradition it is an orientation toward the interest of all people (*kung*) against the egoism of individuals and groups. (Kim:7)

This absence of a transcendent principle may lead to a situation where the right decision or justice can be identified with social convention. If the Confucian ethic of harmony operates without strict adherence to an ideal or principle it may become a political ideology. Prof. Hayao Kawai studied politics in Japan during the Second World War and coined the words “*chuku-kozo*” (the structure of central emptiness). The basic structure of Japanese society is “the structure of central emptiness”. In Japanese mythology there is no absolute or powerful god. The central figure takes no-willful action to mediate the balance of power among other gods. In this sense the center of decision-making is empty. This no-willful god exists in the center which constitutes the structure of central emptiness. In the field of politics, for example, there is also no center of power which can make decisions and take responsibility for foreign policy and national security.

Professor Kim mentions that in Confucian tradition it [what safeguards justice from being identified with social convention] is an orientation toward the interest of all people (*kung*) against the egoism of individuals and groups. (Kim:7)

The existing social convention tends to become a standard for consensus and this is usually the case in Japanese society where the Confucian ethic of harmony is influential. In order to maintain the harmony in a community, the atmosphere or air can be the leading factor in decision-making. A community is primarily concerned with internal affairs and all external

concerns are secondary because the primary or closer relationships tend to be more important than the others. The important thing is to encourage favor or a favorable evaluation among the members of the community rather than making contributions outside of the community.

When consensus is prevented from being realized, the failure is attributed to a lack of effort to realize *harmony* or a lack of sincerity on the part of others. As a consequence such people or groups tend to be excluded for the reason that they are not seeking *harmony*.⁵ Most people are not critical of the norms of the group but tend to accept them unconsciously and naturally. That is why they think that order within a group can be maintained and realized not through transcendent norms or ideas, but rather by the sincerity of the parties who seek peace. Those who have different opinions and ideas tend to be excluded or to be considered strange or stubborn persons.⁶ For example, at the time of decision making, the dynamics or the atmosphere of the group making a decision becomes more important than the principle on which a decision might be based. Maintaining harmony and getting a consensus supersedes the ideal. The dynamics of a decision-making body can be as changeable as the air. Therefore, people outside of the community often don't see the logic of decision-making. In this sense there is no accountability which is one of the most important factors in this international and democratic society.

In addition, no one person takes responsibility for a decision because, in reality, the air or atmosphere is responsible for the final decision. Thus, the important factor in this community is the atmosphere that contributes to getting along with others. Thus, "an orientation toward the interest of all people (*kung*) against the egoism of individuals and groups" cannot safeguard justice, unless there are wise people (sages) who hear the Mandate of the Heaven, participate in the decision making process and influence it.

4. THE PROBLEM OF COLLECTIVE EGOISM AND UNIVERSAL ALTRUISM.

We can see positive aspect in the Confucian ethic of harmony and believe that this ethic is rich in terms of service to others or altruistic actions. At a time when Western excessive individualism seems to be destroying the family and the community, we need to rehabilitate the Confucian ethic of harmony and enhance universal altruism without lapsing into collective egoism. We must try to apply the altruistic reciprocity of a small community to a much larger society.

5. Susumu Shimazono, p. 42.

Many Japanese Buddhists are optimistic that this can be achieved. Harmony can be realized in a local community, a company, a nation, and even in the international community among people of different cultures. It is the experience of selflessness or the experience of being released from the self-centered ego.

New religions vary in their opinions but “some religious groups understand the meaning of universal altruistic duty and advocate its practice, and show a new direction of altruism in a society which intensifies individualistic tendency.”⁷

Robert Kisala made a case study of Tenrikyo and Rissho Kosei-kai in terms of altruism.⁸ As far as RK is concerned, its ethic of everyday life has its doctrine of universal altruism on the basis of populace’s traditional Confucian morality. That is to say, ordinary morality is reinforced by Confucian morality and the virtues derived from Buddhism such as compassion and equality. These ethical implications are working through the teachings and actions of the founder and foundress.

“After the second world harmony, Rev. Nikkyo Niwano whose activities centered around a big metropolitan urban city advocated strengthening the solidarity of the family and local community in modern society and devoted himself to religious cooperation in order to solve social issues at an international level.” RK which is based on the international religious tradition of Buddhism tends to acquire an international character and is easily able to contribute to international aid activities. However, Kisala questions how far RK’s ethic is working to change the social structure. It does, however, work hard to tackle social issues by emphasizing the sovereignty of human beings, the meaning of life, and fostering the self-respect and self reliance of third world people who need aid. This is a little bit different from the approach that stresses the importance of social structure and theory.

5. ECOLOGICAL FEMINISM AND THE REHABILITATION OF CONFUCIAN ETHIC OF HARMONY.

The crucial difference between Confucianism and Taoism lies in the importance given to different kinds of harmony. The former emphasizes societal harmony while the latter gives priority to cosmic harmony. Even though the two emphasize the same virtue, the end results are quite different. On the one hand, the Confucianism values human effort and the culti-

7. Robert Kisala *Gendai Shyukyo to Shakai Rinri* [現代宗教と社會倫理](Seikyusha) p. 168

8. Kisala, *ibid.*

vation of moral values. Education, knowledge, ritual propriety (*li*) and the other three human relational values are all important. On the other, Taoism maintains that intentional human effort is harmful to the attainment of cosmic harmony.

Apart from the exploitation of minorities and women, modern society has also witnessed the destruction of the environment.

Professor Yayoi Aoki tries to grasp the problems of feminism and ecology from the same perspective and stresses the need for a paradigm change. She believes that the realization of feminism will be in the transformation of the relationships between men and women. At the same time ecological thought tries to transform the relationship between humans and the Nature. Without reconsidering human civilization as a whole, the paradigm shift cannot occur. Professor Kim's reference to Professor Chen Chung-ying is suggestive. One unity, *Tao*, "is not static, but creative and the basis for producing and strengthening harmony as a system of integration of differences" (Cheng Chung-ying:140) In this context, a new understanding of the Confucian and Taoist notion of *yin* and *yang* becomes more important than ever.

6. THE IMPORTANCE OF VENERATION ANCESTOR

According to Professor Nobuyuki Kaji, the idea of *hsiao* (filial piety) is the central religious notion of Confucianism. It is the connection between the morality and the religion of Confucianism. In Confucianism the veneration of family ancestors plays a significant role. It helps restore family unity and, in a practical sense, can mean remembering family ancestors, telling children the stories of our parents' and grandparents' lives and sharing family burdens and hopes with the next generation. This veneration creates what *Habits of the Heart* calls a "community of memory".⁹ In order to live a meaningful life, the individual must be related to communities of memory, because they provide a sense of history for the individual and locate him/her in the past, present and future. The book *Habits of the Heart* says,

The communities of memory that tie us to the past also turn us toward the future as communities of hope. They carry a context of meaning that can allow us to connect our aspirations for ourselves and those close to us with the aspirations of a larger whole and see our own efforts as being, in part, contributions to a common good.¹⁰

Unfortunately, in contemporary Japan, we are forgetting community and so each family is having difficulty holding onto a shared family consciousness.

9. *Habits of the Heart*, op. cit., p. 153.

10. *ibid.*

7. THE COMPATIBILITY WITH BUDDHIST IDEA

Many Japanese Buddhists see the value of harmony as one of the highest, and interprets the Buddhist ideal state, *nirvāṇa* (quiescence), as the dynamism of creation and harmony. In order to explain *nirvāṇa*, they understand it not merely as a state of mental peace and quietness, but the dynamic interplay of creation and harmony. It is like the music that results from the dynamic performance of a symphony orchestra.

The ethic of harmony is concerned with appropriate and subtle human relationships within a community. It is based upon a sense of hierarchical order and yet it is not rigidly supported by a system of normative principles. Rather it is based on a flexible sense of habits (customs) and the past experiences of a community.

The realization of harmony can be backed up by past life experiences in closer human relationships within the family, among relatives, or within a small social group to which he or she belongs.

A community has a great sense of security and belonging. The face-to-face relationship or the primary relationship is very efficient, solid and reliable for the members inside and decision making is easy and unanimous. It is extremely good as long as all goes well, and there is no crisis.

The norm of harmony functions to unite people and encourage them to develop a community sense of solidarity. On this topic Mr. Susumu Shimazono says,

This moral consciousness has an optimistic foundation in that it is built on the idea that interests and conflicts of ideas basically can be overcome. Each of us has sincerity and good will, and each of us can behave appropriately according to the situation, time and place. Modern Japanese think that a state of harmony and unity which goes beyond conflict can be realized without fail. However, this kind of harmony and unity can not be realized simply by every one following some common principles or basic rules. Instead these can be realized through being obedient to the dynamics of rationality within their own community. For the parties concerned, the point is not to be opportunistic in every situation, but to feel oneness with the current of nature which is beyond humanity.¹¹

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

The Confucian ethic of harmony is faced with major challenges in our borderless and global age. The traditional ethic of harmony is effective and can

11. Susumu Shimazono, p. 42

work for a traditional culture but may ignore the minority or make the minority become invisible. Yet, this can be overcome by the universal ethic of altruism found in the Confucian ethic of harmony. We have to awaken to the heterogeneous society of the world and learn how to get along with different cultures and races. We have to learn communication skills to gain mutual understanding in this heterogeneous and international society. We also have to make implicit and tacit customs and invisible rules explicit in order to communicate with people of different cultures and traditions. In this respect, the interaction between different cultures and races can provide a great dynamism for East Asian people. Through such cultural exchanges and communication we can find common ground and come to some reasonable agreements so that the international community can be maintained and become prosperous.

Taoist and Confucian Contributions to Harmony in East Asia: Christians in dialogue with Confucian Thought and Taoist Spirituality.

Final Statement

1. INTRODUCTION

Between 15-19 April 1996, 52 participants from 10 Asian countries gathered at Lei Li-O, the T'ienti Chiao Research Center in Nant'ou Hsien, Taiwan, R.O.C., for a seminar on the theme: Taoist and Confucian Contributions to Harmony in East Asia: Christians in dialogue with Confucian Thought and Taoist Spirituality. The participants studied the elements of the Confucian, and Taoist traditions which provide both an understanding of cosmic, interpersonal and interior personal harmony and a way to achieve that harmony. They examined the role of popular religious traditions in offering a sense of identity and dignity to their adherents, as well as a world view to unite the human with heaven.

From this conceptual basis, the participants reflected on harmony in Christianity, Confucian thought and Taoist spirituality. Finally, they explored the ways that modern believers in East Asian societies can profit from the philosophical and religious traditions of the region to form their own personal syntheses.

2. Confucian Contribution to Harmony in East Asia

The contribution of Confucianism to harmony basically begins from *Jen*. *Jen*, benevolence, is the inner core of the human being, the origin of all human values and the perfection of virtues. It is identical with the nature of heaven. Confucianism, a discipline that may be called "the learning of life", puts special emphasis on the cultivation of one's own self. Through the realization of the inner concept of morality, *Jen* aims at mastering the self and returning to the rites, ultimately seeking a harmonious relationship between human beings. Through self-reflection and self-realization, one can possess a loving heart, extending from the individual to others, until finally all people of the world are embraced in harmony. Confucianism also emphasizes the harmony between heaven and the human. It attains its ultimate fulfillment in the unification of heaven and human beings.

Since harmony is at the core of Confucianism, the maintenance of social stability is of utmost concern. In Confucius' ideal world, everyone has a personal identity and should act according to defined ethical and moral norms. This well-defined code provides a firm foundation for building strong bonds among family members. On this basis, social stability can be achieved.

The sequential order of self-strengthening from the personal to the social dimension is hierarchical. While the code of the "Five Relations" is reciprocal and that of the "Three Bonds" is one-sided, the contemporary challenge is to reinterpret the idea of the Five Relations, preserving it as a unifying power while recognizing the distinction between men and women as valid and valuable without exploiting that difference or feeling threatened by it. Then a true harmony will be achieved between sexes and in family life. This is an area that needs further reflection and development.

3. TAOIST CONTRIBUTIONS TO HARMONY IN EAST ASIA

Throughout Chinese history, Confucianism and Taoism have played complementary roles in sustaining the mundane and trans-mundane life of the Chinese people. While the former took charge of the outer life of Chinese people by providing them with politics and a family system, the latter offered them an interior path towards harmony with Nature or *Tao*. In Taoism, whether it be philosophical or religious, harmony is the most important goal to be achieved. The *Tao* is itself the most perfect harmony, often represented in the form of *T'ai Chi* ☯. This is perhaps the most perfect symbol of establishing a harmony of the two generative forces in the universe, *yin* and *yang*.

Insofar as the path toward harmony is concerned, Taoist uniqueness lies in its emphasis on spiritual cultivation, compared to the Confucian stress on interpersonal relationships. Distinguishing between philosophical and religious Taoism (always a controversial subject), we find a slight difference between these two systems in the way each pursues harmony. Philosophical Taoists prefer to take an intellectual approach to attain an ultimate harmony, *Tao*, whereas religious Taoists choose to follow the physical and spiritual way of cultivation one's body and nature.

Becoming one with *Tao*, the ultimate aim of philosophical Taoism, can be achieved only by philosophical awakening to the virtue of *wu-wei*, which can be translated as non-action or non-striving. Practically speaking, when a philosophical Taoist reaches the state of *wu-wei*, the person is emancipated from all human-made fixations of language, concepts, and prejudices which are the main cause of disharmony. At this stage, every

action the person takes follows the way of Nature and a perfect harmony of life is achieved.

Religious Taoists tend to emphasize physical and spiritual practice as the way to achieve the ultimate state of immortality. Aside from the external way of becoming an immortal by taking an elixir compounded of many metals, the Taoist religion also offers various interior practices to refine one's bodily ch'i. When the body achieves the purity of original ch'i, one is awakened to the inner self and becomes an immortal, a new self in union with Tao. At this stage, religious Taoists achieve not only trans-physical immortality, but also the philosophical enlightenment of wu-wei.

In both philosophical and religious approaches, Taoism advocates the pursuit of inner freedom and immortality. Taoists contribute to social harmony, not by interfering with mundane affairs, by remaining in silence. According to Taoists, Confucians try too hard to lead and direct people and this makes society more chaotic. Leaving people as they are and nature as it is is the Taoist way to bring harmony to society.

4. POPULAR BELIEF AND HARMONY

Popular belief incorporates many elements of Confucian and Taoist thought and has considerable influence on the popular world view. It was, until very recently, only taken seriously by its own proponents. Modern society tends to look down on it as primitive and superstitious, and at the academic level there has been opposition to its inclusion in serious studies alongside those of established religions and philosophies. Systematic studies in popular religion begin to feature more in dialogue meetings and academic conferences.

The basic supposition of popular belief is that the human person is a spiritual being living in a spirit-filled, mutually interacting and interdependent world. The underlying aim of customs, ritual, worship, etc. is the maintenance of harmony between humankind and the natural world.

In the discussion, two approaches to the study of popular religion emerged. One postulated an underlying metaphysic, a collective consciousness, passed down from generation to generation. This can be detected at the level of attitudes and values whereby the meaning and purpose of life are addressed, though not in the explicit way of the metaphysic of the organized religions. This is not a fixed system but rather, a constantly changing entity, always assimilating new fragments and showing a collective creativity.

The other approach begins from the level of religious experience, that sense of awe and wonder which arises from one's existential experience of

spirits and nature and sharing a common destiny with them. It is this religious experience, not a set of concepts or social values, which gives rise to and maintains the impetus in popular belief.

In practice, popular belief provides for the emotional and religious needs of the human person. To its adherents, the rituals and ceremonies of popular religion helps to bring about harmony in the individual, within the community, and between the individual and nature. If for no other reason, popular religion deserves further study and elaboration.

5. CHRISTIAN CONTRIBUTION TO HARMONY IN EAST ASIA

The notion of harmony, though not the term itself, is a major theme of Christianity. Like “peace”, the term can express the sum total of salvation offered by God through Jesus Christ. Christianity teaches a threefold harmony: harmony with God, among humans, and with the whole universe. Union with a personal God is viewed as the source of all genuine harmony. Lao Tzu’s Tao is impersonal. Confucian teaching does not insist on a personal relationship with Tien. Christianity presents a God who is clearly personal even though the concept of God finds a transpersonal understanding in the mystical tradition. A harmonious relationship with this personal God is the basis for all proper relations among humans and with the world.

It is often thought that a personal god would be in conflict with human persons. A God with free will who is all powerful would exercise oppressive control over humans. This is not the case. The transcendental anthropology of contemporary theologians points out that, far from being oppressive, God is the natural fulfillment of humans. The Christian God is a loving God who created human beings in God’s image and destined them to share God’s own life in a free response. Irenaeus, one the early Fathers of the Church, affirmed that the glory of God consists precisely in rendering humans fully alive.

To prove this immense love for mankind, God gave Jesus Christ to the world so that men and women might become God’s children by participating in Jesus’ filial relationship with God. This filial relationship is the essence of Christian existence. The Christian’s filial relationship with God necessarily implies relationship with others as brothers and sisters. For this reason, the one Christian commandment of love bears a twofold aspect: love of God and love of neighbor. Negation of love is the capital sin in Christian life. In complete surrender to the Father and total dedication to his fellow human beings, Christ is the supreme example of this twofold love and the source of harmony between god and humans.

6. CHRISTIAN FAITH IN DIALOGUE WITH CONFUCIAN THOUGHT AND TAOIST SPIRITUALITY IN EAST ASIA

Coming into living contact with Confucian thought—a complex system of ethical teaching based on the benevolent design of God and expressed in an orderly scheme of human relationships—Christianity finds a friendly and mutually enriching partner in dialogue. Christians are reminded of the central value of the family and the importance of social order, which should also be an integral part of Christian life. On the other hand, Christianity makes a contribution by explicitly fostering a filial relationship to a personal God. Another contribution can be offered to the social order of Asian countries by Christianity's preferential option for the poor.

In addition to the Biblical teaching of harmony between God and humans, St. Paul teaches harmony with the whole of creation, especially through the ideal of “recapitulation” - putting all things under Christ as head. Unfortunately, due to their anthropocentric emphasis, Christians have for too long neglected the cosmic dimension of the Christian vocation. In our time, contemporary theologians have restored the idea of a cosmic Christ and stressed human harmony with the universe.

In a special way, Confucianism and Taoism contemplate the unity of the whole universe, with humanity as part of it. Lao-Tzu presents *wu-wei* (non-action) as the basic characteristic of Tao and of the true sage. Instead of manipulating and unduly interfering with the created world, one should respect and follow the natural course and rhythm of nature. Dialogue with Taoist spirituality should inspire Christians to a greater sense of respect for and harmony with nature by reducing the desire to control and through the adoption of a simple way of life. Moreover, the idea of Tao as *wu* also invited Christians to explore and rediscover the mystical tradition deeply rooted in Christianity. At the same time, the tripersonal God of Christianity that is both hidden and manifest, *wu* and *yu*, transcendent and immanent, may find resonance in some of the key concepts in Taoism and help to elucidate these concepts.

7. CONCLUSION

We, the participants from the Taoist, Confucian and Christian traditions, have spent these days together sharing the richness of our respective teachings. The main focus of the conference was at the level of systems of thought. The practical contributions of each tradition to harmony in society and the personal experience at the base of Confucian and Taoist world views must remain for another time. The following quotation from the Tao Te Ching was thought most appropriate to point the way forward:

I have just three things to teach:
simplicity, patience, compassion.
These three are your greatest treasures.
Simple in actions and in thoughts, you return to
the source of being.
Patient with both friends and enemies, in accord
with the way things are.
Compassionate toward yourself,
you bring all being in the world into harmony
(*Tao Te Ching*, 67)

Reports From the Centres

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CURRENT GROUP RESEARCH TOPIC:

Thought, Scholarship and Religion
in the Edo Period (1600-1868) and
their influence on the Meiji Period
(1868-1912).

- 1) a. Historical outlines
b. Specific characteristics
c. Topics and methods of research
- 2) Development of thought in
 - a. the traditional school (*Koku Gaku*):
Sō Keichō, Kada Azumarō,
Kamo no Mabuchi, Moto'ori
Norinaga, his son Haruniwa,
Hirata Atsutane and Fujitani
Mitsue.
 - b. the Western (Dutch) influenced
School (*Yō-gaku* or *Ran-gaku*):
Arai Hakuseki, Aoi Konyon,
Maeno Ryōtaku, Sugita
Genpaku (especially in the
Kaitai Shinsho)
This school was strongly
influenced by Western
medicine brought by the Dutch
at Dejima in Nagasaki.
 - c. the continental school (*Shōshi-
gaku*) working under the
influence of Chinese and
Korean Confucian scholars.
- 3) Development in technology and
science
Especially under the 8th Shōgun,

Tokugawa Yoshimune (ruled from
1716-1745), great progress was
made with Dutch help in astronomy
and the calendar, physics, chemistry
and marine measurement.

PUBLICATION:

Matsuoka, Kōji. *Contemptus Mundi:
Text and Commentary*. Yumani Shōbō,
Tokyo, 1996.

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Institute for Theology and Religion

Sogang University, Seoul, Korea
tel/fax:342-716-1928(Keel Hee-sung)
Director: Suh, Kong-suk

NEW PUBLICATION:

Keel, Hee-sung, *Understanding Shinran:
A Dialogical Approach* (Fremont, C.A. :
Asian Humanities Press 1995)

NEWS & COMMUNICATIONS:

Sr. Kim Sung-hae attended BIRA
V/4 at Lei Li O, Taiwan, April 15-
19, 1996 with five other participants
from Korea. The major theme of the
conference was "harmony".

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Nanzan Institute of Religion and Culture

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NEW WEB SITE:

The Institute can now be found on the World Wide Web. The home page address is given below. Inter-Religio is now just one click away at <http://www.ic.nanzan.ac.jp/SHUBUNKEN>

REPORT:

- 2 Jan: Copies of 'Understanding Shinran,' vol. 6 of *Nanzan Studies in Asian Religions*, arrive from Asian Humanities Press.
- 30 Jan: Bob Kisala and Jim Heisig travel to the Seton Inter-religious Center in Seoul for a two-day meeting on restructuring the Inter-Religio network.
- 16 May: A colloquium is held with Loek Halman, Research Fellow at the Work and Organization Research Center of Tilburg University on "Changes in Religion and Morality in Western Societies: Results from the European Values Studies 1981-1990." The Nanzan Institute is preparing to collaborate with other institutes in Japan to compose and conduct a similar survey in Asia.
- 24 May: A periodical meeting of scholars of religion from central Japan met at the Nanzan Institute to discuss a presentation by Hisamatsu Eiji (an associate fellow of the Institute) on "Prayer in the Eastern Orthodox tradition."
- 1 April: Jan Van Bragt, for many years director of the Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture and Jan Swyngedouw, one of the co-founders, retired from the University after some

twenty years of service to the Institute. Inaba Koyu, who specializes in Tendai Buddhism, joins the staff as a Research Associate staff.

Okuyama Michio is named Research Student of the Institute. He will leave on 1 July for a year's study in the United States.

29 May-4 June: Watanabe Manabu and Paul Swanson attend a conference in Taiwan.

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NCC Center for the Study of Japanese Religions

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Director: Dr. Yuki Hideo

EVENTS

In Japan, the past year was overshadowed by two tragic events: the great Hanshin Earthquake of January 17, and the gas attack on Tokyo's subway system on March 20. Leaders of the neo-new religious group *Aum Shinri-kyō* have been indicted for this attack and for other criminal activities. These events have been followed by heated discussion in the media and elsewhere concerning proposed revisions to strengthen the Religious Corporations Law (the law governing registration and control of religious bodies in Japan). For the first time in recent years "religion" is the subject of public discussion at all levels of society.

The Study Center's work has been affected as we try to respond to these events. In May, Lectures and a

discussion on the theme “Why cults now?” were organized. The Director of the Center, Prof. Yuki Hideo spoke on “Cults and Science” and Dr. Alexander Kabanoff (St. Petersburg) on “Aum in Russia”. This meeting was followed by two more: In July, Ms Yamashita Akiko gave a talk on “Science and Religion—the case of Kōfuku-no-kagaku [‘The Science of Happiness’, another neo-new religion],” and in October Ms. Matsuoka Yukako lectured on “Connections between Saibaba [the founder of an Indian new religion] and *Aum Shinri-kyō*.” The residential seminar (in Japanese) was held in December on the subject “The challenge of neo-new religions to traditional religions.” Young persons spoke about their views on religion, and lectures on cults were given by Prof. Ikoma Kōshō (Bunkyo College). The seminar was followed by a symposium on the Religious Corporations Law.

COMMUNICATIONS

Ms. Yamashita Akiko carried our fieldwork in Indonesia on Batak Christianity and folk religion in August and September. Ms. Matsuoka Yukako was a principal translator of Dōgen’s *Shobogenzo* into present-day Japanese (Published this year). The Church Mission Society (London) has sent Ms. Claire Debenham to join the Center’s staff as managing editor of *Japanese Religions* and to engage in the fields of Japanese liturgy and spirituality. In December, Prof. Yanagida Seizan (Hanazono University) completed the monthly lectures for *Buddhist Text*

Study Group on the Zen classic *Rinzai (Lin-chi) Records*.

Among the visitors of the Study Center were Mr. John Capen (Oregon Episcopal School), Dr. Antony Fernandez (Intercultural Research Center, Sri Lanka), Prof. Helga Gripp-Hagelstange (Duisburg University), Prof. Glen Bucher (President, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley), and Prof. C. S. Song (Pacific School of Theology, USA). In addition, three groups from overseas visited the Study Center to learn more about interreligious dialogue: Prof. John Payne together with students from Lancaster Theological Seminary; students from the Cusanus Foundation (Germany); and a group from the MBK Mission (Germany).

PUBLICATIONS

The July 1995 issue of *Japanese Religions* contains articles on the Taoist Koshin cult (part III) by Livia Kohn, the Watch Tower Society in Japan by Jack Nelson, geriatric rituals (*Pokkuri*) by Richard Young and Ikeuchi Fuki, and reports on the earthquake and on *Aum Shinri-kyō*. The January 1996 edition of *Japanese Religions* is a special issue of “Pure Land Buddhism in Heian and Kamakura Japan”, edited by Robert Rhodes. It contains articles on Kōya by Hayami Tasuku, early Genshin biographies by Robert Rhodes, an early Hōnen biography by Christoph Kleine, Hōnen’s interpretation of the Pure Land Sōtras by Martin Repp, Shinran’s Historical Consciousness by Yasutomi Shinya, and reviews of related books.

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REPORT

The Education to Service Program presented the following lecture series:

- 3 Feb. From Chinese village to modern Hong Kong. Dr. Chan Shun-hing, Director of the Christian Study Centre and lecturer at Baptist University. Folk Religion in Hong Kong, Prof Erik Kwan, Former Professor of Psychology at Hong Kong University.
- 24 Feb. Buddhism in Hong Kong, David Yung Chiu-wing, Chairman of the Buddhist Youth Centre. Christianity and Buddhism, Prof. Peter Lee, Professor of Theology at the Hong Kong Lutheran Theological Seminary.
- 16 Mar. Neo-Confucianism, Prof. Liu Shu-hsien, Professor of Philosophy at the Chinese University, Hong Kong. Confucianism and the Christian Faith, Dr. Au Gin-ming, lecturer, Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary.
- 13 Apr. Folk Religion in Hong Kong, Prof. Erik Kwan
New Religions in Hong Kong, Grace Ma, research director, Tao Fung Shan.

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REPORT

The two largest Christian bodies in Asia—the Christian Conference of Asia (CCA) and the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC)—held an ecumenical consultation in Cheung Chau, Hong Kong, between 12-16 March, 1996. Taking part were 42 participants from 15 Asian countries and official delegates from the World Council of Churches and Vatican's Pontifical Council for Promoting Christian Unity.

The consultation studied "The Theology of Ecumenism," "The Vision of Christian Unity," and "Building on what Unites, Overcoming what Divides" according to their respective understanding of each other. From this theological background, the participants embarked on a common search for practical ways to work for Christian unity in Asia and committed themselves to a wide range of programs aimed at fostering Christian unity. The two bodies agreed to form the **Asian Ecumenical Committee** as a structure for implementing proposals to share information, cooperate on social issues, and provide ecumenical formation.

By sharing insights on the subject of Christian unity and by worshipping together, the church representatives became aware of the common responsibility of all Christians for

overcoming the scandal of a divided Christianity. They tried to identify the obstacles to Christian unity in Asia: a long history of mutual indifference, prejudice, and hostility, an inadequate understanding of ecumenism, the failure of the ecumenical movement to reach the grass roots, a lack of structures to carry out initiatives, and unresolved doctrinal, moral and disciplinary issues. They also sought signs of hope: joint ecumenical activities at national and local levels, the experience of churches in Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, and Taiwan where churches have formed more inclusive ecumenical bodies, common responses to social, political and economic issues, improved attitudes towards other denominations, increasing willingness to overcome prejudices and share experiences, and the heroism of Asian Christians of all churches who have given their lives in fidelity to Christ.

Between 15-19 April, the Office of Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conference held its first ever dialogue seminar with the followers of Confucian and Taoist traditions. The site of the seminar, at which 52 participants from 10 Asian countries took part, was significant. BIRA V/4, the fourth in the OEIA BIRA V series, was conducted at the T'ienti Chiao Spiritual Center in the mountains of central Taiwan. T'ienti Chiao is a new religion within the monotheist Taoist tradition.

(The final statement from this conference can be found on page 34 of this issue.)

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Thanks to the efforts of Director Jim Heisig and team at the Nanzan Institute for religion & Culture, *Inter-Religio* now has its own page on the world wide web. Besides giving a list of Network members, a complete index of articles, listed by author, is also given. You can also send an e-mail message to the editor by clicking the highlighted name.

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