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Ching Feng

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Ching Feng

A Journal on Christianity and Chinese Religion and Culture

NEW SERIES, VOLUME 6, NUMBER 2, 2005

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JOSEPH TSE-HEI LEE

A Christian Monastery for Buddhist Monks

Part II: Buddhist Rhetoric in Karl Ludvig Reichelt's Christian Liturgies

NOTTO R. THELLE

In the previous article¹ I described the attempts of the Norwegian missionary Karl Ludvig Reichelt to establish Christian monasteries for Buddhist monks in Nanjing in the 1920s and in Hong Kong in the 1930s. In the article my detailed analysis of the strategies and structures of the monasteries, including architecture, outward and inward design, and daily life, shows that these institutions were consistently modelled after Buddhist monasteries, but with the ultimate aim of converting Buddhist monks to Christian faith.

In this article I will continue my investigation, focusing on the very centre of the spirituality in these institutions, the devotional life expressed primarily in their liturgies and hymns, but also to some extent in other devotional and contemplative activities. I will first describe the role of devotional life in Reichelt's piety and practice, which is important for understanding the effort he put into designing liturgical traditions that would make sense to Buddhists. Then I will in greater detail introduce some of the liturgies and hymns developed in Nanjing and Hong Kong, with special attention to their peculiar mixture of Buddhist

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¹ "A Christian Monastery for Buddhist Monks, Part I: Karl Ludvig Reichelt's Sacred Mountains," *Ching Feng*, n.s., 6, no. 1 (2005): 1–35.

and Christian rhetorics. Reichelt regarded the Buddhist terminology as an effective way to introduce Christian ideas, and consistently gave them a Christian interpretation. In order to grasp the ambiguities and potential meanings of the liturgies and related texts, I will offer three renderings of the central parts of the liturgies and hymns: (1) the Chinese original; (2) a “Christianized” translation of these sections offered by Reichelt himself, when it is available in Norwegian or English; or a corresponding “Reicheltean” translation based on hints from his other writings or comments; and (3) my own translation, using the most accurate Buddhist terminology in the numerous passages where such expressions are used.² A comparative approach to the texts will hopefully help us to see more clearly the mixture of rhetorics in the predominantly Christian liturgies.³

Additional aspects of this comparative approach will be to clarify Reichelt’s own reasons for such a bold use of Buddhist terminology; to suggest some of the hermeneutical implications; and to register at least some of the inherent ambiguities of his venture, such as the tension between his missionary ambitions and the potential Buddhistification of Christianity; and the mixed responses ranging from enthusiastic support to confusion and even violent opposition.

1. LITURGICAL WORSHIP AT THE CENTRE OF RELIGION

We have already observed that worship and devotion occupied a central place in Karl Ludvig Reichelt’s institutions in Nanjing and Hong Kong, but in order to enable the reader to better appreciate the analyses

² I want to thank Thomas Chi-ho Lee for taking time to discuss the translations of the liturgies.

³ As Buddhism contributed to Chinese religious language in general, it was inevitable that terminology coloured by Buddhism also entered the generally accepted Christian vocabulary. W. A. P. Martin argued in 1889 that “half the doctrines of Christianity are introduced to the Chinese in a dress borrowed from Buddhism,” and registered a series of such terms; see his article “Is Buddhism a Preparation for Christianity?” *Chinese Recorder* (hereafter cited as *CR*) 20, no. 5 (1889): 193–203; World Missionary Conference, 1910, *Report on Commission IV: The Missionary Message in Relation to Non-Christian Religions* (Edinburgh: Oliphant, Anderson & Ferrier, 1910), 57. My emphasis in this analysis will be on terminology that was not generally adopted by the churches, but was consciously used by Reichelt and his co-workers in order to appeal to the Buddhists.

of the liturgies and hymns in this article, I will briefly describe the devotional piety that characterized both Reichelt himself and the institutions he established.⁴

Filip Riisager and others have described Reichelt's background in view of Norwegian Lutheran pietism.⁵ The warm emotional piety of his childhood in a small town on the south coast of Norway was further developed by his exposure to the dominant orthodox Lutheran pietism, when he was a student at the missionary college in Stavanger. The dominant trend in conservative church life was a variety of "*Erfahrungstheologie*" ("experiential theology") of the Erlangen School, represented by Gisle Johnson and his "*pistik*," a systematic attempt to combine the experience of faith (Greek: *pistis*) with rational reflection. The emphasis on the personal experience of faith was expressed in a deep sense of sin, and a corresponding confidence in the grace of Christ, interpreted through a pietistic reading of Lutheran confessions and the Bible. Such influences were to some extent modified by Reichelt's own experiences of nature from early childhood, his exposure to the more life-affirming spirituality of the Danish theologian and reformer N. F. S. Grundtvig (1783–1872), and various types of moderate liberal theology. There is room for discussion as to how and to what extent these trends moulded Reichelt's future work, but in spite of the accusations of liberalism and syncretism there is no doubt that somehow they remained basic elements in his whole life. That applies both to his preoccupation with sin, his emotional religiosity and his devotional life. Important in our context is that the pietistic church life in Norway, with all its individualism and emotionalism, went along with a Lutheran tradition of worship that was liturgical and sacramental. While most Protestant missions were preoccupied with freer forms of "meetings" in the preaching places, Reichelt regarded liturgical worship as the central expression of religious life.⁶ From this point of view it seems adequate to characterize him by the words *lex orandi, lex credendi* (the law of prayer is the law of belief), which suggest that his life of devotion and worship not only reflected his basic theological ideas in ways that his

⁴ In addition to my previous article, "Karl Ludvig Reichelt's Sacred Mountains," see also Thor Strandenæs, "Liturgien—mellom universell form og lokal kulturytring. Reichelts liturgiske tenkning" [The liturgy: between universal form and local cultural expression. The liturgical thinking of Reichelt], *Norsk Tidsskrift for Misjon* (hereafter cited as *NOTM*) 49 (1995): 1–31.

⁵ Filip Riisager, *Forventning og Opfyldelse* [Expectation and fulfilment] (Aarhus: Forlaget Aros, 1973), 151–88; idem, *Lotusblomsten og korset* [The lotus and the cross] (Copenhagen: Gads, 1998), 70–98.

⁶ This point is developed in some detail in Strandenæs, "Liturgien."

writings not always did, but also was to some extent a formative power in his theological development.

The Holy—das Heilige

A few additional categories are, however, needed for a more exact description of the devotional religiosity with which Reichelt identified. One of the central notions is the experience of “the holy” (*das Heilige*) as described by Rudolf Otto and Nathan Söderblom; the role of contemplation and meditation analyzed by Friedrich Heiler is also to be noted.⁷ It is not certain at what stage Reichelt became acquainted with Otto’s and Söderblom’s writings about “the holy,” but their influence on him was already evident in the early 1920s, when he developed his ideas into concrete strategies.⁸ Riisager is probably right in noting that Reichelt was more in tune with the “*fascinosum*” or “*fascinans*” aspect of religion,⁹ but the “*tremendum*” aspect remained at least in his preoccupation with sin, as we shall see.

It would be a mistake, however, to assume that it was Otto and Söderblom who had laid the basis for Reichelt’s preoccupation with “the holy” and other related categories. Rather, their phenomenological studies afforded him in his own spiritual life and in his experience of devotional piety a common ground for Christians and Buddhists. In addition, their studies carried academic credibility and afforded him conceptual tools with which he might develop his ideas with greater confidence.

⁷ Rudolf Otto, *Das Heilige* (Breslau: Trewendt & Granier, 1917). Söderblom actually anticipated Otto’s emphasis on “the holy” as the central category of religious life, in *Gudstrons uppkomst* [The origin of faith in God] (Stockholm: Hugo Geber, 1914) as well as his contribution to the entry on “Holiness,” in *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, ed. James Hastings, vol. 6 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1913), 731–41. Reichelt’s copy of Friedrich Heiler’s *Die buddhistische Versenkung* (Munich: Verlag von Ernst Reinhardt, 1922) shows that he was also quite familiar with Heiler’s analysis of contemplative piety. See also Riisager, *Lotusblomsten*, 142, 148–54.

⁸ For further comments on Reichelt’s relationship to these scholars, see Riisager, *Lotusblomsten*, 71–77, 84–86, 142, 148–54, 168–94.

⁹ Riisager, *ibid.*, 76.

The Sanctuary

The most characteristic and perhaps also the most important testimony to Reichelt's devotional piety was his extreme preoccupation with establishing sanctuaries for worship wherever he arrived. At least this is the impression one gets from his numerous articles and reports. Whenever he moved into a new house or new premises, he reported with enthusiasm that "finally" the chapel was ready, not only for preaching purposes, but for private as well as public prayer and worship. That was the case in Ningxiang 寧鄉 in 1905 and 1908,¹⁰ and again in 1910, soon after the premises had been burnt down in public riots.¹¹ He wrote about the small interim altar he and the monk Kuandu 寬度 established as they were producing a design for the future work during the summer of 1919.¹² Apart from the necessary bedrooms, the chapel was the first room to be furnished when the new work started in Nanjing in 1922.¹³ When the formal altar arrived, which was built in Buddhist style, Reichelt described it enthusiastically as "lovely, ornamental, with an atmosphere of its own."¹⁴ When they moved into the new premises in 1924, again it was the chapel and guest facilities that were especially mentioned.¹⁵ When an interim institute was established in Shanghai in 1927, he devoted a whole article to describe the new chapel, which was dedicated in "a mighty and moving celebration." Overwhelmed by emotions he wrote, "Oh, these sacred moments before the altar of God."¹⁶ When Tao Fong Shan was built in the 1930s, the Christ Chapel was one of the earliest erected buildings, an interim chapel having been used in the meantime.¹⁷

These sanctuaries were used in a daily rhythm of worship, prayer and meditation. Equally important was a practice followed by Reichelt and his colleagues whenever they received guests. The reports, articles and letters consistently describe how the guests were first brought to

¹⁰ *Kamp og seier* [Struggle and victory] (hereafter cited as *K&S*), 1905, 70–71; 1908, 58–59.

¹¹ *Norsk Missionstidende* (hereafter cited as *NMT*), 1910, 574–76.

¹² *Kinas buddhister for Kristus* [China's Buddhists for Christ] (Stavanger: Det Norske Misjonsselskap, 1921), 13.

¹³ *Records of the Norwegian Missionary Society Conference in Changsha 1923*, 71.

¹⁴ Letter to N. N. Thelle, 20 July 1923.

¹⁵ *NMT*, 1924, 119

¹⁶ *Buddhistmissionen* (the journal of the Mission to Buddhists, hereafter cited as *BM*), 1928, 5, 7.

¹⁷ The building process was frequently reported in *BM* in the early 1930s.

the sanctuary to worship, to share some sacred moments, to pray or just to be quiet, before they were introduced to the rest of the facilities. It might have been inspired by Buddhist practices. But it certainly revealed the overarching importance of the sanctuary in Reichelt's religious life.

One aspect of devotional life, namely meditation, deserves special mention. Meditation was partly individual meditation in particular sessions of prayer and quietude, and partly meditation that is included in the rituals for common worship. The details and implications will be discussed in my analysis of the various liturgies. For now it is important to note that this aspect of devotional life was nurtured both by Reichelt's spiritual background in Lutheran pietism and by his exposure to meditation in Buddhist spirituality. His concern for meditation is also evinced by his attempt to introduce meditation and spiritual retreat as a discipline for Norwegian Christians, notably for the clergy already in the 1920s.¹⁸

One may notice that his devotional fascination also triggered his admiration for Buddhist places of worship, which he described with his flowery rhetoric: impressive beauty, quiet solemnity, sublime yearning, sanctity, warm and moving devotion, wonderful mysticism, simplicity, magnificence, and similar words. He loved to study temples and liturgies, and one of his real contributions to the study of Buddhism was his excellent description of the actual life in the monasteries.¹⁹ He had his reservations, and from time to time uttered negative remarks about dead worship, shameful practices and spiritual poverty,²⁰ or expressed fears that the beauty of the Buddhist sanctuaries might prevent the expansion of Christianity.²¹ In most cases, however, he was deeply moved and fascinated, and to a great extent identified himself with the sense of devotion he met in those sanctuaries. He was, so to say, among his own.

¹⁸ His lecture to clergymen was published as a booklet, *Kristelig meditation* [Christian meditation] (Oslo: Buddhistmisjonens Forlag, 1926).

¹⁹ His descriptions may be found throughout his career, but most characteristically gathered in his three-volume study *Fromhetstyper og helligdommer i Øst-Asia* [Pious characters and sanctuaries in the Far East], 3 vols. (Oslo: Dreyers, 1947–49), e.g. 1:211, 3:40, 179; see also *NMT*, 1911, 376–77; *Mot Tibets grænser* [Towards the boundaries of Tibet] (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1933), 118.

²⁰ See, e.g., Reichelt, *Fromhetstyper*, 3:40; *NMT*, 1905, 62; *Mot Tibets*, 118.

²¹ Visiting the impressive temples in Kyoto, he commented that it was “no wonder that Kyoto is one of the most difficult places to preach the Gospel in all Japan”; *NMT*, 1911, 377.

The Sanctuary of the Heart

Against this background it is no surprise that the “sanctuary” (*helligdom*) also became one of Reichelt’s most cherished metaphors for the inner dimension of religious life, sometimes expressed with reference to the Holy of Holies in the Jewish Temple. One of his most popular books, *Fra Kristuslivets helligdom* (The sanctuary of Christ-life), features the search for the “inner dimension” or “inner springs” of religion. Here he even refers to the sacred dimension “beyond the isolated temple of Christianity.”²² The metaphor of sanctuary is used in numerous combinations, such as “the sanctuary of the personal revelation of the divine,” “the sanctuary of meditation,” meditation being “the true sanctuary of Buddhism,” “the sanctuary of Confucianism,” “the sanctuary of the New Testament,” and so on.²³ The inner core of religious experience takes place in “the Holy of Holies” of the soul. Even nature may guide people towards “the Holy of Holies of human life, which is the living yearning for God.”²⁴ The pious mother of Miaochi, a Buddhist monk whose life he has portrayed in one of his books, is characterized as a “priestess” for her home, since her caring for the offerings on the altar has left so deep impressions on her sons.²⁵

Reichelt also used the metaphor of sanctuary for analyzing the Gospel of John, a gospel that he appreciated more than any others. The entire structure of the gospel is like that of a sanctuary, he argued, where the reader is guided from the main gate in the prologue to the Holy of the Holies in the Easter narration; the reader arrives in the sacristy with the final sending of the apostles.²⁶

²² *Fra Kristuslivets helligdom* [The sanctuary of Christ-life] (Copenhagen: Gads Forlag, 1931), 13.

²³ See, e.g., *Fromhetstyper*, 1:62, 100, 202; 2:145.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 1:145; “Weishan kloster” [Weishan Monastery], in *Fra Norges innsats i verdensmissionen* [Norway’s contribution to world mission] (Stavanger: Det Norske Missionselskap, 1921), 133.

²⁵ *Fromhetstyper*, 2:39

²⁶ See Reichelt, *Yuehanfuyin de jiegou mudi ji qi tedian* 約翰福音的結構目的及其特點 [The structure, purpose and characteristics of the Gospel of John] (Hong Kong: Xinyizong lianhe chubanshu, 1952). Reichelt seems to have mixed images from traditional Norwegian churches and the Jewish Temple: the Gospel opens with the prologue as the main gate (1:1–18), continues through the main hall (1:19–12:50) to the Holy (13:1–17:26), and further to the Holy of Holies with the altar of reconciliation (chapters 18–19) and the altar of resurrection (chapter 20), while the sacristy behind the sacred altars is the place where the future of the church is organized (chapter 21). Reichelt might have drawn the idea from Kenneth Saunders, *The Gospel for Asia: A*

Reichelt, however, also used the metaphor of sanctuary to describe the process of conversion to Christianity, which appears somewhat in tension with his admiration for devotion and meditation as “the sanctuary of Buddhism” and with his awareness of a dimension beyond the Christian sanctuary. He was concerned about leading the monks “into the sanctuary” of the Christian faith²⁷—or from the outer court of the temple all the way to the inner sanctuary.²⁸ Dialoguing with Buddhist visitors he seemed to use the liturgies and scripture readings as a means for deeper understanding, as described in the story of the monk Miao-chi.²⁹ Actually Miao-chi’s story may be understood as Reichelt’s ideal model of an expected psychological and spiritual pilgrimage from the outer court to the Holy of Holies.

A final aspect of the sanctuary metaphor is Reichelt’s preoccupation with the imagery of the Letter to the Hebrews, which describes Christ as high priest who sacrificed himself, once and for all, opening the way beyond the veil in the Temple to the Holy of Holies of the heavenly sanctuary. Reichelt was, actually, extremely interested in the life on the other side of the veil, with which he wanted to be in constant communication.³⁰

Study of Three Religious Masterpieces. Gita, Lotus, and Fourth Gospel (London: SPCK, 1928). Reichelt’s comments in his copy of Saunders’s book have shown that he was impressed by Saunders’s description of John’s Gospel as a temple or a basilica.

²⁷ *Fromhetstyper*, 3:306; *BM*, 1928, 69.

²⁸ *NMT*, 1927, 441.

²⁹ *Fromhetstyper*, 2:293–96.

³⁰ I have argued elsewhere that Reichelt was to some extent influenced by his contact with esoteric communities, Theosophists, Anthroposophists, and members of Chinese esoteric communities, such as Daoyuan 道院 and others; see “Karl Ludvig Reichelt—pionéren som kom inn fra kulden. Behov for en ny kritisk vurdering” [Karl Ludvig Reichelt: the pioneer who came in from the cold. Demand for a new critical evaluation], *NOTM* 52, no. 4 (1998): 207–8. When Miao-chi’s pious mother died, Reichelt was comforted by the thought that she was now an “interceder in the (heavenly) sanctuary, a priestly representative before the powers of life and eternity” (*Fromhetstyper*, 2:44–45). His *Fra Kristuslivets helligdom* in particular has numerous references to “the veil,” which might have been inspired by esoteric rhetoric.

2. RESOURCES FOR LITURGICAL EXPERIMENTATION

Against this background of liturgical and devotional spirituality it is easier to recognize the importance of the liturgies and devotional material developed by Reichelt and his associates in the “monasteries” in Nanjing and Hong Kong.

My material for the present study primarily consists of two liturgical books bearing the same name, *Libai yishi he shengli* 禮拜儀式和聖禮, “Worship ritual and sacraments.” One was published for use at the two Ching Fong Shan institutions in Nanjing in 1928, resulting from several years of experimentation. The other was a revised and expanded version of the former one, published in 1936 for use at Tao Fong Shan in Hong Kong and some newly established branch institutions.³¹ It is not clear whether there existed any printed version earlier than the former—at least none have yet been found. But references in other written sources have made it possible to reconstruct at least some stages of the experimentation in the 1920s.

There is a great variety of translations and explanations of, and comments on, these liturgies, primarily in Norwegian, and to a limited extent in other Scandinavian languages and English as well. The most basic text is Reichelt’s comprehensive article on the ritual of the Mission to Buddhists from 1930,³² but a number of explanations and alternative translations have appeared elsewhere, which will be referred to whenever relevant to my analysis. Most important for understanding Reichelt’s use of Buddhist rhetoric and concepts are his articles “Indigenous Religious Phrases That May Be Used to Interpret the Christian Message” and “Extracts from the Buddhist Ritual,” published in 1927 and 1928 respectively.³³ But his many books and other publica-

³¹ The first was published in Shanghai in 1928, the other in Hong Kong in 1936. The English title printed on the back of the Hong Kong edition is “Ritual of the Church of Christ among the Religious Devotees of East Asia.”

³² “Buddhistmisjonens ritual” [The ritual of the Mission to Buddhists] (hereafter cited as “Ritual”), *Nordisk Missionstidsskrift* [Nordic Missionary Journal], 1930, 275–87. This article was also published as booklet.

³³ “Indigenous Religious Phrases That May Be Used to Interpret the Christian Message,” *CR* 58, no. 2 (1927): 123–26; “Extracts from the Buddhist Ritual,” *CR* 59, no. 3 (1928): 160–70. The extracts are taken from the most widespread Buddhists ritual book, which was systematically used by Reichelt in his attempt to develop his own liturgies. See below for further comments.

tions are also important for understanding his wider strategies and hermeneutical principles.

The basis for the liturgical life in the institutions was clearly the liturgy that had been developed in the Lutheran churches in China. With Reichelt's liturgical interest he was at an early stage elected to the liturgical committee of the Lutheran community, which included missionaries from Scandinavia and the United States, in addition to Chinese pastors. The Chinese Lutheran liturgy was an almost literal translation of Scandinavian and American versions, not only in structure and rhetoric, but even in musical expressions. The only new element in the Chinese version was the attempt to adapt the celebration of All Saints' Day to the Chinese Ching Ming Festival for the ancestors.³⁴

Commenting on the new rituals developed for the work in Nanjing, Reichelt emphasized that both the liturgy for the main Sunday morning worship (high mass) and other rituals were based on and followed the structure of the Lutheran common ritual. It was Christocentric and thus also theocentric. And he argued that it was in accordance with the Lutheran tradition, referring to investigations made by prominent representatives of the church, both foreigners and Chinese. The difference was the consistent attempt to give the liturgies an Eastern clothing, notably a few pieces of ritual (*ritualstykker*) that had a special value for Buddhists and other religious devotees. Three such passages were particularly mentioned: the threefold Dedication to the Trinity, the hymn of devotion and the ritual of penance.³⁵

The liturgies, especially when rendered in Norwegian or in other Western translations, appear to confirm Reichelt's contention that they were in accordance with the Lutheran tradition. A closer investigation of these Chinese rituals, however, reveals that they were so heavily influenced by Buddhist expressions, both in terms of rhetoric and visual symbols, that a thorough investigation and discussion would be necessary to understand their implications. This is notably the case with some specific parts of the rituals, and is evident in view of the choice of alternative vocabulary elsewhere.

The inspiration for Reichelt's experimentation with Buddhist symbols and rhetoric to a great extent came from his incessant study of

³⁴ For details about Reichelt's contribution to Chinese Lutheran liturgies, see Strandenæs, "Liturgien," 10–11. In my study I have made use of the Lutheran liturgy published in 1924 (5th ed.; first published in 1920). I use it primarily to find out the changes in rhetoric and the new elements in the liturgies developed in Reichelt's liturgies, which were designed for Buddhist and other seekers.

³⁵ "Ritual," 275–76.

Buddhism through visits, dialogues and systematic observations. We have already noted his fascination with worship and rituals, but one written source seems to have elicited his special attention. It is the ritual book most commonly used by Chinese Buddhists, *Chanmen risong* 禪門日誦 (Daily chanting of the Chan school). His own copy, in fact, is full of his own remarks and underlinings, not only suggesting his intensive reading but also clearly indicating which parts he studied with most intensity.³⁶ This is also clearly reflected in the liturgies he designed with his co-workers. His main guide in the initial phase of his study of Buddhism was obviously Kuandu, the former monk who was his first co-worker and most important informer. But he might also have been inspired by other missionaries who had discovered the deep religious values of Buddhist books of worship.³⁷ At a later stage, other converted monks contributed to his further experimentation.

I have already mentioned how the Nestorian Church in Tang China influenced Reichelt's hermeneutical strategies in relation to Buddhism and inspired him to adopting some of the Nestorian expressions taken from Buddhist and Daoist traditions. Notably, he even directly used one of the Nestorian hymns discovered in Dunhuang; it was included in a liturgy book of Tao Fong Shan, along with a series of hymns created by Reichelt and his Chinese co-workers in the 1930s.³⁸ It is difficult to estimate what impact the Nestorian tradition made on Reichelt's experimentation, but there is reason to believe that it was of vital importance for his liberal use of Buddhist rhetoric.

³⁶ Reichelt's copy of the rituals that is still available was published in 1926 (hereafter cited as *Chanmen*). It is reasonable to assume that the edition he had previously used included numerous comments that might have clarified more of the working process, but it was probably lost in the Nanjing incident in 1927, when the institutes of the mission were ravaged.

³⁷ The American missionary Henry A. McNulty wrote in 1918 that Chinese Buddhism came nearer "in its aspirations and its ideals to Christianity than does any other non-Christian religion." Referring in particular to *Chanmen risong*, he argues that it embraces "petitions for almost every thing for which Christians pray." See his article "The Appeal of Buddhism to the Chinese Mind," *CR* 49, no. 4 (1918): 242; 49, no. 5 (1918): 301–2. Other missionaries who prepared the ground for such interest were notably Samuel Beal and Timothy Richard, who had translated central scriptures from the Buddhist tradition; see my article "'The Conversion of the Missionary': Changes in Buddhist-Christian Relations in the Early Twentieth Century," *Ching Feng*, n.s., 4, no. 2 (2003): 1–25.

³⁸ For details, see my article, "Karl Ludvig Reichelt's Sacred Mountains," 3, 16, 24, 29–30.

3. LITURGIES AND RITUALS

The rituals from Nanjing (1928) and Hong Kong (1936) generally follow the same structure and to a great extent coincide in forms and expressions. But the latter was a result of revisions and further experimentation, and also responded to new needs in the community. The explanations about ritual proceedings are more detailed, the vocabulary to some extent has been revised, and some parts have been elaborated or added. In the worship section, both have rituals for morning and evening worships, a shorter devotion, Sunday high mass, common confession, individual confession, blessing and thanksgiving for food, and quiet meditation. To the Hong Kong version rituals have been added for the Ching Ming Festival, memorial service and funeral. The sacrament sections in both versions have rituals for baptism and eucharist, but the Hong Kong version has included the ritual for infant baptism as well. All these changes may be explained by new circumstances, not least in that both infant baptism and the rites related to death reflected needs that inevitably arose as the community became more established. Both versions have an appendix in which rules about entering the brotherhood are set out, but the Hong Kong version has in addition an appendix containing biblical psalms and prayers, and, most significantly, a few new hymns and songs that will be analyzed in greater detail below. The fact that the Hong Kong version is almost twice as long indicates that the needs of the brotherhood had grown and that the experimentation with liturgical forms had resulted in greater elaboration.

The Lutheran Service Book, which was the model for Reichelt and his colleagues, has a wider range of rituals that reflect a more varied congregational life than the more specific community life in Nanjing and Hong Kong with its daily rhythm of worship and meditation. The technical terms chosen for worship differ slightly from the Lutheran Service Book, but the only significant difference lies in the two rituals not found in it, namely the small rituals of “devotion” and “quiet meditation” (both expressions have an obvious Buddhist flavour). Here the Chinese phrase for “devotion” is *guiyi* 皈依 (more often rendered as 歸依), which is one of the classical Buddhist expressions for “taking refuge.” “Quiet meditation” is rendered as *jingzuo* 靜坐 (“quiet sitting”), a term related to the Buddhist expression *zuochan* 坐禪 (Japanese: *za-zen*), instead of the more traditional Christian expressions for medita-

tion. When “meditation” is included among the common rituals for worship, it is designated as “quiet silence,” *jingmo* 靜默 or just “silent prayer,” *modao* 默禱. In addition, one may note that while the Lutheran traditions spoke about confession as “confession of sin,” *renzui* 認罪, Reichelt chose the term he knew from Buddhist rituals of penitence: *chanhui* 懺悔.³⁹

4. WORSHIP SERVICES

My analysis will concentrate on the more elaborate Hong Kong version, using the Nanjing version to clarify significant changes and nuances. I will first give a general description of the four main types of worship: morning and evening devotions, an abbreviated version to be conducted by lay members of the community, and the Sunday morning service or high mass. Then I will in greater detail analyze the sections that were most clearly inspired by Buddhist (as well as Daoist) rhetoric, notably the Dedication to the Trinity, the Devotional Hymn, and the prayers of confession and penance. I will also discuss the Buddhist influences visible in other prayers and hymns in the liturgies. Finally I will offer a detailed analysis of some of the hymns and songs in the appendix of the liturgy book.

Coming from a Lutheran tradition in which one consistently used the word *libai* 禮拜 for the various types of worship, Reichelt probably deliberately chose to use terms with a Buddhist flavour for the daily morning and evening worships, *chendian* 晨殿 and *wandian* 晚殿 (literally morning and evening “hall” or “sanctuary”), obviously referring to the Buddhist term used for chapel, *baodian* 寶殿 (literally “treasure hall”).⁴⁰

The church bell that called people to worship was made according to Buddhist traditions, small compared to most temple bells, but with shape and sound familiar to Buddhist monks. Reichelt has described it with enthusiasm as “one of these remarkable bells we have in China, a bell with the deep tone and the warm heartfelt sound.” Vibrating for

³⁹ Both *guiyi* and *chanhui* are among the terms used in Christian books, as is mentioned by Martin (see note 3 above), but they were generally identified with Buddhist and Daoist rhetoric and rituals, and avoided in Protestant liturgies.

⁴⁰ See my article, “Karl Ludvig Reichelt’s Sacred Mountains,” 16.

two minutes after every strike, it has entered the religious consciousness of people in the valley, so he writes, being a bridge for the soul, a bridge of sounds, to swing upwards. The many Buddhist institutions in the neighbourhood know that now one worships at Tao Fong Shan. "They love the bell as we all do."⁴¹

The morning bell at six o'clock (21 strikes) is the call for rising and personal preparation: quiet reading and prayer either in one's room, outside, in the chapel, or in the Lotus Crypt. When the bell calls people to worship before seven o'clock (30 strikes) the acolytes enter the chapel to light the candles and the incense; meanwhile the other members of the congregation enter the chapel in their worship gowns, and take their places before worship begins. At times the congregation enter the sanctuary more formally, in a procession led by the visiting monks from the Pilgrims Hall and followed by guests and students, and then by the local helpers and employees.⁴²

As the pastor in charge and attendants⁴³ enter the chapel and proceed to the altar, an acolyte taps a small bell three times. All bow and kneel on the cushions for quiet prayer, while those who have no cushions remain standing. Another three rings of the bell then break the silence: the congregation rises, and bows again.⁴⁴

Now the time has come for the more traditional morning worship, beginning "in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit," followed by the congregational "Amen!" and the traditional Gloria. A hymn of praise is sung, followed by Bible reading, prayer, the Lord's Prayer and a Dedication to the Trinity. The small bell is struck three times to signal another bowing; the Devotional Hymn is then sung, followed by the blessing. Another three strikes signal a period of silent prayer, and the worship ends.

The evening devotion follows the same structure, but has Confession of Sin and Kyrie instead of Gloria, and the Creed instead of the Lord's Prayer; and the hymns have a somewhat different mood attuned to the more penitential character of the devotion.

⁴¹ Reichelt, *Broderhjemmet på Tao Fong Shan* [The Brother Home at Tao Fong Shan] (Oslo: Den Kristne Buddhistmisjons Forlag, 1937), 7–8. See also my comments in "Karl Ludvig Reichelt's Sacred Mountains," 25–26.

⁴² The Nanjing edition seems to suggest this order. The Hong Kong edition comments that the more formal procession used for Sunday morning worship may be practised.

⁴³ The terms vary from time to time, but usually three persons seem to be in charge.

⁴⁴ The traditional Buddhist expression for "clasping hands in prayer," *hezhang* 合掌, is used only occasionally.

The Sunday morning service is held at eleven o'clock⁴⁵—as is customary in Norway—and follows the structure of the common Lutheran ritual, with sermon and eucharist as central elements. It has, in addition, included important elements from the daily morning and evening prayers, such as the introductory processions with lighting of candles and incense, the ringing of bells, bowings and silent prayers. The Dedication to the Trinity and the Devotional Hymn are included here as well, as in most rituals.

The way Reichelt describes these liturgies for his Scandinavian audience leaves us with the impression of faithful adherence to Lutheran traditions. His translation of prayers and hymns has few indications of Buddhist influence or inspiration. Yet suggestively, he remarks that he has tried to have them adapt themselves to Buddhist traditions and “let the Chinese tune of language and the peculiar features of East Asian religious phraseology come into its own.”⁴⁶

Some Protestant visitors might have regarded the general shape of the liturgies, with the processions, bells, ritual movements, and robes, as rather high church in style and rhetoric, but beautiful and impressive. Reichelt might have been inspired by Anglican or high church traditions,⁴⁷ but primarily he had learned from his many years of observation in Buddhist monasteries. The rituals were not so elaborate as the Buddhist masses and employed few Buddhist ritual instruments; but the church bell (*zhong* 鐘) and the small bell (*qing* 磬)⁴⁸ were “Buddhist,” as well as the bowings and kneelings, the incense and candles,⁴⁹ and the “worship gown,” which seems to be a mixture of a Western pastor’s robe, a monk’s robe and traditional Chinese dress. Even the terms used, such as *yunshui* 雲水, meaning pilgrims or novices, and *shisheng* 侍生, meaning acolytes or attendants, were Buddhist ones. The liturgical vessels used in the Sunday morning worship were called *faqi* 法器, literally “Dharma vessels/utensils,” as in Buddhist rituals.

⁴⁵ In Nanjing the Sunday worship starts at 10:30 a.m.

⁴⁶ “Buddhistmissionens ritual,” 276.

⁴⁷ Reichelt had notably good relations to some Anglican/Episcopal missionaries.

⁴⁸ *Qing* may signify different types of bells and small gongs, but in this case it was a small handbell, fastened to a wooden stick, to be tapped with another small stick.

⁴⁹ Candles were, of course, common in Western churches, and Reichelt argued that in the Bible, incense was a symbol of the prayers of the saints; but both were to a great extent rejected by Protestants because they were so common in Chinese “idolatry.” For such reasons Reichelt later had to abandon the use of incense.

Dedication to the Trinity

The threefold dedication is probably the most well-known adaptation to Buddhist rituals used in the institutions in Nanjing and Hong Kong, and is the only element from the early liturgies that is still in use, albeit in revised forms, both in Chinese and English.⁵⁰

皈命文 起立同誦：

至心皈命，無上主宰，創造諸有，萬德慈父！

至心皈命，贖罪基督，復我性明，圓滿妙道！

至心皈命，充滿宇宙，隨機應感，清靜聖靈！

The most definitely “Buddhist” element in the dedication is obviously the term *guiming* 皈(歸)命, which is one of the Chinese translations of the Sanskrit *namas/namaḥ* and the Pāli *namo*, the classical term used in Buddhism for “taking refuge” in the Three Treasures, namely the Buddha, Dharma (the teaching) and Sangha (the monastic community); or for dedication to the innumerable Buddhas in the Mahāyāna pantheon. The thrice repeated formula “*zhi xin guiming*” 至心皈命 is not as common as *namo* 南無, but is still one of the conventional expressions meaning “taking refuge.”⁵¹ This version of the formula is not found in the Buddhist ritual book Reichelt used, the closest expression being “*yi xin guiming*” 一心皈命, “with one mind/heart I take refuge.”⁵² In one closest threefold dedication, which was used during the morning ritual, a similar expression is found, namely “*zi guiyi*” 自歸依, “I take refuge.”⁵³ Other Buddhist expressions are not so easily recognized if one is not familiar with Buddhist terms, but I will indicate

⁵⁰ In the Chinese ritual of Tao Fong Shan from 1966, the dedication, however, has been revised in such a way that it is difficult to discern any Buddhist inspiration.

⁵¹ The formulation is used in the Pure Land sutras about those who take refuge in Amītabha’s vows. It might have been used already by the first brotherhood in 1919–20, as part of four vows, “I (N.N.) promise in the presence of the omniscient God that *I with all my heart will dedicate myself to the true, triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit*” (italics added), see *Kinas buddhister for Kristus*, 20. This might actually have been the initial model for later developments of the threefold dedication.

⁵² *Chanmen*, 38.

⁵³ *Chanmen*, 23. Translated into Norwegian and English, with little precision, in *Fra Østens religiøse liv* [From the religious life of the East] (Copenhagen: Gad, 1922), 178; translated into English as *Truth and Tradition in Chinese Buddhism* (Shanghai: Commercial Press, 1934), 138.

some in my comments on the translations below.

Reichelt's translation

With all my heart I dedicate myself to
God, the ruler of all things,
He who is the creator of the universe,
the merciful Father and the origin of all
that is good.

With all my heart I dedicate myself to
Christ, the redeemer for all our sins,
the restorer of our original, pure nature,
He, the perfect revealer of the unfathomable Word from God.

With all my heart I dedicate myself to
Him, who penetrates the universe,
and everywhere has ways and means to
influence the souls,
He, the pure and quietly working Holy
Spirit.

A more exact translation

With a sincere mind I take refuge in
the highest Lord,
the creator of all things,
the merciful Father of all virtues.⁵⁴

With a sincere mind I take refuge in
Christ the expiator (of sins),
who restores our pure nature,
the perfect mysterious Dao.

With a sincere mind I take refuge in
(the one who) fills the universe,
who responds to all according to
their capacities,
the pure Holy Spirit.⁵⁵

The first stanza has no obvious reference to Buddhist terminology, even though the term *wande* 萬德 is a common term used to describe all the virtues of the Buddhas, and the expression *wanyou* 萬有, “all things” or “the ten thousand things,” is reminiscent of Buddhist notions.

The second stanza owes its inspiration more to Buddhist and even Daoist thought. Especially without the second and third lines, which were missing in the first stage of experimentation in Nanjing, the stanza might be read as a clear dedication to the Dao: “With a sincere mind I

⁵⁴ *Wande*, literally “the ten thousand virtues,” might also be translated as “almighty,” since *de* 德 also has a power aspect, as also seen in the liturgies.

⁵⁵ The original Dedication had only the first and fourth lines in each stanza, and would then be as follows: “With a sincere mind I take refuge in / the merciful Father of all virtues. / With a sincere mind I take refuge in / the perfect mysterious Dao. / With a sincere mind I take refuge in / the pure Holy Spirit.” The second and third lines were added since the expressions in the original had been criticized as too vague. See Risager, *Forventning og Opfyldelse*, 200.

take refuge in . . . the perfect mysterious Dao.” “The mysterious Dao,” *miaodao* 妙道, has obvious Daoist connotations. For Buddhists the “mysterious Dao” might be read as an allusion to the “wonderful Dharma,” as *dao* in Chinese Buddhism was one of the common expressions for Dharma, even though Law, *fa* 法, was the most common rendering. In Reichelt’s earlier translations of Buddhist dedications he rendered the words about taking refuge in the Dharma as “I dedicate myself to the great law of life” or “the great life principle.”⁵⁶ One might guess that this was the inspiration for formulating his own ritual version as a dedication to Dao, which he also regarded as “the great law of life.” Since Dao in his imagination was equivalent to the *logos* of Greek philosophy and the New Testament, however, it was intended to be an unambiguous dedication to Christ as the incarnated Logos, the revealer of “God’s wonderful plan of salvation,” as he also rendered the text in his Norwegian translation. Although for him Christ was the *miaodao* itself,⁵⁷ in this early short form the stanza might have been easily misunderstood.

The addition of the second line in the official versions, referring to Christ as the expiator, gives the stanza an unambiguous Christian identity. The new third line of the stanza, describing Christ as the one who “restores my true nature,” was intended by Reichelt as a reference to the classical Christian belief that humankind was created in the original image of God, which is to be restored.⁵⁸ It may also be inspired by an expression in the Nestorian hymn included in the appendix of the Hong Kong ritual book, which refers to the original “true nature” (*zhenxing* 真性) of humankind.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, this expression may also allude to the Daoist notion of the original purity of mind and to the Buddhist notion of the original Buddha nature or the awakening of the mind.⁶⁰ In Reichelt’s translation such allusions to Buddhist or Daoist ideas are entirely lost, for Christ is here presented merely as “the perfect revealer

⁵⁶ The first expression is a literal translation of the Norwegian *den store livslov*; *Fra Østens religiøse liv*, 178; the second is the English translation in *Truth and Tradition*, 138.

⁵⁷ See *Fromhetstyper*, 31.

⁵⁸ In his article “Indigenous Religious Phrases,” 125 he refers directly to the affinity between Buddhists ideas of returning to “one’s original state,” or finding “one’s original face,” and the Christian idea of restoring the image of God. In his explanation in 1925 he added a parenthesis that the meaning of “the original, pure nature” was “the image of God.” See Riisager, *Forventning og Opfyldelse*, 200.

⁵⁹ The expression is used twice, see *Libai yishi*, 77, 78.

⁶⁰ One of Reichelt’s favourite Buddhist rituals refers to “the original pure mind,” *benjingxin* 本靜心; see *Chanmen*, 38.

of the unfathomable Word from God.” Perhaps he had not found the appropriate terminology, but one might suspect that he was tempted thereby to divert the Scandinavian audience from earlier allegations of syncretism.

The third stanza is a beautiful expression of Reichelt’s optimistic faith that the Spirit works in mysterious ways, guiding people towards faith. But the expression about the Spirit—“who responds to all according to their capacities”—is loaded with Buddhist connotations. The Mahāyāna vision, expressed e.g. in the Lotus Sutra, describes the Buddha as one who adapts himself to all levels and circumstances in order to teach the Dharma to everyone according to his or her capacities. The expression *suiji* 隨機 (Sanskrit: *āśaya-bedana*), “following the capacity” of sentient beings at their spiritual stage, is a classical Buddhist concept. The reference to the Spirit who “fills the universe” might be understood by Buddhists as an allusion to the omnipresence of the eternal Buddha in constant activity to teach people the Dharma. Similar expressions about the Spirit blowing throughout the cosmos abound in Reichelt’s rhetoric, as we have already seen, and he had certainly been inspired by the universal vision of salvation in Mahāyāna. In this case, however, it is reasonable to assume that the expression had more likely been inspired by biblical references to God “who fills all in all” (Eph. 1:23; see also 4:10).

Devotional Hymn

If the dedication would primarily be familiar to Buddhists because of the rhetorical form of taking refuge and the allusions to Buddhist and Daoist ideas, the Devotional Hymn is almost entirely Buddhist, both in form and content. It was actually taken directly from Buddhist rituals,⁶¹ a hymnic “Vow [to be born in Amitābha Buddha’s Pure Land] in the West” (Xifang fayuan wen 西方發願文), composed by Zhuhong 株宏 (1535–1615), abbot of the monastery at Yunqi 雲棲. In Reichelt’s liturgy the Chinese term “*fayuan wen*” (“vow”), is maintained, but the reference to the land in “the West” is deleted. In his translated version it is just called a “Devotional Song” (Norwegian: *Hengivelseskvad*). The only change in the text of the hymn is that “the West” or “the western direction” is replaced with “Christ.” Even the Buddhist tune was adopted, and has later found its way into Chinese and Western

⁶¹ *Chanmen*, 38.

hymnals. In this way a thoroughly Buddhist hymnic vow was transformed into a devotional hymn to Jesus Christ—at least it became so in Reichelt’s imagination and his various renderings into Norwegian.⁶²

發願文 同唱：

稽首基督安樂國， 接引衆生大導師；
我今發願願往生， 惟願慈悲哀攝受！

Reichelt’s translation

I bow my head in awe, looking forward
to the Kingdom of Christ, full of peace
and bliss.

Christ is the great Guide and Master,
who is willing to receive all living
beings and lead them safely home.

I now make the sacred promise that I
will wander forward towards life (in
Christ’s eternal kingdom).

May Your compassion (Oh, Lord
Christ), help and protect me. Amen.

A more exact translation

I prostrate myself before Christ’s⁶³
Land of Bliss,

before the great Master who draws
near and guides all sentient beings.

I now make a vow that I desire to be
born (in the Pure Land)

May compassion and pity embrace
me.⁶⁴

Reichelt has described the hymn as a beautiful expression of “the holy movement in the soul . . . the attitude that my soul is in holy movement towards God.” His basic strategy and expectation were that

⁶² I use the most “official” rendering in “Buddhistmisjonens rituale.” The parentheses are Reichelt’s own. Translations of the original Buddhist hymn are found in *Fra Østens religiøse liv*, 138–39; “Extracts from the Buddhist Ritual,” 167.

⁶³ The original Buddhist vow has “the Western” instead of “Christ’s,” an unequivocal reference to Amitābha’s paradise.

⁶⁴ There are a number of later versions that have lost all touch with the original Chinese text; see, e.g., *Fromhetstyper*, 2:31; *Broderhjemmet*, 9. The Chinese text was also abandoned, being replaced by a thoroughly “Christian” text in the revisions of the liturgies in the 1950s and the 1960s, but with the same tune.

the “solemn terms and expressions from China’s old and most elevated religious world of thought” would function as “suitable word-vessels, filled with strong Christ-thoughts.”⁶⁵ The hymn is probably the most striking expression of his optimistic hermeneutic strategy, which will be discussed later. For now I will only indicate the overwhelming Buddhist connotations of the hymn. Actually, all the central expressions are directly related to the popular faith in Amitābha Buddha and his Pure Land.



Amitābha is the Jieyin Fo 接引佛, the Buddha who with his long arm “draws near to guide” everyone to the Pure Land; illustration from Reginald Fleming Johnston, *Buddhist China* (London: John Murray, 1913), 99.

Since the only change in the verse is “the West” being replaced by “Christ,” the Buddhist rhetoric would be obvious to most Chinese. The Land of Bliss, *anleguo* 安樂國, is a classical rendering of the Sanskrit *sukhāvatī*, the most popular term for Buddhist paradises, primarily associated with Amitābha Buddha’s Pure Land, *jingtu* 淨土, in the western regions of the cosmos, where he has vowed to receive anyone who called upon his name in faith.⁶⁶ Reichelt consistently used these expressions as equivalents of the kingdom of God. Prostrations are quite common in Buddhist rituals and are practised in Roman Catholic tradi-

⁶⁵ Broderhjemmet, 9.

⁶⁶ Reichelt was fully informed about this background but, as we shall see, he regarded the Buddhist expressions as so thoroughly influenced by Christianity that it was only a question of reclaiming the original meaning of the hymn.

tions, but they are quite unfamiliar to Protestant churches, where it was more appropriate to “bow one’s head in awe.” Yet in other translations Reichelt rendered it more appropriately as “I prostrate myself . . .”⁶⁷

Amitābha is the Great Guiding Master (*da daoshi* 大導師) who “draws near to guide sentient beings” (*jieyin zhongsheng* 接引眾生). In Pure Land rhetoric and iconography Amitābha is the Jieyin Fo 接引佛, the Buddha whose long right arm is stretching down, eager to “receive and guide” everyone to the Pure Land.⁶⁸

Also, “sentient beings” (*zhongsheng*) is a classical Buddhist expression, an all-inclusive term for all states of existence in the cycle of re-birth, from the divine world to the deepest hells. It was not commonly used in Christian rhetoric, but Reichelt adopted it as a favourite term, well understood by his Buddhist visitors.

The vow that one from now on “desires to be born” alludes to many of the 48 vows of Amitābha, which express the belief that all who so “desire to be born” in his land will be received by him.⁶⁹ *Wangsheng* 往生, literally “to go and be born,” is the technical term for birth in the Pure Land.

The concluding prayer about being “embraced” (*sheshou* 攝受) by compassion is also an unequivocal reference to classical Pure Land rhetoric about Amitābha’s unconditional compassion and care.

The hermeneutical questions—both related to the visitors’ reception of such adoptions of Buddhist material and to Reichelt’s own interpretations—will be discussed below, but it is easy to imagine that opinions would differ radically even among those who understood the religious background of the hymn.

Penance and Confession

The third element in the liturgies that had been strongly influenced by Buddhist rhetoric was the various sections dealing with penance and confession of sin. Reichelt’s own background in Lutheran pietism, which might have helped to sharpen one’s sense of guilt, seemed to

⁶⁷ CR 1928, 167.

⁶⁸ Reichelt refers to this in his comment on a picture of Amitābha as the Jieyin Fo; *Fra Ostens religiöse liv*, 177. See also the popular portrayal of Amitābha printed on the previous page.

⁶⁹ Developed particularly in *The Greater Meditation Sutra*, one of the central scriptures in Pure Land Buddhism.

have made him particularly sensitive to Buddhist rituals of penance. He deliberately used expressions and structural elements from these in his own liturgies.⁷⁰ Rituals of confession and penance were important elements in the evening devotion and the Sunday morning worship, but were particularly developed in separate sessions of common confession, which he also called “penitence meetings.” Saturday afternoons were often set aside for the preparation for the Sunday morning worship, with strong emphasis on serious reflection on one’s sins, contrition, and commitment to a new life.

In the following I will first deal with the confession parts of the evening devotion and the Sunday service, and then look more closely at the ritual of Common Confession of Sin, which was mostly influenced by Buddhist models.⁷¹

The Confession of Sin in the evening devotion in Hong Kong is introduced by a hymn, which is not available in Reichelt’s translation.⁷² His intention was certainly to prepare a mood of contrition: the confessor prays that the shining lamp of the Word will reveal the sins that stand in their way to eternal life, and is then reminded about their obligation to share the gift of God’s grace with the entire world. However the Chinese text, translated into English below, is replete with Buddhist expressions:

Christ, give me a shining lamp,
and remove the karmic hindrances, that (I may) obtain eternal
life/birth.
The sentient beings are innumerable, (my) vow is inexhaustible:
I will dedicate myself to return the Lord’s favour to innumerable
lands.

The initial line is open to interpretation, the “shining lamp” having both Buddhist and Christian connotations. An obvious attempt to use Buddhist terminology is evident in the second line: the traditional notions of sin and forgiveness has switched to that of “karmic hindrances” (*yezhang* 業障) that are to be removed or extinguished. Even though similar references to karma and liberation from karmic consequences

⁷⁰ “Ritual,” 276.

⁷¹ The liturgy of private confession is brief, and adheres to traditional Christian rhetoric; it will not be dealt with here.

⁷² The Nanjing edition has another hymn, and Reichelt’s Norwegian translation only mentions that a hymn may be sung.

have been used time and again, with Reichelt's rather traditional understanding of sin and expiation of sin through Christ, the rhetoric is hardly more than a superficial adoption of Buddhist rhetoric.

The last two lines, somewhat strange in structure, have a clear affinity with the four great bodhisattva-vows,⁷³ which would have been familiar at least to all the participating monks. Reichelt was impressed by the Buddhist vow to save all sentient beings, and adopted the expression as part of his own missionary urge: the favour of forgiveness should be proclaimed to the entire world, or literally, to the “innumerable lands” (*chencha* 塵刹). Even this expression is a characteristic Buddhist term, referring to all the realms (Sanskrit: *kṣetra*) of the Buddhist cosmos that are as innumerable as dust. The term “returning the favour” (*baoen* 報恩) is also a characteristic Buddhist expression, notably in the Pure Land tradition, where it usually refers to the graceful response to Amitābha's compassion.⁷⁴

The Nanjing edition has a different hymn, which also includes some expressions with basically Buddhist connotations.⁷⁵ In Reichelt's rendering it sounds thoroughly traditional:

God is the ground and origin of heaven and earth and all things.

He revealed himself (in Christ) in order to save all living beings.

If we human beings through deep reflection and faith come before
him with praise and worship—

lo, then we will for ever be liberated from perdition and from every-
thing that brings pain and confusion.

A more exact literal translation might be as follows:

The Lord has created heaven and earth, (he is) the origin of the ten

⁷³ The hymn is primarily inspired by the first of the Bodhisattva-vows, “However innumerable sentient beings are, I vow to save/liberate them.” Already the first brothers of Reichelt's community (1919–20) made four vows: to dedicate themselves to the triune God; to the study of the true teaching; to educate themselves to work for God, guiding brothers to Christ “who is the one who gathers the goal of higher Buddhism in his person”; and to work for a Christian church among Buddhists. These are different from the Buddhist four vows, and the formulations are only available in Reichelt's Norwegian text, but indicates a familiarity with the Buddhist vows. See *Kinas buddhister for Kristus*, 20–21.

⁷⁴ In Pure Land Buddhism, to return the “favour of Amitābha Buddha,” *foen* 佛恩, would be to respond with gratitude and praise to his name.

⁷⁵ This was also used in the morning devotions both in Nanjing and Hong Kong.

thousand things.

He saves all sentient beings, (he is) the manifestation that was from the beginning.⁷⁶

If a person in one thought-moment has faith and adoration,
he will for ever be liberated from pain and avoid sinking (in the sea of pain).

The last two lines have strong Buddhist connotations. In particular, “one thought-moment of faith” (*yinian xin* 一念心) is a classical Pure Land formulation, referring to the moment of total trust in Amitābha that is expressed in faith and invocation of his name. The references to liberation from pain and to rescue from sinking in the sea of pain are clearly Buddhist in their original meaning and symbolism.

The hymn introducing the confession of sin in the Sunday morning worship refers to Christ as the “original honoured one” or “the principle object of adoration” (*benzun* 本尊), which is a traditional Buddhist designation of the principle image of worship. The Gospel is here referred to as “the perfect sound” (*yuanyin* 圓音), a common reference to Buddha’s preaching. The following invitation to penitence makes use of the notion of nourishing one’s “good roots” (*shan’gen* 善根) with which one may reach the state of—or acquire the capability for—the “great awakening” (*da juewu* 大覺悟) (both “*shan’gen*” and “*da juewu*” are characteristic Buddhist terms, rendered by Reichelt as “nourishing the good seed” and “reaching the full spiritual insight” respectively). The Nanjing edition continues with the phrase “to be born in the Heavenly Kingdom,” which was changed in the Hong Kong edition to “moving towards the Heavenly Kingdom,” perhaps in order to avoid the strong Buddhist connotations of “birth” in the Pure Land. The following confession of sin, with the prayer of mercy (Kyrie eleison), is generally based on the common Lutheran ritual, and its texts are almost identical in the Nanjing and Hong Kong editions. The prayer of thanksgiving adopted traditional Christian rhetoric of forgiveness for Christ’s sake, praising Christ as the one who has broken the barrier of death and opened the way to the Holy of Holies.⁷⁷ Later prayers also

⁷⁶ The line is somewhat obscure, but the parallelism between “origin” (*pen* 本), in the first line, and “begin/beginning” (*shi* 始), may indicate that the formulation intended to refer to the Word/Logos/Dao that was in the beginning.

⁷⁷ The Nanjing edition has a somewhat “Buddhist” term for the Holy of Holies, literally “the highest treasure place,” *zhibaosuo* 至寶所, which is one of the Buddhist metaphors for Nirvana. It was replaced in the Hong Kong edition with a more traditional term. The only other significant difference from the Lutheran rituals is that the

have traditional Christian expressions, with only a few potential allusions to Buddhist expressions.

The Common Confession of Sin is not found in the Chinese Lutheran liturgy, but was based on the Norwegian traditions (*Almindelig Skriftemål*), with important inspiration from Buddhist rituals. It begins with the customary processions, with bells, bowings, silence etc., and continues with the name of the triune God and with the *Agnus Dei* (Lamb of God) and the hymn “Just as I am, without one plea.” The solemn prayer of confession is read by the pastor, and the congregation responds with the threefold “Kyrie eleison” with the traditional prayers of mercy and pity, and responsive prayers. Everything seems to be in tune with Lutheran traditions, especially in Reichelt’s Norwegian rendering; even the melodies were those used in Norway.

There are, however, quite a few expressions with strong Buddhist colouring, many of which frequently appear in the Buddhist ritual book Reichelt used, notably from the “Vow [to be born in Amitābha Buddha’s Pure Land] in the West” and the ritual of penitence.⁷⁸ The following list comprises some of the characteristic expressions with Buddhist background. I will first introduce the Chinese terms, preceded by an exact English translation, and then translate Reichelt’s Norwegian rendering into English.

To “vow to make penitence,” *fayuan chanhui* 發願懺悔, became to “make a great promise to penitence and confession of sin.”

The “world of ten directions,” *shifang shijie* 十方世界,⁷⁹ became the “entire wide world.”

The “unequalled, most honoured one,” *wuer zhizun* 無二至尊,⁸⁰ became God as the “highest unequalled (Saviour).”

The “innumerable lands,” *chacha-chenchen* 刹刹塵塵,⁸¹ became the “universes (the great) and the specks of dust (the small),” that is, the everywhere.

“merit” of Christ is *gongde* 功德 in Reichelt’s versions, with stronger Buddhist connotations than *gonglao* 功勞 in the Lutheran rituals.

⁷⁸ Chanmen, 38, 90.

⁷⁹ In Sanskrit *daśa diś(āni)*, a characteristic Buddhist term for the cosmos, referring to the eight directions of the compass plus zenith and nadir.

⁸⁰ See the discussion about Buddhist terms connected to the “Honoured One” in my article, “Karl Ludvig Reichelt’s Sacred Mountains,” 16.

⁸¹ A characteristic expression referring to the innumerable Buddha realms (*kṣetra*) in the cosmos, used e.g. in the Lotus Sutra.

“The diabolic states are extinguished,” *mojing mie* 魔境滅,⁸² became “the Satanic power which now is forced back.”

“The birth of the Dao-mind/heart,” *daoxin sheng* 道心生, became “the true religious life that is born in the hearts.”

“Sudden awakening to the mysterious principles in the Scriptures/Sutras,” *dunwu jing zhong zhi miaoli* 頓悟經中之妙理,⁸³ became “the secret truth of the Scripture that has in a glimpse dawned on me.”

To be ruled by “greed, anger, and delusion,” *tan chen chi* 貪嗔癡,⁸⁴ became to be controlled by “evil lust, vain thoughts, and haughty desire.”

The accumulated sins of “endless kalpas,” *yijie* 億劫, became the enormous debt of sin of the “centuries.”

The “defiled world,” *zhuoshi* 濁世, which will vanish,⁸⁵ became “the world and its lust will perish.”

There is also a quite intriguing expression about the cross as the “great vow,” *hongyuan* 宏願, which was fulfilled, or, in Reichelt’s rendering, “the infinite promise of grace through the cross is realized.” This and similar references to the cross as the “great vow” (of God) may perhaps open up a new way of understanding the cross from a Buddhist perspective.

We who “from beginninglessness,” *wushi yilai* 無始以來,⁸⁶ have produced “sinful karma,” *zuinie* 罪孽, became we who are “oppressed by the infinite burden of sin.”

“Delusion, avarice, and confusion,” *wangxiang* 妄想, *tanlian* 貪戀, *mihuo* 迷惑,⁸⁷ became “vain thoughts, evil desires, and delusions of the world.”

⁸² Diabolic states are known in Japanese Zen as *makyō* 魔境.

⁸³ See my article, “Karl Ludvig Reichelt’s Sacred Mountains,” 23, for comments on “sudden enlightenment.”

⁸⁴ These are in Buddhist tradition regarded as the “three poisons” (Sanskrit: *rāga, dveṣa, moha*) that manipulate the mind, which are often represented by three animals in the centre of the wheel of existence. In Reichelt’s translation of the *Xifang fayuan wen* this is rendered as “life desire, worry and error” (“Extracts from the Buddhist Ritual,” 167).

⁸⁵ The defiled world is characterized by “five defilements or impurities” (Sanskrit: *kaṣāya*), often related to ideas of the gradual disappearance of the Dharma in the world.

⁸⁶ *Wushi* (Sanskrit: *anādi*) is a classical Buddhist expression for the karmic cycle without beginning and end, the beginningless ignorance, and numerous similar notions. The expression might have been inspired by the expression in the Ritual of Penitence in *Chanmen*, 32, which refers to the sins committed “from the beginningless cycle of life and death” (*wushi sheng si yilai* 無始生死以來). *Zuinie* does not necessarily refer to karma, but is common in Buddhist references to karmic retribution.

⁸⁷ The three expressions are closely related to the “three poisons” (*tan, chen, chi*) mentioned above.

The human condition is described as being confused in the “matters of the world” or “thrown around in the sea of pain,” and “wandering around in the long night”⁸⁸—expressions with strong Buddhist colouring that was to some extent maintained in Reichelt’s rendering: “busy with thousand worldly worries, thrown into the sea of sorrow where the waves are flooding us, sunk into the deep long darkness of night.”

The list may be expanded, but I have registered above the most obvious examples of Buddhist terms, and expressions with Buddhist colouring, in the rituals most frequently used in Reichelt’s institutions. With the rich source of material we may further reflect on the possible implications of such rhetoric in Christian liturgies.

Other Rituals

There are some other rituals for occasional use at the institutions, but apart from the appendix of hymns, there are few examples of Buddhist rhetoric that have not been commented upon already. The Private Confession is mostly a replica of the Norwegian ritual used for this purpose. The section with Blessings and Thanksgivings for Meals includes prayers and hymns that to some extent suggest Buddhist inspiration. For example, food is referred as “dharma meal” (*fazhuan* 法饌), but the prayers do not add to what we have already registered.⁸⁹ The ritual for the Ching Ming Festival for the dead is interesting as a phenomenon and was, of course, developed in order to meet a real need among Chinese Christians for revering ancestors. As an early member of the liturgy committee of the Lutheran common board Reichelt had already been involved in developing such rituals, which were included in the early common Lutheran ritual book.⁹⁰ The Ching Ming ritual in Reichelt’s institutions differed from the common Lutheran rituals, but had no particular Buddhist colouring apart from the dedication and devotional hymn used in all other rituals. The traditional memorial ser-

⁸⁸ All the three expressions are classical Buddhist descriptions of karmic existence: the matters of the world (*loka-saṃvyavahāra*), the sea of suffering (*duḥkha-aṇava*) and the long night (*dīrgha-rātram*) where people are transmigrating in the sleep of delusion.

⁸⁹ He was obviously acquainted with the Buddhist devotions related to meals in *Chamen*, 107.

⁹⁰ According to Strandenæs, “Liturgien,” 10–11, it was included in the 1920 ritual book for the Lutheran Churches as Ching Ming Worship Service. In the 1933 edition it is introduced as a Ritual for Memorial Service (Zhuisi libai yishi 追思禮拜儀式).

vice and funeral service do not evince any particular Buddhist influence either. The same is true for the rituals for baptism (infant and adults) and eucharist.

One additional element in the baptism ritual for adults deserves mentioning, as it has a slight resemblance to Buddhist ordination ceremonies. The newly baptized adult members of the community would be admitted as full members of the brotherhood of Daoyou (Friends in Dao) through a ceremony immediately after baptism. Leaving the chapel and entering the quiet prayer room they would kneel down and make a solemn vow to be loyally keeping the basic ideas and rules of the brotherhood, to be obedient to the leaders, to love the Dao-friends, spread the Dao/Way of the Lord and expand the Kingdom. As a sign they would receive a lotus-cross, with an inscription marking their number in the brotherhood and the new name, which relates them to the mountain to which they belonged—being either Ching (Jing), Tao (Dao) or T'ien (Tian). With the rather critical view of monasticism described in my previous article, however, the vow did not seem to demand greater loyalty to the brotherhood than to other obligations, such as family life, marriage and secular involvement.

5. THE APPENDIX OF HYMNS AND RESPONSIVE PRAYERS

I have sporadically referred to the selections of hymns added in the appendix of the Hong Kong edition of the ritual. The first part includes traditional Psalms from the Old Testament to be used liturgically (Pss. 1, 23, 24, 84). The second part includes hymns and responsive litanies. Some are taken from other sources, such as the old Nestorian hymn to the trinity and a Chinese translation of Reichelt's own mission hymn, "Din rikssak, Jesus, være skal" (The cause of thy kingdom, Jesus, shall be). The others—a hymn to Christ and a hymn to "the Luminous Honoured One," a song for the brotherhood of Daoyouhui and a song featuring Tao Fong Shan—exhibit quite extraordinary mixtures of Buddhist and Christian rhetorics. They were the result of continued liturgical experimentation at Tao Fong Shan, inspired and partly written by Reichelt himself but, as we shall see, also by converted monks. It is reasonable to expect that these pieces of poetry and liturgy would give a good impression of the mood of experimentation that characterized the community around Reichelt at Tao Fong Shan in this period. The evaluation of their literary and theological quality would certainly

vary, but here they are presented as examples of the courage and creativity—some would probably say the naivety—of a community that was willing to go a long way in order to communicate their message to the Buddhist world.

In order to enable readers who are not conversant with Chinese to make their own judgements, I have chosen to present two of the central hymns in full, printing the Chinese text, Reichelt's probable interpretation of it (based on my study of his hermeneutic principles and numerous renderings of similar texts), and then a more accurate translation of the texts, letting both the traditional Christian and Buddhist expressions stand unmediated side by side. That would at least give an impression of how they might have been heard or read by educated Buddhists and Christians.

“Praise to Christ”

“Jidu zan” 基督讚 (Praise to Christ) was written by Reichelt himself, at Tao Fong Shan in the early 1930s, and was designed as responsive reading or singing between the leader/liturgist and the congregation. Since several of the central expressions with Buddhist background have been commented upon earlier in this article, I will mostly limit my comments to footnotes, and refer to earlier explanations whenever appropriate.

One central idea, however, needs special comment, since it is the key to the entire hymn—indeed it is one of the central hermeneutical keys to Reichelt's missionary vision. Following Timothy Richard and other Western missionaries and scholars, Reichelt was convinced that a whole series of Buddhist terms, such as “true suchness” (*zhenru* 眞如), “Tathāgata” (*rulai* 如來) and “one mind” (*yixin* 一心), had been developed in Buddhism as a result of the contact with Christianity in Western or Central Asia, and hence referred to an original divine reality that was identical with God in anything but in the name, as Richard argued.⁹¹ Translated in various ways as the “source of all things in the

⁹¹ Timothy Richard, *Conversion by the Million in China: Being Biographies and Articles* (Shanghai: Christian Literature Society, 1907), 1:285, 292; 2:196–97. His ideas were primarily developed in his study of *The Awakening of Faith*, i.e., *The New Testament of Higher Buddhism* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1910); see notably pp. 38, 45–47, 51–53. Reichelt seems to have accepted these ideas rather uncritically, as seen in his *Fra Østens religiøse liv*, 35–40; *Truth and Tradition*, 34–38; *Fra Kristus-livets helligdom*, 76–78.

universe,” “true form,” “true model,” “true reality” and “archetype,” it was easy to relate the Buddhist terms to the preexistent Christ, the Logos, the Great Dao (who was from the beginning) and similar notions; and consequently to describe the birth of Christ as the incarnation/manifestation of the Tathāgata (or of True Suchness, the True Form, the Eternal Dao) in history. Only against such a background is it possible to understand the somewhat obscure references to the Great Dao, the true origin, the original face, the model, the true suchness etc. in Reichelt’s hymn.

基督讚

主領啓：聖哉兮景尊， 無始之大道；
會衆應：萬有宇宙根本，衆生本來面目。

主領啓：過去諸聖賢， 萬代留師表；
會衆應：教導天下萬民，設立種種方便。

主領啓：脫離深苦海， 同登到彼岸；
會衆應：無量光明境界，無上正等覺悟。

主領啓：玄之又玄兮， 衆妙之門兮；
會衆應：大道鍾於基督，西方如來應世。

主領啓：世界皆歡喜， 陰間有望兮；
會衆應：基督勝過死亡，救贖衆生孽障。

主領啓：十架之奇妙， 無量之宏願；
會衆應：拯救三界衆生，免除曠劫冤恨。

主領啓：巍巍主耶穌， 慈悲之救主；
會衆應：淨土示現地土，十方皆作道場。

主領啓：宇宙之眞源， 古今之矩矱；
會衆應：高深太初大道，顯在基督身上。

主領啓：各宗慕道者， 凡渴想義者；
會衆應：引到基督羊群，同歸一大牧者。

主領啓：靈光普耀兮， 衆生保惠師；
會衆應：普度六道群迷，充滿大千世界。

主領啓：常轉大法輪， 說法隨機應；
會衆應：觀世苦難起悲，化身無量無邊。

主頌啓：萬法歸一靈， 慧劍斬邪魔；
 會衆應：澆灌真如妙性，以馬內利歡騰。
 啊利路亞！

**“Praise to Christ” in
Reichelt’s rhetoric**

Holy Glorious Lord Christ,
 the Great Eternal Logos;
 the origin of all things in the universe,
 the original image of all life.⁹²

The saints and sages in times past,
 in all ages they have appeared as
 models;⁹⁶
 educating all peoples in the world,
 they establish various ways (to guide
 the souls).⁹⁷

**“Praise to Christ” in a more
exact translation**

Holy Luminous Honoured One,⁹³
 the Great Dao without beginning,⁹⁴
 the origin of all things in the universe,
 the original face of all sentient be-
 ings.⁹⁵

The great saints and sages of the past
 in all ages remain as models;
 educating all peoples under heaven,
 they have established all sorts of
 skilful means.⁹⁸

⁹² The Buddhist notion of “the original face” has for Reichelt a close affinity to the Christian notion of humankind created in the image and likeness of God. See, e.g., “Indigenous Religious Phrases,” 125.

⁹³ The expression *Jingzun* (Luminous Honoured One) is inspired by classical names of Buddha such as “The World-honoured One” (*Shizun*), one of the renderings of the Sanskrit *Baghavat*. The expression was at an early stage adopted by the Nestorian Church in China, see my article, “Karl Ludvig Reichelt’s Sacred Mountains,” 16.

⁹⁴ *Wushi* (Sanskrit: *anādi*) is used in Buddhist context to express various aspects of beginninglessness; see also note 86. For Reichelt the beginninglessness was used as an expression referring to what was “in the beginning” or from eternity.

⁹⁵ “The original face” is a classical Buddhist expression, particularly used in Chan/Zen to refer to the inherent Buddha-nature of sentient beings. See Reichelt, “Indigenous Religious Phrases,” 125. For “sentient beings,” see p. 152 above.

⁹⁶ Probably a reference to the exordium of the Letter to the Hebrews, but also with allusions to the manifestations of the Tathāgata and other “True Forms” mentioned above.

⁹⁷ See similar expressions in the threefold Dedication.

⁹⁸ “Skilful means” (Sanskrit: *upāya*) is a classical Buddhist term, used to express how the Buddha is able to teach every person according to his or her spiritual stage. See the previous comments to the threefold Dedication.

He broke the bonds of suffering,
and opened the way to the heavenly
sanctuary,⁹⁹
the world of eternal light,
the state of supreme knowledge.

He liberated himself (disconnected
himself) from the deep sea of pain,
and in the same way reached the
other shore,¹⁰⁰
the realm of immeasurable light,¹⁰¹
the highest supreme enlighten-
ment.¹⁰²

The mystery of mysteries,
the gateway to the mystery of life in
its fullness.¹⁰³
The Great Logos was incarnated in
Christ,
The Source of all things was coming
into the world in the west.¹⁰⁴

The mystery of mysteries,
the gateway to all secrets;¹⁰⁵
The Great Dao was gathered in
Christ,¹⁰⁶
the Tathagata from the West¹⁰⁷ was
coming into the world.

The entire world rejoices,
the kingdom of death has hope;
Christ has overcome death
and redeems all from their sinful
chains.

The entire world rejoices,
the kingdom of death has hope;¹⁰⁸
Christ has overcome death,
and redeems sentient beings from
their karmic hindrances.

⁹⁹ With Reichelt's predilection for the letter to the Hebrews, he is probably referring to the image of Christ the high priest, who through his suffering opened the way to the heavenly sanctuary.

¹⁰⁰ Both the "sea of pain" and the "other shore" are classical Buddhist expressions referring to the human predicament and the ultimate salvation. Both expressions are mentioned in Martin, "Is Buddhism a Preparation for Christianity?" 203 as terms that have been used in Christian books.

¹⁰¹ Classical expression in the Pure Land tradition for the realm (*viśaya*, *gocara*) of Amitābha, the Buddha of Unfathomable Light.

¹⁰² Sanskrit: *samyaksambodhi*—a classical expression for Buddhist enlightenment.

¹⁰³ I have used Reichelt's Norwegian translation of the *Daodejing* 道德經, where he uses a somewhat obscure term, "*all-livets mysterium*," "the mystery of all-life."

¹⁰⁴ See the above references to Christ as the Tathāgata or the "True Form" incarnated.

¹⁰⁵ The two lines are almost a direct quotation from the first chapter of the *Daodejing*.

¹⁰⁶ The expression is somewhat strange: *zhong* means to gather/collect as a verb, or a vase/chalice as a noun. The expression almost seems to suggest that Christ came into being as a sort of gathering of the *skandhas* that according to Buddhist understanding constitute a human person.

¹⁰⁷ A classical way to describe Amitābha, the Buddha of the Western Realm of the Buddhist cosmos. See above for the use of Tathāgata about God and Christ.

¹⁰⁸ *Yinjian*, "the realm of shades," is one of the traditional words for Hades, or the kingdom of death.

The mystery of the cross,
the great intention of universal salva-
tion,
saves people in the world,
releasing (them) from the eternal cy-
cle of hatred.

Highest Lord Jesus,
Compassionate Saviour;
the kingdom of God has appeared on
earth,
the entire world is a place where Lo-
gos is at work.¹¹²

The true origin of the universe,
the model of past and present;
the great Logos that was in the begin-
ning, lofty and profound,
has become incarnated in Christ.

All religions are longing for the Logos,
all are thirsting for justice;
Christ who guides his flock of sheep,
the shepherd who gathers all into
one.¹¹⁷

The mystery of the cross,
the boundless great vow,¹⁰⁹
saves sentient beings in the three
worlds,¹¹⁰
releasing (them) from dwelling in
endless kalpas of hatred.¹¹¹

Highest Lord Jesus,
compassionate Saviour,¹¹³
The Pure Land¹¹⁴ has appeared on
earth,
all the ten directions have become a
training ground.¹¹⁵

The true origin of the universe,
the model of past and present;¹¹⁶
the great Dao from the beginning,
lofty and profound,
has been revealed bodily in Christ.

All religions are longing for Dao,
all are thirsting for righteousness;
Christ who leads¹¹⁸ the flock of
sheep, the great shepherd who gath-
ers all into one.

¹⁰⁹ A classical expression for Amitābha's great vow.

¹¹⁰ "The three worlds" (*trayo-dhātavaḥ*) are the three worlds of transmigration: the world of desire, the world of form, and the formless world.

¹¹¹ Hatred, grudge or anger (*hen*) is one of the impurities that hinder liberation from the karmic cycles.

¹¹² For Reichelt's interpretation of *daochang*, see my article, "Karl Ludvig Reichelt's Sacred Mountains," 10.

¹¹³ "Jiuzhu" (literally "Saving Lord") is one of the most common names of Guanyin (Avalokiteśvara), but is also adopted by the Christian Church as a name for Christ the saviour.

¹¹⁴ Reichelt regarded the Pure Land as an equivalent to the Kingdom of God.

¹¹⁵ "Training ground" (*bodhi-maṇḍa*) is a Buddhist expression for places for spiritual training or worship; see my article, "Karl Ludvig Reichelt's Sacred Mountains," 10.

¹¹⁶ See above for the notion of "True Model" and similar terms.

¹¹⁷ This is an obvious reference to one of the favourite themes in Reichelt's thought: the Johannine description of Jesus as the shepherd who has "the other sheep" whom he will also bring in, and there will be one flock and one shepherd (John 10:14–18).

¹¹⁸ The terminology resembles the classical Buddhist descriptions of Amitābha who is

The Light of the Spirit shines in the
entire world,
the comforter of all people;¹¹⁹
saving all who are lost in the paths of
perdition,
penetrating the entire cosmos (with
his presence).

He is constantly preaching the great
truth,
and has ways and means to teach the
souls;
he sees the suffering world with his
compassion,
and is omnipresent in his activity.¹²⁴

The light of the Spirit shines
throughout the world,¹²⁰
the comforter¹²¹ of all sentient
beings;
he liberates all those who are deluded
in the six paths,¹²²
he is filling the world of total inter-
penetration.¹²³

He is constantly turning the wheel of
the great Dharma,¹²⁵
teaching all according to their ca-
pacity;
seeing the pain of the world he is
aroused by compassion,¹²⁶
his body of manifestation is im-
measurable and infinite.¹²⁷

mercifully leading and drawing all sentient beings to his pure land. For Reichelt this corresponds to the notion of Christ who will draw all humanity to himself when he is lifted up on the cross (John 12:32), and to the related image of Christ who has “the other sheep” that he will also bring in (John 10:14–18).

¹¹⁹ “The comforter” is an obvious reference to the Johannine description of the Spirit as “comforter” or “advocate.”

¹²⁰ A classical expression usually referring to the light of the Buddha that shines universally (*pu*), found in the inscriptions in most Buddhist temples; see my article, “Karl Ludvig Reichelt’s Sacred Mountains,” 20.

¹²¹ See note 119.

¹²² Liberation is expressed in the classical Buddhist notion of “reaching across (to the other shore),” while *liudao*, the “six paths of existence,” is one of the classical expressions referring to the “six paths of transmigration.”

¹²³ Literally, “the world of great thousand,” the “great thousand” (*daqian*) being a thoroughly Buddhist term expressing the total interpenetration of all elements in the myriads of realms in the Buddhist cosmos; see the my article, “Karl Ludvig Reichelt’s Sacred Mountains,” 13.

¹²⁴ This is the translation Reichelt used for an equivalent Buddhist expression, *yingshen* 應身; see “Extracts from the Buddhist Ritual,” 160.

¹²⁵ A characteristic expression for the Eternal Buddha who is constantly teaching the Dharma, notably described in the Lotus Sutra.

¹²⁶ “*Qi bei*” (“to be roused by compassion” or “to rouse compassion”) is a common Buddhist expression.

¹²⁷ “Manifestation body” (*huashen*, or *yinghua shen* and corresponding terms) is a classical Buddhist expression used to refer to the historical manifestation (Sanskrit: *nirmānakāya*) of the Buddha.

The Spirit that unifies all things,¹²⁸
 is the sword of wisdom that conquers
 evil,
 pouring out his mysterious true nature,
 Immanuel! Rejoice! Hallelujah!

The spirit that unifies all things,
 (is) the wisdom sword that cuts
 through hindrances;¹²⁹
 pouring out the mysterious nature of
 true suchness.¹³⁰ Immanuel, Re-
 joice!¹³¹ Hallelujah!

*Praise to Jingzun, the Luminous Honoured
 One—Holy, holy, holy*

“Jingzun song” 景尊頌 (Praise to *Jingzun*) was written by Wang Tao Ping (Wang Daoping 王道平), a Buddhist monk who came to Tao Fong Shan in 1935, and who was baptized in 1936. He soon engaged himself in writing and publishing activity of the community, and was characterized as a “man of great stylistic ability.” In addition to this and other hymns and songs, he was a frequent contributor to the Chinese magazine *Tao Fong* (*Daofeng* 道風), worked as editor and wrote two Christmas plays to be performed at Tao Fong Shan.¹³² The melody used for the present hymn was “Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty,” and Wang’s text may be seen as a rather free rendering of the old hymn.

景尊頌

聖哉聖哉聖哉巍巍主景尊
 宇宙萬有主創造無始大道成人
 聖哉聖哉聖哉教導天下萬民
 正等正覺悟三而一景尊

¹²⁸ See note 117.

¹²⁹ The expression is thoroughly Buddhist, but may also allude to the biblical description of the word of God as a piercing “two-edged sword” (Heb. 4:14).

¹³⁰ See the comments above on Tathāgata, True Suchness, True Form, etc.

¹³¹ Perhaps this is an allusion to the hymn, “O come, O come, Emmanuel”; its refrain runs, “rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.”

¹³² See N. N. Thelle, *En buddhistmunks vei til Kristus* [A Buddhist monk’s way to Christ] (Oslo: Gads Forlag, 1940), 29–39; *Daofengshan de gongzuo* 道風山的工作 [Work at Tao Fong Shan] (Hong Kong: Tao Fong Shan Christian Institute, 1938), 296–320.

聖哉聖哉聖哉玄玄兮景尊
 榮光照亮啟妙門基督如來降生
 耶穌勝過死亡救贖衆生業障
 救苦且救難救世景尊

聖哉聖哉聖哉慈悲主景尊
 十方皆作聖道場引人歸主羊羣
 惟有主是大道淨土示現地上
 全能全慈悲全方便景尊

聖哉聖哉聖哉保惠師景尊
 六道羣迷頌揚主歌聲充滿大千
 化身無量無邊說法隨機應變
 萬法歸一靈三而一景尊

**“Holy, holy, holy” in
Reichelt’s rhetoric**

Holy, holy, holy, Lord God the highest,
 Lord of all things in the universe, the
 origin of the eternal Great Logos who
 became man.
 Holy, holy, holy, (he) guides all peoples
 in the world,
 God in three persons,¹³³ perfect wisdom.

**“Holy, holy, holy” in a more
exact translation**

Holy, holy, holy, highest Lord Jingzun,¹³⁴
 Lord of all things in the universe, who
 created the Great Dao without beginning,
 who became man.
 Holy, holy, holy, (he) guides all
 peoples under heaven,
 The triune Jingzun¹³⁵ of the highest
 supreme enlightenment.

¹³³ *Jingzun* here obviously refers to God, expressed in the original hymn as “God in three persons, blessed trinity.”

¹³⁴ I could have rendered Jingzun as “The Luminous Honoured One” here as in the previous hymn, but use the Chinese term to emphasize the peculiar character of the expression.

¹³⁵ The same expression is used in the Chinese version, corresponding to the original “God in three persons, blessed trinity.”

Holy, holy, holy, God of light, veiled in darkness,¹³⁶

reveals his glory by opening the Wonderful Gate,¹³⁷ Christ the true form¹³⁸ who came down to be born.

Jesus conquered death, and expiated the deeds of sinful man,¹³⁹

he saved from suffering and hardship, the Messiah,¹⁴⁰ the Lord Christ.

Holy, holy, holy, mysterious Jingzun,¹⁴¹

(His) light shines, opening the wonderful gate, Christ the Tathāgata came down to be born.

Jesus conquered death, and expiated the karmic hindrances of all sentient beings,

he saves from suffering and hardship, the World Saviour and Lord¹⁴² Jingzun.

Holy, holy, holy, merciful Lord Christ, the entire world is a sacred place where the Logos works, gathering all people to the fold of the Lord,

Only the Lord is the Great Logos,¹⁴³ who reveals the Kingdom of God on earth;¹⁴⁴

Holy, holy, holy, merciful Lord Jingzun,

the ten directions have become a sacred training place (*bodhi-maṇḍa*) guiding people to return to the fold of the Lord,

Only the Lord is the Great Dao,¹⁴⁵ who established (revealed) the Pure Land on earth;¹⁴⁶

¹³⁶ My translation alludes to a line in the original hymn: “though the darkness hide Thee,” while Jingzun (the Luminous Honoured One) alludes to the “light.”

¹³⁷ For Reichelt this obviously refers to Christ, who calls himself the “door” (John 10:7), and to other references to “gate” in the New Testament.

¹³⁸ See my earlier comments on Tathāgata and True Form.

¹³⁹ Cf. the expression “sinful man” in the original hymn; see note 141 below.

¹⁴⁰ Reichelt followed traditional Christian readings, interpreting the one who “saves the world” (*jiu shi*) as Messiah, the saviour king in the biblical tradition.

¹⁴¹ “Mysterious” (*xuan*) may also be translated as dark, obscure, hidden or abstruse. This expression is characteristic of the Daoist description of the Dao; but perhaps also corresponding to these lines in the original hymn: “though the darkness hide Thee” and “though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see.”

¹⁴² “*Jiu shi*” is mostly used to describe Guanyin (Avalokiteśvara), the most popular bodhisattva in the Mahāyāna pantheon.

¹⁴³ This expression corresponds to the line “only Thou art holy, there is none beside Thee” in the original hymn.

¹⁴⁴ Reichelt had no problems adopting the Buddhist “Pure Land” as an expression for the Kingdom of God.

¹⁴⁵ See note 143.

¹⁴⁶ *Jingtu* (“pure land”) refers to Buddhist notions of paradise, usually Amitābha Buddha’s paradise.

The Lord Christ is perfect in power, in love,¹⁴⁷ and in his wise means for salvation.

the Lord Jingzun who is almighty, all-merciful, and who uses innumerable expedient means.¹⁴⁸

Holy, holy, holy, God the Comforter,
All who are lost in the sinful world
praise the Lord, jubilation fills the entire cosmos.

The Spirit teaches everybody everywhere, finding ways and means to influence the souls.¹⁴⁹

The spirit that unifies all things,¹⁵⁰
blessed trinity.

Holy, holy, holy, Comforter Jingzun,
All who are deluded in the six paths¹⁵¹ praise the Lord, jubilation fills the world of total interpenetration.¹⁵²

The body of manifestation¹⁵³ that is teaching the Dharma without limit¹⁵⁴ in accordance with the capacities (of everyone).¹⁵⁵

The spirit that unifies all things, the triune Jingzun.

Other Songs and Hymns

We have already noted that the Nestorian “Gloria,” a hymn to the trinity from the Tang, found in Dunhuang in 1908, was included in the

¹⁴⁷ This corresponds to the line “perfect in power, in love, and purity” in the original, which is also found in the traditional Chinese version.

¹⁴⁸ This is a classical Buddhist expression, traditionally describing Buddha’s “expedient means” (*upāya*) or wise ways of guiding sentient beings towards salvation.

¹⁴⁹ See the notes on similar expressions in the threefold dedication.

¹⁵⁰ While the Chinese translation of the original hymn refers to “the Lord of all countries” (*wanguo*), the hymn here refers to the unification of “all things” (*wanfa*), which is a characteristic Buddhist term.

¹⁵¹ “The six paths” is a classical Buddhist description of the six possible states of rebirth: gods, ashuras, animals, hell, hungry ghosts, human beings.

¹⁵² “The world of total interpenetration” (*daqian*) is a thoroughly Buddhist expression, based on an understanding of the cosmos in which all elements in the innumerable realms are mutually interrelated and interpenetrated.

¹⁵³ The expression refers to the *nirmāṇakāya*, one of the three “bodies” of the Buddha, through which he appears as a human being (as the historical Buddha, or sometimes in other forms) in order to teach humans.

¹⁵⁴ The two expressions, *wuliang* and *wubian* (both *ananta* in Sanskrit), are characteristic Buddhist expressions, often referring to the immeasurable compassion and wisdom of (Amitābha) Buddha, symbolized by his life and light.

¹⁵⁵ The expression refers to the vision of Buddha teaching all sentient beings according to their capacities, especially developed in the Lotus Sutra; see earlier comments on the dedication.

appendix (pages 77–78). This is a clear expression of the great inspiration Reichelt received from the Nestorian Church and its attempt to interpret Christianity in a cultural context moulded by Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism. Apart from a few expressions with Buddhist colouring, however, the hymn itself has few references to Buddhist rhetoric,¹⁵⁶ and will not be fully discussed here. The same applies to Reichelt's missionary hymn, which has no direct reference to the Chinese context.

The two remaining songs in the appendix make frequent use of Buddhist terminology, but are of a somewhat different character than the hymns. The Daoyouhui song, written by the above-mentioned Wang Dao Ping, expresses the enthusiasm for belonging to the brotherhood and being part of the missionary work. The Tao Fong Shan song was written by another Buddhist student, Cheng Tao-pen (Zheng Daoben 鄭道本), who was baptized in 1935. His song, sung on a rather solemn hymn melody that became popular during the Reformation,¹⁵⁷ praises the beauty and serenity of Tao Fong Shan as a peaceful paradise on earth.¹⁵⁸ Both songs use the type of rhetoric we have already analyzed in the liturgies and hymns, describing Christ as the Great Dao/Logos who was “from the beginning,” and as the great shepherd who gathers “the other sheep” scattered around (John 10:16), unifying people from all races and religions. Since no new elements are added, there is no need for further analysis.

6. HERMENEUTICAL IMPLICATIONS

In my two articles I have sporadically anticipated some of the hermeneutical assumptions and implications of the attempt to establish Christian monasteries for Buddhist monks. In my concluding remarks I will summarize some of my findings, and present some additional reflec-

¹⁵⁶ The most obvious examples are the expression used for salvation, *du* 度/渡, literally carrying people across to “the other side,” and the corresponding image of the sending of a “raft” (*fa* 筏) that saves people from the river of fire. *Shan'gen* is also a Buddhist expression Reichelt used in the penitence parts of the rituals; see above.

¹⁵⁷ Originally a fifteenth-century Dutch melody that was adopted by Joseph Klug in his *Geistliche Lieder* (1529), “Dies est laetitia”/“Der Tag der ist so freudenreich.”

¹⁵⁸ See N. N. Thelle, *Fra begynnelsen til nu* [From the beginning until now] (Oslo: Den Kristne Buddhistmisjons Forlag, 1939), 76; *Tao Fong* 3, no. 2 (1936): n.p.

tions that may enable the reader to make a nuanced evaluation of Reichelt's project.

In my first article I described the inherent ambiguity of establishing Christian monasteries in order to convert Buddhist monks and ultimately to lead them back to active life in society.¹⁵⁹ Now the focus is directed towards the rhetoric, found both in the external layout and the facilities of the institutions, as well as the liturgies and devotional life. What were the basic missionary principles behind the venture, and what sort of hermeneutical thinking lay behind the attempt to create Christian liturgies so heavily loaded with Buddhist terminology? A simple answer cannot be given, for there were obviously crossing concerns, tensions and ambiguities.

The most obvious emphasis in Reichelt's own missionary thinking was his consistent identification with a theology of fulfilment, a basic conviction that would definitely have placed him in Paul F. Knitter's categories of "inclusivism" or "fulfilment" theologies of religions.¹⁶⁰ "Fulfilment" theories combine missionary concerns with appreciation of the values of other religions and willingness to integrate their insights and experiences into one's own faith. Reichelt's fascination with Buddhism often made him an advocate for Mahāyāna, and he was tireless in his attempt to share his appreciation of the highest levels of Buddhism. At the same time, however, what he regarded as the "highest" were the elements in Buddhism that seemed closest to Christianity and which could be used as stepping stones towards the Christian faith. In other words, the generous inclusivism in his fulfilment vision implied an obvious element of at least "partial replacement," to use Knitter's terminology. Reichelt's use of Buddhist rhetoric is characterized by such a tension between fulfilment and replacement.

From one point of view, the use of Buddhist terms and concepts by Christians in China was merely an inevitable aspect of cross-cultural communication,¹⁶¹ just as Buddhism had to make extensive use of Chinese terms loaded with Daoist and Confucian ideas when it was introduced from India and Central Asia. Similar things happened in the early church when Christianity was transferred from Jewish/Hebrew contexts to Greek contexts, with entirely new concepts and philosophi-

¹⁵⁹ See my article, "Karl Ludvig Reichelt's Sacred Mountains," 32–34.

¹⁶⁰ Paul F. Knitter, *No Other Name? A Critical Survey of Christian Attitudes towards Other Religions* (London: SCM Press, 1985); idem, *Introducing Theologies of Religion* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 2002).

¹⁶¹ See note 3.

cal categories that would in many ways transform Christianity. We have noticed to what extent the Nestorian Christians coming to China during the Tang had to adopt Buddhist, Daoist and Confucian terms so as to translate their message. The same happens in our own time when Hindu gurus and Buddhist masters teach Yoga and Buddhism in the West. Their appeal is partly due to their new and distinctive message, but to a great extent to the fact that they have used “Christian” rhetoric and categories in order to be heard and to some extent to be understood.

On the other hand, Reichelt’s missionary work was obviously more than such a “normal” processes of cross-cultural communication. It was consistently directed towards a specific religious community, Buddhist monks and so-called “religious devotees in the Far East,” and experimented with developing an environment and a language that would appeal to those communities. We don’t have sufficient material to evaluate the response, but sporadic reports suggest all sorts of evaluations: from enthusiastic support among Buddhists as well as Christians, via more nuanced sceptical interest, to harsh criticism from both Buddhist and Christians—and at times even violent opposition from Buddhist communities.

With hindsight, after seventy or eighty years of further development in the academic study of Buddhism and the dialogue between Buddhists and Christians, it is tempting to regard Reichelt merely as a “Bible-waving missionary who fraudulently adopted Buddhist guise,”¹⁶² or to brand his venture as naive and uncritical, even crude and offensive. Christian observers have often criticized or even ridiculed Asian Buddhists—notably Buddhist reformers—for trying to modernize Buddhism by copying Christian strategies for propagation and social work. Buddhist reformers have introduced modern forms of preaching, Sunday schools, youth work, YMBA (instead of YMCA), charity and other activities, even “stealing” Christian songs, replacing “Jesus” and “Bible” with “Buddha” and “Sutra,” as in the children’s song “Buddha loves me, / this I know, / for the Sutras tell me so.” One might ask whether it is better to “steal” devotional songs from Buddhist liturgies, only replacing “Amitābha’s paradise in the West” with “Christ,” as we have seen in one of the central devotions in Reichelt’s liturgies.

A few comments are needed in order to correct the one-sidedness of such criticism. The most important basis for Reichelt’s liberal use of

¹⁶² See Whalen Lai, “Why is there not a Buddho-Christian Dialogue in China?” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 6 (1986): 93.

Buddhist concepts, and even of entire passages from Buddhist rituals, was his conviction that these originally were inspired by Christianity. Along with many historians and scholars of religion, he was aware of the possibility of an early contact between Christians and Buddhists in Western and Central Asia, and was convinced that the development of Mahāyāna Buddhism to a great extent had been influenced by Christianity. The tendency to divinize the Buddha, the development of an entire pantheon of Buddhas and merciful Bodhisattvas, the ideas of divine grace and faith, masses for the dead, the belief in the paradises of Amītibha and other Buddhas, somehow must be the result of interactions with Christians in Western or Central Asia, primarily in its Nestorian form, as he argued. He was supported by contemporary scholars,¹⁶³ while historians nowadays are rather reluctant to recognize such direct influence as historically plausible.¹⁶⁴ For Reichelt such theories were so evident that he without any reservations or scruples—historical or religious—translated “Buddha” and corresponding terms as “God.” In similar ways he described Christ as the “Tathāgata from the West” and regarded Buddhist Pure Land as equivalent to the Kingdom of God, as we have seen. In Reichelt’s historical perspective, such Christianization of Buddhist terms was not primarily a question of adapting to Buddhist rhetoric, but actually a historical reclaiming of notions and concepts that had come from Christianity and which might in this way regain

¹⁶³ See, e.g., *Fra Østens religiøse liv*, 7–8. In a letter to the general secretary of the mission Lars Dahle (14 March 1916), he mentions that he will write a chapter on “the higher Buddhism” in the new edition of *Kinas religioner* (China’s religions), since the historical issues now seemed more clarified. P. Y. Saeki’s book *The Nestorian Monuments in China* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1916) might have impressed him. Joseph Edkins argues in *Chinese Buddhism: Its Historical, Theoretical, and Popular Aspects* (London: Trübner & Co., 1893), 2–3 that Mahāyāna got its central notions from Persia and Babylonia, and refers to other studies by S. Beal, B. Hodgson and B. Burnouf. Timothy Richard referred to Friedrich Max Müller and the Japanese Buddhologists Takakusu Junjirō 高楠順次郎 and Nanjiō Bunyū 南条文雄, but was mostly concerned about the possible connection with Egypt and Persia; see Timothy Richard, *The New Testament of Higher Buddhism*, 1–4; idem, *Forty-five Years in China* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1916), 269, 272, 336–37. See also my discussion in “Karl Ludvig Reichelts religionshistoriske og religionsteologiske profil” [The profile of Karl Ludvig Reichelt’s contribution to the history of religion and the theology of religion], *Norsk Teologisk Tidsskrift* 105, no. 4 (2004): 193–215.

¹⁶⁴ Even though modern historians accept the possibility of mutual influence between Buddhism and Christianity, there is much more material showing the extensive contact between Buddhists and Manicheans; see Ian Gillman and Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, *Christians in Asia before 1500* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1999), 251–62; Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, “Christians, Buddhists and Manichaeans in Medieval Central Asia,” *Buddhist-Christian Studies* 1 (1981): 46–50.

their original meaning.¹⁶⁵ That was in particular the case with Pure Land Buddhism in which, according to Reichelt, some of the “most precious gold of Daoism and Christianity” had been included.¹⁶⁶ A number of contemporary learned Buddhists rejected such appropriations, and tried to demonstrate the misinterpretations of Buddhist concepts.¹⁶⁷

Reichelt’s historical assumptions may also explain why his translations and renderings of liturgical texts were “Christianized” to such an extent that the Buddhist colouring almost disappeared. My own translations and comments have shown the peculiar mixture of Buddhist and Christian rhetorics, often unmediated side by side in the same sentence. One might suspect that it was due to the need to avoid suspicion of syncretism, but I tend to see it as an expression of his optimistic expectation that even classical Buddhist notions would attain new meaning when integrated into a new context. From Reichelt’s perspective this was a sort of “homecoming” in the sense that the Buddhist concepts regain their original, old meaning by returning to their original context.

To what extent was Reichelt’s attempt to establish Christian monasteries for Buddhist monks successful? The question cannot be answered properly, for various reasons. First, the answer depends on the criteria one chooses for measuring success or failure. Second, there is still too little historical material for describing the impact of his work, particularly when it comes to written material from the Buddhist side.¹⁶⁸ Third, the evaluation of the use of Buddhist conventions and rhetoric to a great extent depends on rather subjective and emotional predilections. Fourth, Reichelt’s work has to be seen in its historical context, with all its limitations when it comes to interfaith relations and historical knowledge. It is not to be one-sidedly evaluated with the hindsight of later generations. The following are my suggestions based

¹⁶⁵ This has been developed in great detail in *Fra Østens religiøse liv*; see, e.g., pp. 88, 119–22, 176–80, 200–201.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 200.

¹⁶⁷ See, e.g., Tai Hsü (Taixu 太虛), “The Meaning of Chen Ju (眞如) and Ju Lai (如來),” *CR* 55, no. 2 (1924): 119–20. I have a copy of a letter written by Taixu to Reichelt in the 1930s with a thorough demonstration of Reichelt’s misconception of these terms. See also the references to such criticism in He Jianming, “Buddhist–Christian Encounter: A Case Study of *Ren Jian Jue Banyuekan*,” *Ching Feng*, n.s., 1, no. 2 (2000): 121–42; Lai Pan-chiu, “Influence of Chinese Buddhism on the Indigenization of Christianity in Modern China,” *Ching Feng*, n.s., 1, no. 2 (2000): 143–59.

¹⁶⁸ Chinese researchers involved in the study of Buddhist–Christian relations will hopefully find more material about Buddhist reactions to Reichelt’s work.

on my own observations and reflections as far as the available material is concerned.

My first suggestion is that, however critical one might be of the actual strategy and practical results of Reichelt's and his associates' work, they initiated a new relationship between Buddhists and Christians in China. It was a unique and courageous missionary work that deserves admiration and respect. Their theoretical approach was shared by many contemporaries, but no one had ever transformed the theories into a practical strategy for communal life and friendly contact in the way they managed to do in the 1920s and 1930s.

Second, even with statistics as a criterion of success and failure, the result depends on the observer. The fact that thousands of monks and religious devotees visited the institutions in Nanjing and Hong Kong was mostly regarded as an unquestionable proof of the reputation and popularity of the work. The fact that a number of monks were actually converted to Christianity and engaged in propagation might also be seen as quite remarkable.¹⁶⁹ Others would say, however, that the actual number of converted monks was rather limited, and few of these had been monks in higher positions. Reichelt's tendency to idealize the converted monks as prominent and high-ranking was countered by Buddhist claims that the mission only attracted unsuccessful and uneducated monks. The Buddhist opposition to the work, at times involving rather violent actions, may be an indication that the work was "successful" enough to disturb the Buddhist leadership. A paradox inherent in such a dialogical mission is that in the moment it really succeeds, it will lead to failure—the conversion of a great number of Buddhist monks would inevitably create barriers of mistrust and animosity. Further research is needed to obtain more exact material for these sorts of evaluation.

Third, it is probable that the liberal use of Buddhist conventions and rhetoric in the spiritual life of the institutions caused a variety of reactions. Many visiting monks were apparently attracted by an atmosphere that was familiar and friendly, with its generous appreciation of Buddhist symbols and expressions. The enthusiasm with which many converted monks engaged in developing Christian rituals inspired by Buddhist rhetoric shows the appeal of such an approach. One might

¹⁶⁹ The mission reported that 58 Buddhist and Daoist monks had been baptized between 1923 and 1938; see Thelle, *Fra begynnelsen til nu*, 77. For a more detailed analysis of conversions, baptisms and students in various courses at Tao Fong Shan, see Eric J. Sharpe, *Karl Ludvig Reichelt: Missionary, Scholar, and Pilgrim* (Hong Kong: Tao Fong Shan Ecumenical Centre, 1984), 203–6.

imagine, however, that quite a few visitors were confused about the identity of the community, and some even turned off by what seemed to be only a superficial touch by Buddhist forms. Some visitors were certainly enraged by what seemed to be a hypocritical combination of friendly dialogue and proselytism.

Fourth, did the use of Buddhist rhetoric lead to a Buddhistification of Christianity, or did it in some ways enrich and deepen the understanding of Christian theology, and perhaps even contribute to a more contextual understanding of the Christian faith? Again, no clear answer is possible. Some critics, notably those among more conservative Christians, regarded the openness to Buddhism as intolerable syncretism, as we have seen. Some visitors also were attracted to the work because they felt the affinity with their own visions of spiritual unity behind all religions, such as the Chinese members of Daoyuan and other esoteric societies. As to its general identity, however, Reichelt's work never seemed to lose its missionary fervour. Not only the missionaries but also converted monks tended to combine positive evaluation of Buddhism with rough comparative expositions aiming at demonstrating the strengths of Christianity over against the weaknesses of Buddhism.¹⁷⁰ After all, rather than a process of Buddhistification of Christianity, the general atmosphere seemed to be characterized by traditional Christian piety, clothed in Buddhist ritual and rhetorical conventions.

An interesting parallel may be what happened with the Manichean adoption of Buddhist terminology as it expanded into Asia. According to Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, Manichaeism had a unique ability to fit into various contexts; it adapted to Christian terminology in the West, to Islam in Abbasid realms, to Buddhism in Central Asia, and to Daoism in China. Such adaptations were, however, "only of a superficial, linguistic level, and did not really affect the basic concepts of the religion." I am tempted to rephrase Klimkeit's conclusion about Manichaean hermeneutical strategies, concluding that the surface of Reichelt's work suggests an *interpretatio Buddhica*. But a closer look at the apparently Buddhist terms reveals that they were but labels for Christian concepts.¹⁷¹ Even though Reichelt was informed and inspired

¹⁷⁰ This is obvious in Reichelt's extensive production, and was a prominent feature in the journal *Tao Fong* in the 1930s as well as in the pamphlets and books written by converted monks.

¹⁷¹ Hans-Joachim Klimkeit, *Gnosis on the Silk Road: Gnostic Parables, Hymns and Prayers from Central Asia* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco 1993), 4–5; see also the references to works by Klimkeit and Gillman in note 164.

by Buddhist teaching and devotional practice, and was never tired in his warm defence of “higher Buddhism,” his varied adaptations to Buddhism were basically “skilful means” for promoting the ultimate vision that Buddhism should be fulfilled in and replaced by Christianity.

Literacy, Canon and Social Reality: Socio-cultural Dimension of the Reception of the Bible among Ethnic Groups in Southwest China

YOU BIN

Abstract

Scholars have paid much attention to the cultural reception of the Bible among the practitioners of the centuries-old, well-formed Asian traditions such as Confucianism, Buddhism and Hinduism, but they have largely ignored how the Bible was received by preliterate societies that might have long-standing oral traditions. On the basis of historical research and anthropological fieldwork in some ethnic, Christian and non-Christian, communities in southwest China, this paper investigates the larger socio-cultural *Sitz im Leben* against which the Bible has been translated and received in that area. Some basic issues, such as the interrelation between orality and literacy, its social implications and the construction of identity in relation to the reception of the Bible will be discussed. With some case studies of the reception of the Bible by ethnic groups in southwest China, this paper is also intended to contribute to our understanding of the formation of biblical literature itself and its social implications for faith communities.

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Biblical scholarship has generally been aware that the question of literacy and orality stands at the heart of issues related to the study of the Bible (especially the Hebrew Bible) and ancient Israelite social history at large. The emergence of literacy, a *sine qua non* of the emergence of scripture, was undoubtedly one of the most influential advances in human civilization. On the basis of the biblical text and the archaeology done in ancient West Asia, scholars have begun to analyze the social makeup within which the transition from orality to literacy took place in ancient Israel, as well as the social impact of a written Bible upon social hierarchy and group identity.¹ Interestingly, at least in Asia, and especially among preliterate ethnic groups, the reception of the Bible was also deeply involved with the relationship between orality and literacy, the idea of a written Bible, and their complex social impact. This paper primarily concerns the following questions: What changes did the technique of written communication as well as the emergence of a written Bible bring about to the social structure and organization of preliterate societies? What happened to the authority structure in ethnic communities after they had received the Bible? How did they construct their group identity with the acceptance of the Bible into their own culture? In short, it studies the interrelationship between the reception of the Bible and the social reality of ethnic Christian communities. But before answering these questions, we shall first make a brief introduction to the history of the Bible and Christianity among ethnic groups in southwest China.

1. BACKGROUND

China has long been a multi-ethnic and multi-religious nation. Ethnic groups in its southwestern region have developed distinct socio-cultural systems vis-à-vis traditional Han society.² These ethnic groups also had

¹ For a recent treatment of these issues, see Ehud Ben Zvi and Michael H. Floyd, eds., *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy* (Atlanta, Ga.: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000), esp. 1–30.

² For a general introduction to as well as rich case studies on ethnic religions and cultures in China, see the multi-volume *Zhongguo ge minzu yuanshi zongjiao ziliao ji-*

a distinct reception history of the Bible vis-à-vis the Han Chinese, who had a predominantly Confucian background. Interestingly, these ethnic groups had a common dominating feature: the making of their Bibles was coincident with the introduction of literacy to them as well as the creation of the scripts of their languages.³ Thus their canonical writings (i.e., the Bible) and the script used to transliterate them became new cultural symbols of these ethnic groups. Here are some examples:⁴

1. *The Miao 苗 people.* Samuel Pollard (1864–1915) began his mission work among the Miao people in Guizhou 貴州 Province in 1904 and started to create a script for their language. The script, completed in 1907, was based on roman letters and the calligraphical style used by traditional weavers and painters. The Bible was translated into the Miao language from 1907 to 1915 and printed in the new script. The New Testament in the Miao language was released in 1917.
2. *The Jingpo 景頗 (Kachin) people.* Ola Hanson (1884–1929) began his mission work among the Kachin people at the Sino–Burma border area in the late 19th century. A team under his leadership created the Kachin script with roman letters for the Kachin Christians. Selections from the Bible were translated into their tongue and printed in the new script.
3. *The Lisu 傈僳 people.* J. O. Fraser (1886–1938) created the Lisu script with roman letters and some of their transfigurations in the 1910s in northwest Yunnan 雲南 Province. He then rendered the Bible into the Lisu language and transliterated it with the new script, with the assistance of some Lisu people. The New Testament was completed in 1932, and the whole Bible in 1950. This version is still the only one used by the Lisu Christians in southwest China.⁵

cheng 中國各民族原始宗教資料集成 [Encyclopedia of the religions of Chinese ethnic minorities], ed. Lü Daji 呂大吉 and He Yaohua 何耀華 (Beijing: Zhongguo shehuikexue chubanshe, 2000).

³ For general studies on Christianity among the ethnic groups in southwest China, see Qian Ning 錢寧, ed., *Jidujiao yu shaoshuminzu shehui wenhua bianqian* 基督教與少數民族社會文化變遷 [Protestant Christianity and the ethnic minorities' social and cultural changes] (Kunming: Yunnan daxue chubanshe, 1998); Han Junxue 韓軍學, *Jidujiao yu Yunnan shaoshuminzu* 基督教與雲南少數民族 [Protestant Christianity and the Yunnan ethnic minorities] (Kunming: Yunnan renmin chubanshe, 2000).

⁴ The paper focuses largely on the reception of the Bible in the Lisu Christian community, although the Lisu Bible is only one among many important and widely used versions written in the ethnic scripts of, for example, the Yi 彝, Lahu 拉祜, Wa 佤, Dulong 獨龍, Naxi 納西, Dai 傣 (Thai) and Hani 哈尼 languages.

⁵ On Fraser's work on the Lisu script and the first Lisu version of Bible, see his biogra-

For these and such other ethnic groups, the Bible was usually the first-ever *book* in their socio-cultural history. In that sense their reception of the Bible was inevitably intertwined with the issues of literacy, the relationship between orality and literacy, and the implicit social function of canonical writings, namely, the *written* Bible.

The study of the cultural reception of the Bible can in turn shed some light on the study of biblical literature itself. Since Hebrew Bible scholars have been particularly concerned with the social role of written word in ancient Israel, they have attached much importance to the bearing of writings—especially canonical writings—upon the statuses of their compilers, readers and interpreters, the formation of new social structures, the construction of moral discourses, the propagation of theological/ideological viewpoints concerning group identity and self-perception, etc.⁶ Interestingly, these were also crucial aspects of the reception of the Bible by preliterate ethnic societies. Thus, looking at these aspects through the lens of anthropological research into the socio-cultural reception of the Bible in such societies could assist our reflection on the social processes and implications of the formation of the written Bible in ancient Israelite society.

2. METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTIONS

To evaluate the social impact of a written Bible upon preliterate societies, this paper will in particular use anthropological theory of literacy to illuminate the social implications of literacy and canonical writings (viz. the Christian Bible) in the ethnic groups in southwest China. Because of the preliterate nature of these ethnic groups, data about their social life were collected mainly through participatory observation and interviews.

Literacy has long been an important issue in anthropology. In the past the emergence of literacy in preliterate societies was usually regarded merely as a sign of progress according to some theories of social development, or as an entrance gate through which the “primitive”

phy by Eileen F. Crossman, *Mountain Rain* (Sevenoaks: OMF, 1982).

⁶ On these issues, see Ehud Ben Zvi, “Writings, Speeches, and the Prophetic Books: Setting an Agenda,” in Ben Zvi and Floyd, *Writings and Speech in Israelite and Ancient Near Eastern Prophecy*, 8–9.

people might enter into a modern, “civilized” stage.⁷ Not only did this progressive view presuppose a binary opposition between orality and literacy; it left aside the complex interrelations between the emergence of literacy (and a written Bible as well) on the one hand and social realities on the other. The anthropological study of literacy has now largely abandoned this presupposition and has turned either to the autonomous model or the ideological model.

Both models emphasize the interrelations between literacy and social realities. In the autonomous model, however, more attention is paid to the social effects of the emergence of literacy, including the resultant changes in group identity and social memory, as well as how the future is envisioned on the basis of a new understanding of the past, when written records are used. Moreover, the far-reaching political effects of literacy is also brought into consideration in that it inevitably enhances bureaucratic efficiency in a vast country.

In the ideological model, literacy is treated as a product of the interactions among social powers. Its influence upon the individual and society crucially depends on the social practices surrounding it, and the social system in which it is embedded. The issues concerned include: How does literacy become a “symbolic capital” the access to which is controlled by the social elite? How are the role and function of literacy determined by other socio-cultural and even political entities? Their differences notwithstanding, both models propose that literacy cannot be studied independently of the social, political and historical forces that it shapes and by which it is shaped.

In our study of the cultural reception of the Bible in an Asian context, we have brought literacy into consideration because it was crucial for the reception of the Bible as a collection of holy, canonical writings in the ethnic Christian communities studied. The socio-cultural dimension of the reception of a written Bible, moreover, was part of a larger context for our understanding of the social function of literacy in such preliterate societies. As biblical scholars have widely realized, scripture both shaped and was shaped by social forces and systems in which it was embedded. In this regard, at least three points must be considered. First, the formation of a canon or a set of sacred writings itself was a social process. While literacy turned some traditions into a canon and then into permanence, it also made other traditions mute as a result of the struggles between different social groups. This was the case in the

⁷ Brian V. Street and Niko Besnier, “Aspects of Literacy,” in *Companion Encyclopedia of Anthropology*, ed. Tim Ingold (London: Routledge, 2002), 537.

formation of biblical literature itself,⁸ and also was the case in the reception of the Bible following the introduction of literacy in the ethnic societies studied.

Second, the formation of a canon could be a landmark in a social history because it might draw and fix the social boundaries between different groups. Before canonical writings emerged with the creation of a writing system, the oral preservation of traditions had predominated, which was characteristic of fluidity and obscurity and which in turn rendered the construction of community identity fluid and obscure. But with the formation of a written canon, certain traditions become textualized and less flexible than others. As a result, community identity based on such a canon might become clearer but less fluid. This was true of the ethnic communities we have studied, in which the Bible was the earliest created written text, emerging as an absolutely closed religious canon.⁹

Third, the written Bible would become a starting point for oral communication concerning religious matters. In fact, in the ethnic groups studied oral communication still reigned even though a new class of literati had emerged, whose duty was to interpret and orally transmit the divine message to a largely illiterate audience, rather than just to read or recite the canonical writings. Thus, public religious communication not only involved the canonical written texts themselves, but also how they were read or orally transmitted on the one hand, and the interaction between the audience and the interpreter/speaker on the other. We may apply some anthropological insights about literacy in order to better understand the socio-cultural forces behind the reception of the Bible in the ethnic groups in southwest China.

Lastly, a few words about the method of collecting primary materials. In particular, because of the preliterate nature of the communities studied, there were few written sources available from which we might acquire knowledge about their socio-cultural traditions. Thus, we had to depend heavily upon the oral hi/stories narrated by the socio-cultural elite, collected when the present author interviewed them during fieldwork from 2002 to 2003. On the other hand, in order to investigate the

⁸ See Terje Stordalen, "Canon and Canonization: Comparison between the Hebrew Bible and the Confucian Canons" (lecture, Central University for Nationalities, Beijing, 2003).

⁹ This is a dominating feature of the so-called Semitic religions, especially when they are compared with Eastern religions like Confucianism, and even Buddhism. See Kōgen Mizuno, *Buddhist Sutras: Origin, Development, Transmission* (Tokyo: Kosei, 1982).

socio-cultural differences between the original preliterate society and the society that had received the Bible, we chose two distinctive communities in which to conduct the fieldwork. In one of the communities people still relied upon oral communication in preserving their culture and traditions; traditional oral practices still continued in shaping the community. In the other community the reception of the Bible greatly had affected the socio-cultural practices and structures of the community. Through a comparison between them, this paper tries to clarify what socio-cultural changes the reception of a written Bible might possibly bring about to such ethnic groups.

3. SOCIAL AUTHORITY AND STRUCTURE, AND THE RECEPTION OF THE BIBLE

The substitution of writing, especially in combination with the reception of the Bible as a written canon, for orality in the preliterate ethnic groups studied was not only a change in the method for preserving religious traditions, but was also a far-reaching social change in their history. Basically, literacy brought in a class of literati who could read and interpret the Bible, replacing the old class of orators who were well-versed in tribal traditions. Social authority was thus transferred from the latter to the former. The church, where the Bible was read, sung and interpreted, became a public centre and replaced the household as the new "political block," where tribal rituals were performed. Thus a new power structure was woven into the social fabric of the ethnic group, and in turn reshaped its social structure and organization.

(a) Christian Literati and Tribal Orators

The creation of a script, which makes the translation of the Bible into an ethnic language possible, turns literacy into a "symbolic capital" the access to which may strongly influence the social statuses of different groups. In the past, the outstanding status of tribal orators relied heavily upon their capability of memorizing and reciting tribal epics:

The tribal orators have outstanding memorizing capability. They can memorize many ethnic epics, including those about the creation of

heaven and earth, the ethnic origin and ancestors, as well as epics for specific occasions. In the following occasions they are invited: important life events such as the birth of a child, the first birthday, wedding and death; particular sacrificial ceremonies in which, for example, sacrifices are offered to ancestors, the souls of the dead, and gods, when there are natural disasters and diseases. It is believed that demons can be dispelled and the gods satisfied by reciting the epics according to a particular schedule known only to the orators. The charisma of the orators lies in their capability of memorizing and reciting our traditional epics. To educate a good orator for the next generation, an old orator must select a clever boy and teach him since his childhood. After the boy has grown up, he will also be quite fluent in reciting the epics. And after the old orator dies, he will succeed.¹⁰

Tribal orators wielded both religious and social authorities. They controlled access to the world of religious beliefs and knowledge with their exceptional ability to recite epics and other oral traditions from memory, from which their “symbolic capital” was derived. From the perspective of sociology of knowledge, such oral traditions constituted an intellectual foundation for their authoritative social status. But with the creation of an ethnic script as well as the emergence of a written Bible in an ethnic Christian community, that foundation was largely overthrown; literacy rendered the skills of oral communication and memorizing much less important. As a result, whereas the literati, who were educated in churches and equipped with the abilities of reading and interpreting the Bible, emerged as the new class in authority in the whole community, the orators of traditional epics were losing their influence on it.

(b) Churches and Households

In the ethnic communities studied, with the introduction of literacy and emergence of the written Bible, not only did a new class of literati gradually rise to power; the church also emerged as a new authority site as well as a holy site. Generally the church, where the Bible is read and interpreted, would become the first public centre for a preliterate society. Before the establishment of a Christian community, the household,

¹⁰ Interview with a Lisu traditional orator–priest, July 20, 2003, Lanping 蘭坪 County, Yunnan Province.

including extensions such as the familial burial-ground, had been the heart of the community's religious life:

The ancestral altar is placed in the household—generally, with the ancestresses on the left and the ancestors on the right. On the occasion of a special ceremony for the ancestry, people will invite a tribal orator to the household to recite tribal epics. Other occasions that call for the participation of a tribal orator include the dedication of a new house to, and the petition for the blessings of, ancestral spirits; when a family member falls sick (the orator will then be invited to sing some epics to expel the demons); when a family member is dying (the orator will then be invited to perform certain rituals and to sing some epics so as to bring the soul of the dead into a tree, which then becomes a holy tree for that family). Anyway, the tribal orator usually visits his client's household to perform the duty of reciting epics.¹¹

Though the occasions for the recitation of tribal epics varied, they were mostly related to the household. Indeed, most of the time tribal epics were recited in household sphere, and reciting them was part of the family rituals. But the emergence of the Bible dramatically changed the status of this ritual. Preaching the Bible was believed somehow to be preaching the Word of God itself, which needed a separate public space. The interpretation of the Bible became the focus of the whole ceremony in which the Christian community gathered together. This separate public space (i.e., the church) stood above the whole community because it was where the interpretation of the Bible, or of the Word of God, was heard. As a holy place, the church transcended the household because of the Bible as the new authoritative book. Combined with the new class of literati who had taken responsibility for interpreting this book, the church became the dominating centre in the whole community.

We can therefore conclude that the reception of the Bible, which was made possible by the introduction of literacy to the communities studied, not only had deep cultural significance, but also had a far-reaching transformative effect on their social structure, not least as a result of the rise of the class of literati—clergymen and the church as the new religio-political centre.

¹¹ Interview with a traditional orator-priest, July 22, 2003, Lanping County, Yunnan Province.

4. IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION AND THE RECEPTION OF THE BIBLE

As anthropologists have generally argued, the conception of who we are as a people is one of the most fundamental factors that shape our social consciousness. Therefore, to investigate the socio-cultural dimension of the reception of the Bible, a crucial question has to be raised: After the ethnic believers received the Bible as their canon, to what extent and in what aspects did their conception of who they were as a people, or the way they constructed their identity, change? In other words, how was the Bible (or at least some traditions in the Bible) involved in their identity construction?

Before answering this question, we may first review how oral traditions (e.g., ethnic epics recited by tribal orators) might have shaped their ethnic identity. How the ethnic people perceived the present largely depended on how they narrated the past (not least through orally transmitted narratives about their history), which in turn shaped their understanding of their ethnic identity. Rather than merely recounting historical facts, their ideologically and aesthetically shaped narratives were usually presented in a ritual context in which the orator (narrator) and the ethnic community (audience) were present. According to a Lisu intellectual,

One of the main duties of the orator–priest is to recite our ancestral history during the birth, the wedding or the burial ceremony. He remembers lots of our ancestral epics. Most of them are about the migration of our tribe. We were forced to migrate under some stronger powers because our tribe was small and weak. Especially in the burial ritual, in which the souls of the dead are sent to the original place of our ancestors, the orator–priest recounts our entire history—how our tribe migrated from one place to another, what battles it fought and with which tribes it fought, and how it finally arrived here—so that the souls can trace their way back to our original ancestral land. From these oral epics we began to know our history, who our ancestors were and how they lived.¹²

¹² Interview with a Lisu intellectual from a non-Christian community, July 25, 2003, Lanping County, Yunnan Province.

In such rituals, a process of complex identity construction was undertaken by the orators' narration of the tribal epics. First of all, in so doing the orators evoked a common space and time for "those who are narrated" and "these who are listening." It was a double process of drawing the story of the ancestors into the present and the audience into the historical world of their ancestors. Past history was thus experienced by the present audience, who, having common ancestors and common historical roots, developed a common attitude towards other groups. Thus, a "homogeneous" group was formed out of the common experience of those participating in the rituals, each of whom bore the same group identity.

Whereas early Chinese Catholics did not only receive baptism at conversion, but also the canonical writings in a ritual manner (*cheng-jing* 承經),¹³ receiving scripture was for the ethnic groups a long process of internalization of biblical traditions as a result of regularly attending church and listening to the interpretation of the Bible. Because of the Christian claim of possessing the sole truth and of their exclusive attitude towards other religions and the tribal culture (an attitude not least adopted by the first missionaries to the ethnic groups), participation in the rituals presided over by tribal orators was strictly forbidden. Therefore, as the Bible replaced oral ethnic epics, both the ethnic orators and tribal historical memory lost their authoritative status. A more far-reaching result was the loss of a historical foundation for the construction of ethnic group identity. On the basis of biblical interpretation, spiritual genealogy replaced biological genealogy as to identity construction. "The God we worship," so an ethnic Christian leader confessed in an interview,

is the God of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and Jesus Christ. Before our conversion to the Lord, we invited orators to recite songs about our ancestors. But we have now forgotten almost all of those, and we are more familiar with biblical figures and stories. We believe Abraham to be our authentic forefather.¹⁴

¹³ Nicolas Standaert, "The Bible in Early Seventeenth-century China," in *Bible in Modern China: The Literary and Intellectual Impact*, ed. Irene Eber, Sze-kar Wan and Knut Walf (Sankt Augustin, Ger.: Institut Monumenta Serica, 1999), 46: "It should be noted that for them entering the Church (*rujiao*) did not merely mean baptism. It also meant to accept the canonical writings (*chengjing*), and, therefore, to enter into a new canonical tradition."

¹⁴ Interview with a Lisu Christian leader in the office of Yunnan Christian Council, July 30, 2002, Kunming 昆明, Yunnan Province.

The replacement of oral epics by the written Bible had great impact on ethnic group identity. In addition to the nominal ethnical identity, a new, Christian (or biblical) dimension was added to the being of these ethnic people. In a sense, the Christian identity was more important for them than the ethnic identity. In some cases of Han Chinese literati who had converted to Christianity, the struggle between Confucian and Christian identities was rather intense: these men strained every nerve to bridge the gap between these two identities because it was impossible to completely replace the long-standing canonical tradition in Confucianism with the Christian (or biblical) one.¹⁵ But in the case of the ethnic groups in southwest China, the preponderant advantage of literacy over orality ensured the overwhelming victory of the Bible over oral ethnic traditions. With the loss of the latter, the biblical history as well as its faithful heroes and heroines formed the spiritual foundation for the new identity of the ethnic groups converted to Christianity. Therefore, it was the Christian identity rather than the ethnic identity that has ever since dominated in these groups.

The perception of time, expressed especially in calendrical or festive cycles, is another important factor in the construction of group identity. Calendrical or festive cycles are often tied up with a particular tradition or culture. To follow a certain calendrical or festive cycle and celebrate certain festivals, and thus to participate in the calendrical or festive rituals in order to commemorate the historically or cosmologically significant events in a belief system, is an important way of identifying oneself with a religious culture. As a result of their reception of the Bible, ethnic Christian groups in southwest China switched to the Christian festivals. A Lisu pastor told the present author in an interview:

We had lots of festivals in the past. Usually, they were set according to the lunar calendar. For example, when spring came, we celebrated it by playing certain melodies; when somebody finished building a house, we celebrated it with some other melodies. But after our conversion to Christianity we neither celebrate such festivals nor sing such songs any more. Rather, we have fashioned our festivals in accordance with what the Bible says. For example, as Sunday is the day of rest, we rest and refrain from work on that day in accordance with the Bible. We worship our Lord at church, and the Communion is the

¹⁵ For some case studies on Confucian literati, see Li Chichang 李熾昌 (Archie Lee), "Kuawenben yuedu celüe: Ming mo Zhongguo jidutu zhuzuo yanjiu" 跨文本閱讀策略：明末中國基督徒著作研究 [Cross-textual reading strategy: studies on some Chinese Christian writings in the late Ming], *Jidijiao wenhua xuekan* 基督教文化學刊 [Journal for the study of Christian culture] 10 (2003): 165–90.

climax of the day. We believe this is the most efficient way of communicating with God. The important festivals include Christmas, Easter and Thanksgiving.¹⁶ Of course, we also celebrate the most important traditional festival, Kuoshi 閩時 Festival, which is like the Spring Festival in the ordinary Chinese calendar.¹⁷

The ethnic Christians' calendrical cycle, and so their perception of time, has been Christianized. As a result, festivals of agricultural origin have largely been abandoned and replaced by biblical ones. For example, the ethnic Christians have divided the year into seven-day weeks and spend the whole Sunday to worship God, refraining from any work; for them Sunday is the day for the hearing of the Word of God—that is, the Bible—being interpreted by the literati—clergymen. Also, Christian festivals such as Christmas and Easter have taken the place of traditional ones as the most important yearly festivals. The new temporal cycle perennially reminds the ethnic believers of their identity as Christians, and reaffirms their relationship with Christ.

The reception of the Bible has had powerful influence on the process of identity construction. In the cases of the ethnic groups in southwest China, the far-reaching influence of biblical traditions on identity construction can be clearly seen. According to our analysis, both the notion of spiritual lineage of faith and the biblical structuring of time (the latter is expressed in the weekly observation of the Christian Sabbath and the yearly celebration of the Christian festivals) have reshaped the ethnic groups' understanding of who they are and what kind of life they shall live. With the overwhelming victory of literacy over orality, and of the Bible over ethnic epics, traditional cultural foundations for constructing a strong ethnic identity have largely collapsed; the Bible has become the most dominant element in constructing identity. Because of the closed biblical canon and the Christian claim of possessing the sole truth, the identity of the ethnic Christians has been more clearly circumscribed. They have understood themselves first and foremost as Christians, "children of Abraham."¹⁸

¹⁶ Since the missionaries who worked among the Lisu people mainly came from the United States, under their influence the Thanksgiving Day has also become one of the annual festivals celebrated by the Lisu Christians.

¹⁷ Interview with a Lisu pastor in a Christian community, August 5, 2002, Fugong 福貢 County, Yunnan Province.

¹⁸ In reality, certain ethnic traditions have made their way into their Christian life: some among the clergymen were former orator-priests, whose pre-Christian thought might have strongly influenced their interpretation of the Bible. Another paper would be needed to deal with this issue.

5. CONCLUSION

In view of these case studies of the reception of the Bible by preliterate ethnic groups, we can first of all say that in an ethnic group where the vast majority is illiterate and where ethnic traditions have been orally preserved, the *written* Bible may have a vital social role and bring about substantial social changes to the group—not least changes in the social status of religious leaders and their congregations, on whose life the interpretation of the Bible has a significant bearing. Furthermore, the Bible, which has superseded oral ethnic epics, has contributed to forging a new sense of group identity and self-perception among the ethnic people, which in turn have long-term effects on the social structure of ethnic groups. Our study of the reception of Christian scripture by the ethnic groups in southwest China, moreover, has reminded us that in the study of the composition, compilation and reception of biblical literature, especially the Hebrew Bible in ancient Israelite society, the issues of literacy and its socio-cultural dimension need to be considered seriously as well.

Alfred North Whitehead and Yi Yulgok on Cosmology: A Preliminary Comparison with Special Reference to Christian–Confucian Dialogue

CHUNG SOON LEE

1. INTRODUCTION

Religious pluralism is one of the striking characteristics today in Korean society. This is, of course, a very natural phenomenon in East Asian societies in which many religions were born and developed together. All living religions are still streaming together, although they are in conflict as well as harmony and unity. As Diana L. Eck describes, “The religious traditions are more like rivers than monuments. They are not static and they are not over. They are still rolling—with forks and confluences, rapids and waterfalls.”¹ This is the case in Korea where various living religions have existed together for over three thousand years. As religions have been introduced over the centuries, they were indigenized on Korean soil and have co-existed. Thus, it is hard to discern precisely the characteristics of each religion separately

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¹ Diana L. Eck, *Encountering God: A Spiritual Journal from Bozeman to Banaras* (Boston, Mass.: Beacon, 1993), ix.

in Korea, as they have all influenced one another and mixed together. Christianity is no exception. Many elements of other religions, such as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, exist in Korean Christianity. Christianity, however, still remains the one Western religion in Korea. This means that there are still many conflicts in the encounter between Christianity and other traditional religions.

Confucianism, which served as the state religion for the Chosŏn dynasty for five centuries (1392–1911), still exists and exerts strong religious and spiritual influence in Korean society.² Given its historic dominance in Korea, as well as its profound influence on the rest of Asia, Confucianism is an important partner in Christianity's encounter with the traditional religious culture of Korea. Confucian spirituality has often been defined as the practice of self-cultivation through which people obtain the Way/Dao in service to others. In spite of this positive, world affirming spirituality, Confucianism's encounter with Christianity had not been successful in the modern period. In other words, the Confucian-Christian dialogue is still an important task in the context of Korea.

With special attention paid to such situations, in this article I will attempt a Confucian-Christian dialogue by making a theoretical comparative study of the cosmologies of Alfred N. Whitehead (1861–1947), a founder of contemporary process philosophy/theology, and Yi Yulgok (1536–84), a great scholar of Korean Neo-Confucianism during the Chosŏn dynasty. In regard to a hypothetical Confucian-Christian dialogue as a practical model of comparative religious studies and interreligious dialogue in the Korean context, I have deliberately chosen Whitehead's process philosophy and Yulgok's Neo-Confucian philosophy as two poles. This choice is based on the following convictions:

(1) Process philosophy/theology provides a solid philosophical framework for a great diversity of human experience and belief in world religions and functions as a helpful means of comparing and synthesizing them in a creative new way. It can also be a useful instrument for dialogue among various religions. Above all, process the-

² The ruling and guiding principle of the Chosŏn dynasty was Confucian ideals. More precisely speaking, "the nature of the Yi (Chosŏn) society is the extent of ramification into every aspect of the dynastic life of the Confucian political ideal and moral doctrines." Wanne J. Joe, *Traditional Korea: A Cultural History* (Seoul: Chung'ang University Press, 1981), 298. For greater details, see Ki-baek Lee, *A New History of Korea*, trans. Edward W. Wagner with Edward J. Shultz (Seoul: Ilchokak, 1986), 173–200.

ology, with its processive, organic, and relational cosmology, a sensibility shared by Chosŏn Neo-Confucianism, can be used to reflect upon Christian spirituality and spiritual practices for a new era in the context of Korea.

(2) Confucianism, as a living religious tradition and culture, is a rich resource for enhancing Korean spirituality. Specifically, Neo-Confucianism represented by Yi Yulgok is not only a philosophy that deals with the origin of the universe and the essence of human nature, but is also a religion that has a spiritual dimension. This dimension is defined by the quest for the embodiment of the wisdom of the sages as profound and significant as any world religion. Above all, its similarities to process philosophy with respect to cosmology can produce meaningful suggestions and implications for spiritual formation in the Korean Church.

(3) The Confucian–Christian dialogue is an urgent task in the religiously pluralist society of Korea. Dialogue functions as a bridge between Western Christianity and Korean traditional religions introduced from China. Such dialogue will thus stimulate the development of mutual learning between Western and Asian civilizations. It will further influence the emergence of a new type of interreligious spirituality both for the Christians and the Confucians as a desirable way of peaceful coexistence among various religions believers in the global context of religious pluralism.

2. A COMPARISON OF WHITEHEAD AND YULGOK ON COSMOLOGY

Whitehead and Yulgok proposed remarkably parallel views on the cosmos and the world. Although they came from totally different philosophical contexts, it becomes evident that there are strong resemblances between Whitehead's process philosophy and Yulgok's Neo-Confucian philosophy. It is basically because both thinkers understand the universe and the world as an interrelated organism in the process of change and becoming. Although their philosophical contexts and terms are different, their modes of thought are very similar in terms of the organismic perspective of nature. I am convinced, above all, that

there are similarities between the two thinkers on cosmology, and more specifically, between Whitehead's theory of "eternal object–actual entity" and Yulgok's theory of "principle–material force" (*li-qi* 理氣).³ This is because Whitehead's "eternal object" and Yulgok's "principle" basically function as universal principles and sources of cosmological harmony, whereas Whitehead's "actual entity" and Yulgok's "material force" are phenomenological realities in the world. Accordingly, Whitehead's concept of God in terms of his panentheism has similarity to Yulgok's Neo-Confucian concept of the Great Ultimate. The two concepts suggest a balanced structure of God or the absolute and the world, transcendence and immanence, and the one and the many.

In his *Science and Civilisation in China*, Joseph Needham points out that "Chu Hsi's [Zhu Xi 朱熹] philosophy was fundamentally a philosophy of organism, and that the Sung [Song] Neo-Confucians thus attained, primarily by insight, a position analogous to that of Whitehead."⁴ Needham's comment is very pertinent to the issue we deal with in this study. In the same way, Chung-ying Cheng also insists that Cheng–Zhu Neo-Confucianism shares the organic views of philosophy with Whitehead's process metaphysics.⁵ Zhu Xi himself clearly expressed the organismic quality of his philosophy and even applied this philosophy of organism to family and society. Thus, in opposition to the Buddhists, he maintained,

Under heaven, only the principle of *Tao* and *Li* exist, and we cannot but follow them unto the end. The Buddhists and the Taoists, for example, even though they would destroy the social relationships (i.e. by becoming monks and cutting themselves off from the world) are nevertheless quite unable to escape from them. Thus, lacking (the relationship of) father and son, they nevertheless pay respect to their own preceptors (as if they were fathers) on the one hand, while they treat their novices as their sons on the other. The elders among them become elder-brother preceptors, while the younger become younger-brother preceptors. And yet (in so doing) they cling to something

³ According to Hyong-Jo Han, "the *li-ch'i* (*qi*) scheme is a unique theory which interprets the substance and function of human energy in the framework of cosmic patterns. This is especially the case for Yulgok." Hyong-Jo Han, "Yulgok's Plan of Self-Cultivation," in *Confucian Philosophy in Korea*, ed. Haechang Choung and Han Hyong-Jo (Seongnam: Academy of Korean Studies, 1996), 97.

⁴ Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, corrected repr. ed., vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1954), 458.

⁵ Chung-ying Cheng, *New Dimensions of Confucian and Neo-Confucian Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York, 1991), 537.

false, whereas it is the (Confucian) sages and worthies who have preserved the reality.⁶

Zhu Xi's organismic philosophy is rightly applied to Yi Yulgok's thought because Yulgok was a faithful student of Zhu Xi and the frame of his philosophy was formulated under the influence of Zhu's Neo-Confucianism. Fundamentally, Yulgok's metaphysical system is formally similar to Whitehead's. It is well known that Whitehead preferred to call his philosophy "a philosophy of organism." Whitehead also maintained the similarity of his thought to Oriental thoughts. He claimed, "In the general position the philosophy of organism seems to approximate more to some strains of Indian or Chinese thought, than to western Asiatic or European thought. One side makes process ultimate; the other side fact ultimate."⁷ These similarities enable us to do a comparative study between Whitehead and Yulgok, which can be significant in building a bridge between West and East today. As Julia Ching has described, more precisely, "The richness and profundity of the Chinese macrosm/microsm outlook allows comparison with Western philosophers known for their dialectical logic and synthetic genius."⁸

We can find many good reasons for analyzing the similarities between these two thinkers. In particular, this kind of comparative study is very helpful to beginning the Confucian-Christian dialogue in the world of religious pluralism today. And through this dialogue, as Whitehead foretold, "They can learn from each other, borrow from each other, and individuals can make imperceptible transitions. Above all, they can learn to understand each other and to love."⁹ Furthermore, the encounter and the dialogue among religious traditions can offer fresh opportunities for growth and vigour. As John Cobb notes, the purpose of dialogue is to learn from others about transforming ways, in order to cease threatening our planetary home. It must be a process of

⁶ Quoted in Needham, *Science and Civilization in China*, vol. 2, 489.

⁷ Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality* (New York: Free Press, 1978), 7.

⁸ Julia Ching, *The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 53. Furthermore, Ching more explicitly expresses her belief that a comparative study between Zhu Xi and Whitehead is worthwhile: "A comparative study of Chu Hsi and Whitehead is especially appropriate and useful for several reasons. Whitehead was personally conscious of possible resemblances between his philosophy and that of China or East Asia—of which Chu remains an important representative. Chu Hsi and Whitehead shared a common interest in the world of nature—the starting point in their respective philosophies." *Ibid.*, 244.

⁹ Alfred North Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* (New York: Free Press, 1967), 172.

mutual learning and transformation which leads to the building of a global community. Therefore, the motivation for a dialogue between religious communities should be “to increase the likelihood that both communities would become more effective in countering the forces that endangered the future.”¹⁰

As a theoretical system of such a dialogue, the comparison between Yulgok and Whitehead can initiate a specific model of Confucian–Christian dialogue in the Korean context. It is, of course, not an easy task in the global community where hatred, conflicts, tensions, and war among the people of various religious backgrounds still exist. Similarly, it is not easy to compare Whitehead to Yulgok because their general schemes of philosophical thought and their historical, cultural backgrounds are not the same: large differences exist between the two thinkers. As Ching have noted, “Their philosophies grew out of different cultural matrices with divergent basic concerns.”¹¹ So, in order to reveal the similarities and differences between the two thinkers more exactly, it is necessary to make a thorough comparative study in various ways. In terms of specific methods of comparison in this article, I will make use of comparative systematic cross-cultural studies in philosophy and theology. Here, our comparison will revolve around the two thinkers’ cosmological thoughts, focusing on their key terms and motifs. In other words, we will analyze common terminology for mutual understanding and learning cross-culturally. We will focus more on their similarities than their differences, so that this comparative study may offer meaningful implications in the formation of an interreligious spirituality in the context of religious pluralism, and suggest ways of enhancing Korean Christian and Confucian spirituality and spiritual practices.

Actual Entity and Material Force (qi)

According to Whitehead, the phenomenal world is composed entirely of actual entities in the process of changing and becoming. He defines “actual entities” as final realities. He maintains, “‘Actual entities’—also termed ‘actual occasions’—are the final real things of which the world is made up. There is no going behind actual entities to

¹⁰ John B. Cobb Jr., *Transforming Christianity and the World* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis, 1999), 180.

¹¹ Ching, *The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi*, 243.

find anything more real.”¹² Even God is one of the actual entities. That is, for Whitehead, actual entities are the fundamentals of the metaphysical system and the least elements of the universe. Hence comes the ontological principle of his process metaphysics: “No actual entity, then no reason.”¹³ This principle indicates to us that actual entities as ultimate things do not perish in the universe, although their modes and forms of existence are changed in many different ways. All actual entities have no differences in quality; instead, all actual entities are ontologically on the same level. All things are part of the society of actual entities in the universe. Also, actual entities are born, become, and change on their own. Furthermore, every actual entity is related to one another and surrounded by other entities. In particular, all actual entities form themselves and influence one another in the process of concrescence. However, in order to be an individual, concrete fact, an actual entity must have the form of definiteness. Actual entities always exist in relation to the form of definiteness. Here, an eternal object plays the role of the form of definiteness. Ingression is the manner in which eternal objects are present in actual entities as the form of definiteness or the pure potentials for specific determination.

In Yulgok’s Neo-Confucian cosmology, “material force” (*qi*) is the equivalent term to “actual entity.” Along with “principle,” “material force” is one of the fundamental concepts on which the Neo-Confucian cosmology is built. Like actual entities, material force is the final thing and element of which the universe is comprised. According to Yulgok’s Neo-Confucianism, the universe is full of material forces. Material force, which is called “what is within shape,” permeates all things in the universe. As Zhu Xi says, “In the beginning of heaven and earth, there was only the *ch’i* [*qi*] of yin and yang, in heaven and earth. This *ch’i* moved and turned around continuously.”¹⁴ In the same way, Yulgok also maintains, “All things issued are of material force.”¹⁵ Without material force, the universe cannot exist. Even principle has meaning only in relation with material force. All things, organism or non-organism, come into being by means of material force. They be-

¹² Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 18.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁴ Quoted in Yung Sik Kim, *The Natural Philosophy of Chu Hsi (1130–1200)* (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2000), 36.

¹⁵ Quoted in Ha-Tai Kim, “The Difference Between T’oegye and Yulgok on the Doctrine of *Li* and *Qi*,” in *Traditional Thoughts and Practices in Korea*, ed. Eui-Young Yu and Earl Philips (Los Angeles: Center for Korean-American and Korean Studies, California State University, 1983), 20.

come various things depending on differences of their material forces. Furthermore, material force produces all things in the universe by operating through them. This means that, similar to Whitehead's actual entity, material force continually acts in the rotation of quiescence and movement: incessant movement of yin and yang in the universe. Yulgok thus states, "What moves once and stops once in quiescence is material force. . . . 'Thus-so of things' is material force."¹⁶ And, material force is divided into the two modes of yin and yang, the two forces of quiescence and activity. Here "[y]in and yang are the same material force. The retreat of yang is the emergence of yin. It is not true that yang retreats and then yin separately emerges."¹⁷

Eternal Object and Principle (li)

In Whitehead's process cosmology, "eternal object" is understood as "universals." An eternal object is "eternal" because it is non-temporal; eternal objects are "objects" because they are given as pure potentials. Unlike actual entities, eternal objects have nothing to do with concrescence, process, and transition in essence. An eternal object functions as a determinant which determines definiteness in concrescence of all actual entities. In other words, an eternal object determines the realization of actual entities by having ingression into actual entities. Eternal objects are prior to actual entities because they ingress into actual entities. This is true if we are speaking not temporally but logically. This does not mean eternal objects exist apart from actual entities; rather, eternal objects function as datum of past actual entities in the process of concrescence. An eternal object plays its role only with an actual entity. Eternal objects cannot be separated from actual entity. Thus, eternal objects are potentialities which are realized in actual entities.

For Yulgok, "principle" (*li*) is a similar concept to Whitehead's eternal object. "Principle," which is called "what is above shape," is the ontological being which is prior to the actual existence of objects. The principle of a thing is the supreme archetype of that thing; it is the essence and the norm of that thing. In other words, it is the principle of things to be actualized, and actualization requires principle as its substance and material force as its actuality. Principle has priority over all

¹⁶ Yi Yulgok, *Yulgok chŏnsŏ* [Complete works of Yulgok] (Seoul: Sungkyunkwan University Press, 1971), 14:48–49.

¹⁷ Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 [Conversations of Master Zhu arranged topically] (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1986), 65:1 (translation is mine).

things, including material force. That is to say, all existent things have reasons for their existence, or have an essence for their existence, which is called “principle.” Yulgok clearly states that principle is the reason for all things, which can be called the formal principle of all things.¹⁸ Thus, he claims, “All things issued are of material force and the reason for issuance is principle. Without material force, there will be no issuance; without principle, there is no reason for issuance.”¹⁹

*The Dynamic Interrelationship of the Eternal Object—
Actual Entity and the Principle—Material Force*

A good way to explore and compare the cosmologies of Whitehead and Yulgok is to investigate the dynamic interrelationship of eternal object—actual entity and principle—material force. Interestingly, both Whitehead and Yulgok maintain that all things are constituted by the interrelationship between eternal object and actual entity, and principle and material force.

First, there are systematical similarities between Whitehead’s theory of eternal object—actual entity and Yulgok’s theory of principle—material force. For Whitehead and Yulgok, the actual entity and material force have activity and function, while the eternal object functions as the form of definiteness and principle functions as the source of activity. Material force has artificiality, but principle has no artificiality. Eternal objects and principle always exist in relation to the actual entity and material force. They are necessary in forming actual entities and material force.

Principle always adheres to material force because principle is the principle which has no active function. Likewise, an eternal object has ingression into actual entities. Material force is moving only according to principle.²⁰ “Principle is the master of material force and material force is the instrument of principle.”²¹ In this regard, Wanne J. Joe’s comment is right: “Although all things were created by the two cosmic

¹⁸ Julia Ching calls *li* the formal principle and *qi* the material principle respectively. See Ching, *The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi*, 248.

¹⁹ Quoted in Kim, “The Difference Between T’oegye and Yulgok on the Doctrine of *Li* and *Qi*,” 20.

²⁰ A. C. Graham, *Disputers of the Tao: Philosophical Argument in Ancient China* (Chicago, Ill.: Open Court, 1997), 335–40.

²¹ Kim, “The Difference Between T’oegye and Yulgok on the Doctrine of *Li* and *Qi*,” 188.

forces of *i* (*li*) and *ki* (Chinese *ch'i*; *qi*), the *i* as an immaterial and immutable principle did not participate in creation through action as such. It is the *ki* alone that creates through its ability to change and act.”²² On the other hand material forces cannot begin to change and act without principles, which are the source of all movements of material forces. In other words, material force has no value and order without principle. Likewise, eternal objects play the role of determinants that determine the becoming of actual entities. Actual entities do not come into being without eternal objects. That is to say, principle and eternal objects are the sources of the movements of material force and actual entities.

According to Whitehead, actual entities take on a form of definiteness (i.e., eternal objects) and specific characteristics of movement and activity. Without having this form of definiteness, actual entities cannot exist and function. In a similar way, according to Yulgok, the thing that gives issuance is material force, but material force is impossible without principle as the source of issuance. The eternal object and principle enable the actual entity and material force to have particular activities. Change, development, and transition do not belong to the activities of eternal objects or principle but to the activities of actual entities or material force. Since eternal objects and principle remain as the factors of definiteness in the changing process of actual entities and material force, the eternal object and principle exist only in the relationship of defining and determining actual entities and material force.

Second, Yulgok maintains the theory that “material force issues and principle mounts it.” This means that all things are moving and changing, which is possible not by an external controller, but by the function of material force in relation to principle. Actual entities and material force can be understood only in relation to the activities of eternal objects and principle as the ultimate realities. Actual entities also are moving and changing. Whitehead places identity and permanence on the process of actual entities interacting with other entities. Here, an eternal object has ingression into actual entities with the same characteristics. Thus, the eternal object has a role of “identity” and “permanence.” In other words, the eternal object relates to all separated, individual entities. “The universe of many things acquires an individual unity in a determinate relegation of each item of the many to its subordination in the constitution of the novel one.”²³ In other words, “The

²² Joe, *Traditional Korea*, 337.

²³ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 211.

many, which are the universe disjunctively, become the one actual occasion, which is the universe conjunctively.”²⁴

Yulgok also presents the same basic format for principle and material force. He insists that principle is one, but a number of appearances are formed by material force.²⁵ It is expressed by the famous axiom of Cheng Yi 程頤 and Zhu Xi that “principle is one but its manifestations are many.” Here, “principle” refers to “one” and “material force” refers to ‘many.’ “Principle” as “one” has an interaction with material force as “many.” As a result of that, principle appears in a number of ways in relation to material force. In other words, principle as formless is immanent in the actuality of material force and is concretized into many realities. This dynamic relationship between principle and material force is expressed by the theory that “principle pervades and material force delimits.”

Third, Whitehead’s concept of “definiteness” corresponds to Yulgok’s concept of “delimitation.” For Yulgok, material force appears in various forms by the process of movement and change, which means that it delimits. Yulgok maintains that principle has no form but material force has form, and that principle has no activity but material force has activity. Principle exists in all things, even in ashes, dregs, mud, and muck, because it pervades and penetrates. However, principle is realized according to its immanence in the actuality of material force. All things are related to one another in the organic system. In the same way, for Whitehead, eternal objects participate in all events of actual entities and play the role of universal characters for actual entities. That is, eternal objects function as ingredients in the given realities, and give them the objective form of definiteness. In other words, the actual entity must have some determinate forms in order to be a concrete reality. Thus, eternal objects are involved in the process of determining the specific character for the given actual entities. This is the eternal object’s role of specifying the character of an actual entity.

Fourth, like eternal objects, principle has the quality of universality over all actualities. Of course, this universality of the eternal object and principle is different than the Platonic “idea” which is prior to all things. Instead, it is originally interrelated to actual entities and material force. There is no priority or posteriority between eternal objects and actual

²⁴ Ibid., 21.

²⁵ Michael Kalton, *The Four-Seven Debate: An Annotated Translation of the Most Famous Controversy in Korean Neo-Confucian Thought* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994), 175–77.

entities, principle and material force. Principle always exists along with material force. According to Yulgok, "Principle and material force are interfused with no interstice, no anterior or posterior, no separating or conjoining."²⁶ The two are never separated in reality. Principle can be prior to material force if we speak logically, but this does not refer to any temporal priority or posteriority. While principle is never manifested except through material force, material force is never issued except by principle. In a similar way, Whitehead's eternal objects and actual entities are also interrelated. Whitehead also writes, "That the fundamental types of entities are actual entities, and eternal objects; and that the other types of entities only express how all entities of the two fundamental types are in community with each other in the actual world."²⁷ Eternal objects and actual entities take part in the process of change, becoming and determining each other. The two adequately present their interrelatedness and interdependence.

God and the Great Ultimate

God is the final term that completes Whitehead's process cosmology and functions as a ground for his process metaphysical system. The concept of God is based on his process metaphysics and cosmology, which fundamentally considers a reality of the world not a static concept of being but a dynamic concept of changing and becoming. In other words, Whitehead's process philosophy speaks of God and the world in very dynamic, developmental terms. Whitehead's concept of God is often called "panentheism," which means that God is included in all creatures. This is a new synthesized concept of God beyond theism and pantheism. Hence, God is characterized both as being transcendental and immanent. According to panentheism, this universe is an appearance which expresses an aspect of the being of God. Along with the character of God's transcendence over all other things, God is immanent as the order giver and value creator in the whole processes of creation as well. God enters into the world very intimately and transforms it by leading it into the future. Moreover, "God is the great companion—the fellow-sufferer who understands."²⁸ That is to say, in Whitehead's philosophical system, God suffers the pain of the world

²⁶ Ibid., 126.

²⁷ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 25.

²⁸ Ibid., 351.

and people by virtue of an intimate relationship with all aspects of life. God attempts to build such a relationship with all things in the world in a persuasive way by the divine lure. God lures the world and people into the future by offering the choices that are made at all levels of existence. God lures people into making choices that morally or positively advance the created order. Lewis Ford describes the characteristics of the process theism developed by Whitehead: "Process theism revises our understanding of divine power. Classically, God's power is seen in terms of omnipotence, and God is creator as the sole primary efficient cause of the world. In process theism, God is primarily persuasive, creating more indirectly by providing the lure for each occasion whereby it can create itself."²⁹

On the other hand, the world and all things exist together with and in the being of God. Both God and the world participate in the whole process of creation together. God as an ultimate being, in this regard, is called "creativity" or "creating activity" rather than "creator." The word "creativity," for Whitehead, means "a fundamental principle of creation and formation." It indicates that the creation of God is continuously involved in all processes of the universe. Thus, Whitehead claims that God does not exist before creation but exists along with all creation. God is not the sole creator of traditional Christian theism any longer in his metaphysics; instead, God is newly understood in terms of the scheme of Whitehead's process metaphysics. That is, with the world as his/her partner, God is considered to be co-creator in continuous creation of all things.

For Whitehead, more specifically, God is understood as a dipolar concept. That is to say, God as an actual entity has two natures: primordial nature and consequent nature. This means that God has two aspects as one actual entity. This explains the transcendence and immanence of God very adequately. The primordial nature of God refers to a pure ideal, or mental nature, of God. The primordial nature of God means that God is away from the concrete reality of the world. The primordial nature of God also has the role of including, ordering, and classifying eternal objects as pure potential, so that those eternal objects can be used as the datum by other actual entities. This means that God functions as the principle of concretion in the process of concrescence. On the other hand, God having the consequent nature means that God has essential relationships with all things in the world. God pre-

²⁹ Lewis S. Ford, *The Lure of God: A Biblical Background for Process Theism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1978), 12.

hends all actual entities as they are when they occur, takes them into himself, and relates them to the reality of God. Thus Whitehead clarifies: "God is the infinite ground of all mentality, the unity of vision seeking physical multiplicity. The World is the multiplicity of finites seeking a perfected unity. Neither God, nor the World, reaches static completion. Both are in the grip of the ultimate metaphysical ground, the creative advance into novelty."³⁰

In the Neo-Confucian cosmology, the Great Ultimate has a place comparable to that of the God in Whitehead's process cosmology. In a word, the Great Ultimate means not only the principle but also the principle that includes all principles of heaven and earth and the myriad things. The Great Ultimate is often characterized as "limitless" because it is not bound by space or shape. Ching's description of the Great Ultimate based on Zhu Xi's philosophy is very helpful for our understanding: "The Great Ultimate is full of *li* (principle), that which constitutes the myriad things, that which also determines good and evil. It is prior to things and yet also after the creation of things; it is outside yin and yang and yet operates in the midst of yin and yang; it penetrates all things, is absent nowhere, and yet originally was without sound, smell, shadow, or echo."³¹

Following Zhu Xi, Yulgok defines principle as the Great Ultimate, and material force as the yin and yang on which the Great Ultimate is dependent. In Yulgok's Neo-Confucian cosmology, the Great Ultimate is an ultimate truth that penetrates all things, including humanity, in the universe, and has a meaning of heavenly way and human nature. In other words, all things come from the Great Ultimate and return to the Great Ultimate. It is a principle of unity and of wholeness in all things. He agrees with Zhu Xi on the famous axiom that "the Limitless (or the No-Ultimate; Chinese *wuji*; Korean: *mugeuk* 無極), which is yet the Great Ultimate,"³² is prior to things and yet is also after the creation of things. There is no doubt that this presents the transcendental character of the Great Ultimate like Whitehead's God of primordial nature. On the other hand, the Great Ultimate becomes manifest and immanent through material force, which indicates the immanent character of the Great Ultimate like Whitehead's God of consequent nature. Therefore Whitehead also states: "In God's nature, permanence is primordial and flux is derivative from the World: in the World's nature, flux is primor-

³⁰ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 348–49.

³¹ Ching, *The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi*, 45.

³² The original statement is 太極而無極.

dial and permanence is derivative from God. Also the World's nature is a primordial datum for God; and God's nature is a primordial datum for the World."³³ Similarly, in Yulgok's Neo-Confucian cosmological system, the Great Ultimate plays a role as the principle of permanence amid flux and brings multiplicity into unity. But material force plays a role as the principle of change and multiplicity.

It should be noted that both the Great Ultimate and the yin-yang forces are essential elements in constituting all things. They are like the relationship between God and the world. They are involved together in the formation of all things. However, it is the Great Ultimate as the ultimate principle that exists in the myriad things and the cosmos. As the basis and ground of all things, the Great Ultimate causes yin-yang to act in movement and quiescence. It further presides over all movements and changes of yin and yang. It has a central role in the cosmos. It is the origin of all things in the cosmos. Therefore, Zhu Xi emphasizes, "Fundamentally there is only one Great Ultimate, yet each of the myriad things has been endowed with it and each in itself possesses the Great Ultimate in its entirety."³⁴ This leads us to the dynamics of creativity between "one" and "many" in Whitehead's and Yulgok's process metaphysical systems.³⁵ That is, "The one is actually also many, since one is but manifested in many, while the many is also one, as its manifestations. Being is the principle of becoming, and becoming is also transmuted into being";³⁶ or as Whitehead writes, "The many, which are the universe disjunctively, become the one actual occasion, which is the universe conjunctively."³⁷

The Great Ultimate, on the other hand, is always followed by the yin and yang forces, the two appearances of material force. The Great Ultimate would have remained an abstract principle or a theoretical concept without yin and yang being its place of dependence. It always accompanies yin and yang as a counter partner, and does not initiate its activity without regard to material forces. This shows another aspect of the Great Ultimate in relation to the world. Thus, it seems clear that

³³ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 348.

³⁴ Wing-Tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963), 638.

³⁵ With regard to the creativity between "the one" and "the many," it is necessary to note some major differences between their systems. E.g., Whitehead's concepts of God and the world make a creative advance into novelty, while the Great Ultimate and the yin-yang forces are in a cyclical movement.

³⁶ Ching, *The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi*, 53.

³⁷ Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, 211.

both the God in Whitehead's cosmology and the Great Ultimate in the Neo-Confucian cosmology have dual natures in a similar way. That is to say, these two concepts are transcendental as well as immanent, primordial as well as conceptual. These two concepts stand for the absolute and the ultimate or the divine. These two concepts are found in panentheism, which is different than the traditional theistic concept of God. Furthermore, they can lead us to a cosmic religious feeling which functions as the foundation of spirituality in religion and paves the way for a mysticism that is common in all religions. Investigating Yulgok's cosmology in respect to its ecological implication, Young Chan Ro has made a very pertinent claim:

Yulgok believed that the universe could not be completely comprehended by human intelligence or through human thought processes. He believed that the universe is a "mystery" not to be reduced to the rational or conceptual framework of a human intellectual system. This dimension of mystery causes us to feel that the universe is sacred; hence, we have a sense of awe toward the universe. The universe "manifests" itself to us as much as it "conceals" itself from us.³⁸

Therefore, Julia Ching's comments on the concept of the absolute in Neo-Confucianism have much relevance for this issue. She first claims that the absolute in Neo-Confucianism, which is called "the Great Ultimate," "the Heavenly Way," and "Principle," is the origin of all things, presides over the universe, and explains the internal and ultimate meaning of the universe. She believes that it is very similar to the mystery of God in Western medieval mysticism and the philosophical expressions of Schelling, Hegel, and Whitehead.³⁹ She goes on to say,

The notion of the Great Ultimate approximates most the notion of God in Western theistic philosophy, and it serves as foundation and center of Chu's entire metaphysical system, the explanation of the

³⁸ Young Chan Ro, "Ecological implications of Yi Yulgok's Cosmology," in *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans*, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Center for the Study of World Religions, 1998), 178.

³⁹ Julia Ching, *Confucianism and Christianity: A Comparative Study* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1978), 164. Of course, it is not possible to say that Neo-Confucianism has explored the concept of absolutes such as the Great Ultimate in the same context of Western theistic tradition. And it is true that there are great differences between God and the Great Ultimate in their historical and cultural traditions.

organic interrelatedness of all things. I see Chu Hsi's philosophy of the Great Ultimate as an effort to present the notion of God as the chief exemplification of his metaphysical principles, an effort similar to Whitehead's.⁴⁰

3. CONCLUSION

Various religions have interacted with one another and deeply penetrated Korean people's lives. Conflicts among religions were not critical until modern times when Christianity was introduced from Western countries. This means that Christianity has been taking a major role in creating conflicts among religions in the modern history of Korea. This was due largely to Christianity's conservative theology and exclusivistic attitude toward other religions. In this respect, it is an unavoidable task for Korean Christianity to become actively engaged in an interreligious dialogue, in order to truly indigenize Christianity in the Korean soil and facilitate its own spirituality and spiritual practices demanded in the context of religious pluralism.

It seems quite certain that, among various religious traditions, Confucianism is an important partner in the Christian encounter with traditional religions in Korea. Precisely speaking, however, modern Koreans are estranged from traditional Confucian moral values because they consider Confucianism to be outdated and preventing modernization in Korea. Nevertheless, nobody can deny the reality of Confucianism as a valuable historical heritage in Korea. In particular, the cosmology or worldviews of all modern Koreans, religious and non-religious, are still greatly influenced by Confucianism. Without regard to Confucianism, therefore, it is not possible to consider the various characteristics of Korean spirituality.

In this article, I have made a theoretical comparative study of the process cosmologies of Alfred N. Whitehead and Yi Yulgok as an example of Christian–Confucian dialogue in the Korean context. Broadly speaking, both Whitehead and Yulgok revealed very similar modes of process cosmology, understanding the universe as changing and becoming, rather than static and separated substances. Although they had

⁴⁰ Ching, *The Religious Thought of Chu Hsi*, 252.

different philosophical and cultural backgrounds, the strong resemblance between the two thinkers' versions of cosmology has enabled us to effectively pursue a dialogue and comparative study in this article.

In regard to the comparative analysis of Whiteheadian and Confucian cosmologies, this study argues that Whitehead's theory of "eternal object–actual entity" has affinity with Yulgok's theory of "principle–material force." The eternal object and principle function as the universal principle and source of cosmological harmony, whereas the actual entity and material force are phenomenological realities in the world. These contrasting sets of concepts have dynamical and interrelationships with each other in constituting the universe and making the world a cosmos characterized by the process of becoming. Accordingly, Whitehead's panentheistic concept of God has similarity to Yulgok's Neo-Confucian concept of the Great Ultimate in its relation to material forces. These two concepts suggest a balanced structure of God or the absolute and the world, transcendence and immanence, and the one and the many.

In conclusion, I believe this comparative study can suggest some useful insights from the two thinkers' versions of process cosmology concerning religion and spirituality with a special emphasis on ecology. This is, of course, based on the assumption that cosmology suggests a religious perspective and relates deeply to spiritual formation. In particular, this study can be of help in formulating an ecologically sensitive spirituality (with respect for Korean Confucian tradition) based on Yulgok's and Whitehead's process cosmologies. Yet we need to further investigate how these cosmological insights could be used for encouraging a new type of spirituality, a process-Confucian spirituality, as a desirable way of peaceful coexistence among Christians and Confucians in a religiously pluralistic context.

Typology and Prospect of Sino-Christian Theology

LAI PAN-CHIU

1. INTRODUCTION

During the last two decades or so, the academic studies of Christianity mushroomed dramatically in China. Being involved in this rapid growth was a group of Chinese intellectuals who were not church members but interested in the academic studies of Christianity, including Christian theology. Sometimes they are collectively called “cultural Christians” (*wenhua jidutu* 文化基督徒). Some of them actively propose a “Sino-Christian theology” (*hanyu jidushenxue* 漢語基督神學), which can be abbreviated as “Sino-theology” (*hanyu shenxue* 漢語神學). Their approaches to theology seem to be quite different from that of church leaders so much so that some disputes emerged in the Chi-

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nese-speaking world as to whether the theology done by those not-yet converted should be classified as Christian theology. This paper attempts to examine sympathetically as well as critically the notion of Sino-theology as well as the theological approaches advocated by those cultural Christians. The discussion will be based on the writings of Liu Xiaofeng 劉小楓, who is arguably the best known representative of the cultural Christians as well as the most outspoken proponent of Sino-theology.

Before embarking upon discussion of the main theme, it seems necessary to clarify further the terms “cultural Christian” and “Sino-theology.” The term “cultural Christian” is somewhat ambiguous and controversial. It is ambiguous and even misleading because it seems to imply that “cultural Christians” are Christians in a “cultural” but not “religious” sense. In other words, they are “non-religious” and thus different from those who profess Christianity as their religion. This term also seems to imply that other Christians are “un-cultural,” which may mean uncivilized or barbaric in the Chinese context. Furthermore, the demarcation between “cultural Christians” and, if there is such a term, “religious Christians” is far from clear. Some people can be Christians in both “cultural” and “religious” senses of the word. Even Liu Xiaofeng himself would prefer to use the term “cultural Christians” to refer to intellectuals from Mainland China with personal faith in Christ, rather than to those who are merely interested in studying Christianity as a cultural phenomenon without any personal religious faith in Christ.¹ According to this definition, in terms of personal faith, “cultural Christians” are also “religious Christians”; they are not “religious Christians” merely in the sense that they are not officially registered members of any Christian church or regular church-goers.

With regard to the term “Sino-theology,” it should be clarified that it means literally theology (*shenxue* 神學) in the Han language (*hanyu* 漢語), which is conventionally called the Chinese language (*zhongwen* 中文). The expression *hanyu* reflects the awareness that China is a multi-ethnic country, although its many ethnic groups are overshadowed both culturally and numerically by the Han people. Since there are many languages with various dialects being used by different ethnic groups in China, it is more accurate to call the official language of China *hanyu*

¹ Liu Xiaofeng 劉小楓, “Xiandai yujing zhong de hanyu jidushenxue” 現代語境中的漢語基督神學 [Sino-Christian theology in the modern context], *Daofeng: Hanyu shenxue xuekan* 道風：漢語神學學刊 = *Logos and Pneuma: Chinese Journal of Theology*, no. 2 (1995): 25.

rather than *zhongwen*, which literally means the Chinese language or the language of China.

In the relevant literature, the term “Sino-theology” is being used in two senses. It seems that “Sino-theology” has a broad sense and a narrow sense. Broadly speaking, “Sino-theology” could refer to any theology written in Chinese, so that one can retrieve the history of Sino-theology back to several hundred years ago.² Nevertheless, sometimes “Sino-theology” seems to designate specifically the theological thinking of the cultural Christians represented by Liu Xiaofeng, i.e., a kind of philosophical expression of personal faith gaining a footing in the academic communities of the humanities and the social sciences. In this sense, Sino-theology is radically different from both the seminary-based church dogmatics and “indigenous theology” (*bense shenxue* 本色神學)—an approach adopted by many theologians in Hong Kong and Taiwan.³ One can find support for this narrow understanding of Sino-theology in the works of Liu Xiaofeng, who clearly opposes theological indigenization and gives special emphasis on the individuality of faith and theology.⁴ Such conceptual ambiguity shows that Sino-theology is yet in the preliminary stage of searching for its own niche and orientation. On the one hand, it would like to attach it-

² Ibid., 9. In the lecture on “Pluralistic Cultural Context and Sino-theology” held by the student union of the Theology Division, Chung Chi College on 8 March 1998, Liu Xiaofeng said that Sino-theology should refer to any theology expressed in the Chinese language (*hanyu*), and should not be understood only as his theology or that of the cultural Christians.

³ For this usage, see Stephen T. Chan’s (Chen Zuoren 陳佐人) introduction to the Chinese translation of Pseudo-Dionysius’s *De mystica theologia* (*Shenmi shenxue* 神秘神學, trans. Bao Limin 包利民 [Beijing: Sanlian, 1998], 27); idem, “Jiaoyi, shenxue yu ‘wenhua jidutu’” 教義、神學與「文化基督徒」[Dogmatics, theology and the “cultural Christians”], in *Wenhua jidutu: xianxiang yu lunzheng* 文化基督徒：現象與論爭 [Cultural Christian: phenomenon and argument] (Hong Kong: Institute of Sino-Christian Studies, 1997), 244–54. According to this understanding, those theological writings adopting indigenization approach cannot be regarded as works of Sino-theology, even though they are written in Chinese.

⁴ Liu Xiaofeng emphasizes that the significance of Christian faith lies in the salvation of the individual rather than of the nation. The title of a collection of his essays, *Geti xinyang yu wenhua lilun* 個體信仰與文化理論 [Personal faith and cultural theory] (Chengdu: Sichuan renmin chubanshe, 1997), shows the importance of the individuality of faith in his thinking. Moreover, with his studies on E. Troeltsch, Liu Xiaofeng indicates that the emphasis on the individuality of faith and theology is inevitable in the modern context; “Teluoerqi de xiandai lijie ji qi shenxue yiyi” 特洛爾奇的現代理解及其神學意義 [Troeltsch’s understanding of modernity and its theological significance], *Daofeng*, no. 1 (1994). In regard to his opposition to indigenous theology, see Liu Xiaofeng, “Xiandai yujing zhong de hanyu jidushenxue,” 42. Whether Liu’s position stands for that of the cultural Christians, however, awaits further discussion.

self to a long-standing tradition (Sino-theology in the broad sense); on the other, it is dissatisfied with the tradition and tries to develop a singular approach out of the current context (Sino-theology in the narrow sense). In view of this situation, Stephen T. Chan's typological investigation of theology is significant in that it may help us rethink the methodologies and approaches of Sino-theology.

1. RECONSIDERING THE TYPOLOGY OF THEOLOGY

Through a general survey of the history of theology and the history of dogma, Chan roughly categorizes theology into two types: theology as philosophical discourse on personal religious belief and theology as systematization and interpretation of Christian faith. Accordingly, the theology of the cultural Christians belongs to the former type, which in Chan's view has affinities with the theologies of Thomas Aquinas, Schleiermacher and Tillich; whereas dogmatic theology is closer to those of Augustine, Calvin and Barth.⁵ Instead of offering a comprehensive and intricate typology, the aim of this dualistic division is merely to show the character of the theology of the cultural Christians and to justify their approach to theology in terms of typology. Thus it may appear too simplistic in comparison with other typologies of theological thought.⁶ Moreover, there are also grey areas between the two types and many cases mixed with the two. Take Augustine as an example. He wrote numerous dogmatic writings, especially after he became a bishop, yet he also wrote a great deal of personal or philosophical works, such as the *Confessions*, *De libero arbitrio* and *De quantitate animae*. In fact, some theologians employ philosophical concepts to systematize the Christian doctrine and insist that the faith they thus expound conforms essentially to church dogmatics without any substantial differences. This could be well exemplified in the works of the aforementioned three theologians whose theological style is akin to that of the cultural Christians.

⁵ Stephen Chan, "Jiaoyi, shenxue yu 'wenhua jidutu,'" 254.

⁶ See the three types formulated by Justo L. González in his *Christian Thought Revisited* (Nashville, Tenn.: Abingdon, 1989); the five main types by Hans Frei in his *Types of Christian Theology* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1992), 28–55; and the five types of contemporary theology by David Tracy in his *Blessed Rage for Order* (New York: Seabury, 1975), 22–42.

For Thomas Aquinas, the *sacra doctrina* developed in his *Summa theologiae* clearly indicates a kind of theological discipline other than philosophy, with its principles derived from the revelation of God. Therefore, the *sacra doctrina* is in itself not necessarily in need of philosophy. It is only because of the finitude of human intellect that the *sacra doctrina* makes use of philosophy to help human beings understand the sacred doctrine. Instead of proving its principles (the doctrines) by dialectic arguments, the *sacra doctrina* starts from doctrines to demonstrate other issues. It recurs to the authority of revelation, and its use of human reason is merely to clarify the doctrine rather than to prove the faith. Apart from the Bible prescribed by the Church, the *sacra doctrina* also appeals to the works of church fathers.⁷ Therefore, although Thomas Aquinas adopted philosophical concepts, he remained a dogmatic theologian, for his theological system is firmly grounded on the authoritative texts recognized by the Church, on the basis of which the task of theologians is merely to mediate and to further develop a system.

As for Friedrich D. E. Schleiermacher, since the present author has discussed elsewhere the ecclesiastical character of his theology,⁸ there is no need to go into details here. A supplementary remark may suffice: the *Glaube* of Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre* signifies essentially the communal faith of the Church instead of the personal faith of Schleiermacher as an individual, and the *Lehre* refers specifically to "doctrine" or "teaching" rather than "speech" (*Sprache*) in general. Thus, "the doctrine of faith" could be a more feasible translation of the term *Glaubenslehre* than "the speech of faith." In fact, as Stephen Chan rightly points out, the purpose of dogmatics is, according to Schleiermacher, to study the experience of Christian faith as to the entire Christian community rather than Christian individuals.⁹ In this regard, the *Glaube* in Schleiermacher's theology is apparently different from the individualized faith emphasized by Liu Xiaofeng. Besides, one should be cautious of concluding that Schleiermacher's *Glaubenslehre* is a

⁷ Xie Fuya 謝扶雅, ed. and trans., *Sheng Duomo de shenxue* 聖多默的神學 [The theology of St. Thomas Aquinas] (Hong Kong: Jidujiao fuqiao chubanshe, 1965), 5–18, esp. 17–18.

⁸ See my "Cong Shilaimahe kan jidujiaoshenxue yu zongjiaoxue" 從士來馬赫看基督教神學與宗教學 [Christian theology and *Religionswissenschaft* from Schleiermacher's perspective], in *Bianyuan shang de shenxue fansi* 邊緣上的神學反思 [Theological reflections on the boundaries] (Hong Kong: Jidujiao wenyi chubanshe, 2001), 53–88.

⁹ Stephen Chan, "Jiaoyi, shenxue yu 'wenhua jidutu,'" 243.

philosophical expression of faith—it is at least less philosophical than that of Thomas Aquinas.

It seems that the theology of Paul Tillich, who is well-known for his proposing a theology of culture, should be analogous to that of the cultural Christians.¹⁰ By his idea of “theological circle” Tillich points out that theology cannot be detached from the actuality of the Christian message, and that theologians should commit themselves to the Church and work with their identity as church members, for theology, as the self-interpretation of the Church, is one of the fundamental functions of the Church. Tillich, however, also notices the fact that theologians usually commit themselves to the Church and at the same time separate themselves from it, standing both inside and outside the circle. It is natural that theologians too have doubts about their faith and are under no obligation to submit themselves to all doctrines. So even if one has certain doubts about or even critiques against Christianity, as long as one admits the content of the theological circle as his or her ultimate concern, one can yet be regarded as a theologian.¹¹ If the term “cultural Christians” refers to those intellectuals who have personally converted to Christianity and taken the Christian faith as their ultimate concern,¹² in Tillich’s view, although they are not baptized believers belonging to any particular church, they should neither be excluded from the theological circle, nor be deprived of their identity as theologians. In fact, Tillich too considers himself a man on the boundary, standing on the boundary between the Church and society;¹³ his theological approach and ideas seem to be the best support for the theological orientation of the cultural Christians. Nevertheless, it is noteworthy that the opening sentence of his *Systematic Theology* reads, “as the function of Christian Church, theology must serve the Church”; he also reiterates, “theology is the methodological interpretation of the content of Christian faith.”¹⁴ In his *History of Christian Thought*, he further emphasizes that what theology expresses is the reality and the life of the Church.¹⁵

¹⁰ The theology of Tillich has considerable divergences with that of Liu Xiaofeng, but it is to a certain degree in sympathy with the theological orientation of He Guanghu 何光滢. See He Guanghu, “Hanyu shenxue de fangfa yu jinlu” 漢語神學的方法與進路 [The methodologies and the approaches of Sino-theology], *Weizhen xuekan* 維真學刊 = *Regent Chinese Journal* 4 (1996): 16–24.

¹¹ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1 (London: SCM, 1978), 10.

¹² Liu Xiaofeng, “Xiandai yujing zhong de hanyu jidushenxue,” 25.

¹³ Paul Tillich, *On the Boundary* (London: Collins, 1967).

¹⁴ Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 3, 15, 28.

¹⁵ Paul Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought: From Its Judaic and Hellenistic Origin to Existentialism*, ed. Carl E. Braaten (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1972), xxxvii.

According to Tillich, his theology is a kind of “apologetic theology” other than the Barthian “kerygmatic theology.”¹⁶ What Tillich intends to achieve is not the philosophical expression of personal faith, nor the Barthian introspective theology which is “by the Church, for the Church, and to the Church,” but a theology “by the Church, for the Church and to the society,” facing up to the query and the opposition to Christianity from the modern society (including modern philosophy and science). For Tillich, in order to disseminate the message of Christianity effectively, theology should point out the existential problems in relation to the self-understanding of his contemporaries, and offer corresponding answers from the perspective of the Church.¹⁷ Apologetics of this kind does not reject the ecclesiastical character of theology; rather, it serves the Church through the defence for the Christian faith.¹⁸ As has just been seen, it is out of place to categorize the theology of Tillich, who is insistent on the ecclesiastical character of theology, under the type of theology that aims at the philosophical expression of personal faith; his theological approach is apparently distinct from that of Barthian dogmatics as well. So it is more proper to regard Tillich’s theology as a third type other than the two given by Stephen Chan.

As stated above, Thomas Aquinas, Schleiermacher and Tillich all insist on the ecclesiastical character of theology rather than, as does Liu Xiaofeng, emphasizing the individuality of faith and theology. With respect to the construction of their theological systems, although they wrote philosophical works and employed philosophical concepts in their theological writings, they all regard the expression of communal rather than personal faith as their duty. One may basically agree with Stephen Chan in saying that the theology of the cultural Christians is more similar to theirs than Barth’s or Calvin’s. But the thought of the three theologians may still be seen as more typologically akin to Barth’s than to the cultural Christians’ theology. It may more or less be far-fetched to group their theology and that of the cultural Christians together, and it may be more proper to see the theology of the cultural Christians and those of Simone Weil and Kierkegaard as belonging to the same type. Without doubt, it is legitimate to understand theology as a philosophical expression of personal faith, but is it the only option

¹⁶ Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 6–8.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁸ Tillich’s early works have already shown this apologetic approach of ecclesiastical character. See Paul Tillich, “Kirchliche Apologetik,” in *Theological Writings*, ed. Gert Hummel, vol. 6 of *Main Works* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992), 39–61.

available to the cultural Christians? Could apologetics also be a possible type for the future Sino-theology?

2. THE IDEA OF APOLOGETICS

Apologetics as a type of theology goes back to ancient times and blossomed in early Christian theology. Justin Martyr's apologies and Origen's *Contra Celsum*, for instance, are among the most outstanding apologetic works in the early Church. The aim of apologetics is not to refute all criticisms on Christians and the Church, for some critiques are theologically reasonable. Not even its main contribution lies in its strict adherence to or its comprehensive systematization of doctrines; rather, it lies in its proper response to contemporary misunderstandings of and unreasonable criticisms on Christianity. In the modern context, since Christianity no longer possesses the dominant intellectual and cultural status as it did in medieval times, and even comes under attack, apologetic writings and theology have become more important; this made the nineteenth century, as it were, the most fruitful times in the history of apologetics.¹⁹ Among twentieth-century theologians, the best-known heir of the apologetic tradition is Tillich, who confesses that his method of correlation comes down from the apologetic literature arisen since the second century.²⁰

In fact, some dogmatic writings have also adopted the apologetic approach. Augustine's *De civitate Dei* and several anti-Manichaeist works are early examples. In addition to his *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas Aquinas also wrote apologetic works such as the *Summa contra Gentiles*, whose style is quite different from the former. Without reasoning on the basis of the Bible and the works of church fathers, the *Summa contra Gentiles* does not even, as the title suggests, intend to attack "pagan" faiths (such as Islam) as did the ancient church fathers. Thomas Aquinas realized that the church fathers were once pagans themselves or had frequent contacts with pagans, so that they were familiar with pagan thought, but this was not the case with his contemporaries. Since the pagans did not accept the authority of the Bible, one could not simply recourse to the Bible. Instead, one should employ

¹⁹ Avery Dulles, *A History of Apologetics* (New York: Corpus, 1971), 200.

²⁰ Tillich, *A History of Christian Thought*, 26–27.

natural reason rather than the truth of God to demonstrate that the faith of the catholic church is compatible with reason.²¹ Schleiermacher gives a systematic presentation and interpretation of the Christian faith in his *Der christliche Glaube*, and in *Reden über die Religion (On Religion)*, which first earned him reputation, he also tried to respond to the opinions of the modern cultured despisers of religion, pointing out their misunderstanding of and unreasonable criticisms on religion, especially Christianity. He was thus speaking for the faith of the Church instead of personal belief. Hence not only did he indicate that religion was indispensable for personal life, he also used the entire fourth chapter of *Reden über die Religion* to explicate that religion or piety is necessarily communal.

What Thomas Aquinas, Schleiermacher and Tillich display is a type of theology different from ordinary dogmatics, yet without denying the ecclesiastical character of theology. They all fundamentally agree that theology should be “by the Church, for the Church, and to the Church”; in view of this they and dogmatists such as Barth seem remarkably alike, but they would moreover emphasize that theology should face the society as well, for theology should not merely be something for the Church’s “internal consumption” only; rather, it should not lose sight of the non-Christian public as well as intellectuals who criticize Christianity. The three theologians are well aware that the way of speaking has to be different between talking about God with these people and talking about God among believers or praying to God. To explicate the Christian faith to non-believers, in particular its despisers, one should be aware that they do not accept ecclesiastical authoritative texts such as the Bible and/or patristic writings, and that they do not have a blank mind and are not an unquestioning audience. They also have their own pre-understanding or worldview, which affects their self-understanding and even their critical views of Christianity. All these must be taken into account in talking about God with them. Precisely because of the existence of different audiences or readers comes the necessity of developing apologetics as a type of theology in addition to dogmatics.

In view of the contemporary Chinese context, apologetics is indispensable in that Christianity has always been beset by rumours and misunderstanding since its introduction into China. Besides the disdain

²¹ *Summa contra Gentiles*, 1,2. In this book Thomas Aquinas, having offered a series of philosophical arguments, also appends scriptural warrants to them so as to show the compatibility of reason and divine revelation.

from the intellectuals who are heavily influenced by traditional Chinese thinking, it is also under the attack of scientism and materialism, so that, to date, religious freedom has not yet been thoroughly realized and Christianity still suffers various unreasonable treatment and misunderstanding due to the lack of comprehensive knowledge of it. For contemporary Chinese Christian intellectuals (including the cultural Christians), the immediate tasks are to correct the misunderstanding of Christianity from the outside and to respond to the challenges to Christian thought from various directions.

As Thomas Aquinas has seen, the task of countering pagan criticisms is to be undertaken by those who know pagan thought well. Although the cultural Christians are marginal members of the Church, having both academic expertise as well as faith in Christ, they could become the best apologists for their faith. In this sense, their identity and apologetics as a type of theology are not incompatible with each other. Moreover, the idea of apologetic theology encompasses the various contributions the cultural Christians could possibly make. It is noteworthy that both the historical and social studies of Christianity are component parts of the theological encyclopaedia. In the case of the current Chinese context, many Christian scholars are experts in various disciplines such as history, sociology and psychology other than philosophy and theology; although they may not undertake the task of philosophically expressing their religious faith, they may still become apologists in the broad sense with their own academic expertise.

As to the current situation, it is not very much to the point to categorize the theology of the cultural Christians under the type of apologetics, for Liu Xiaofeng and his circle have not plainly set apologetics as their objective. Besides, as will be shown in the following discussion, Liu's theology is in some ways incompatible with the commonly made theological presuppositions in apologetics.²² But the idea of apologetics as an orientator for further development in the future could be a noteworthy approach for the cultural Christians, because it would certainly promote the diversity of theological studies: since the challenge to Christianity is pluralistic, the Christian response to it has to be pluralistic. Although the Church may not completely endorse the theology of the cultural Christians as to its contents, their theological endeavours could still have apologetic effects: as they present their faith, the cul-

²² Tillich points out that apologists normally assumed a common ground that they could share with those outside the theological circle, which was rejected by Barth and other kerygmatic theologians. See Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 6, 15. The position of Liu Xiaofeng is similar to that of the latter.

tural Christians also witness the significance or the credibility of Christianity for some Chinese intellectuals. The idea of apologetic theology may enable the Church to recognize the value of the theological endeavours of the cultural Christians better than the idea of theology as philosophical expression of personal faith, in the sense that the idea of apologetic theology not only shows that such theological endeavours and church dogmatics are mutually supportive, it can more clearly orientate the theological and scientific work of the cultural Christians towards maintaining their commitments both to the academia and to the Church.²³ Moreover, the idea of apologetic theology may perhaps enable scholars contributing to Sino-theology to make a more balanced and fair assessment of indigenous theology.

3. SINO-THEOLOGY AND INDIGENIZATION

Apart from his emphasis on the individuality of faith and theology, Liu Xiaofeng also firmly opposes the project of indigenous theology. For him, “the theme of indigenous theology is purely imaginary, for it is based on a rather problematic presupposition: Christian culture is identical with Western culture.”²⁴ However, his understanding of theological indigenization perhaps is quite different from that of the theologians engaged in indigenous theology. Simon Sai-ming Ho (He Shiming 何世明), for example, stressed that a clear line should be demarcated between Christianity and Western culture, which is not to be seen as identical to Christianity or Christian culture. The aim of theological indigenization is, through sinification, to show that Christianity (as far as its essence is concerned) is not a “foreign” religion that is incompatible with Chinese culture, but rather a universal religion that can be integrated with it.²⁵ In the “de-Hellenizing” proposal of Thomas

²³ In fact, Liu Xiaofeng also expects that the academic studies of Sino-theology from academic world could be of help to the Church. See Liu Xiaofeng, “Teluoerqi de xiandai lijie ji qi shenxue yiyi,” 214–15.

²⁴ Liu Xiaofeng, *Zhe yi dai ren de pa he ai* 這一代人的怕和愛 [The fear and love of this generation] (Hong Kong: Zhuoyue shulou, 1993), 130, cited from Guan Ruiwen 關瑞文, “Ping Liu Xiaofeng de hanyu jidushenxue” 評劉小楓的漢語基督神學 [Remarks on Liu Xiaofeng’s Sino-Christian theology], *Daofeng*, no. 4 (1996): 221.

²⁵ He Shiming 何世明, “Wo dui ‘bense shenxue’ de yixie yijian” 我對「本色神學」的一些意見 [Some remarks on “indigenous theology”], *Wenyi* 文藝, no. 1 (1982): 12–14.

In-sing Leung (Liang Yancheng 梁燕城) there is a “core” of Christianity that is not identical to Western culture, and which has no organic or intrinsic relationship with it. The appropriation of Greek philosophy of ancient Christian theology is not unlike a person putting on clothes that can be removed. Theological indigenization in China is in that sense to remove the Western clothes and put on Chinese clothes, without in the process damaging the “core” of Christian faith.²⁶ Actually, as far as the theologians who undertake the indigenization of Christianity in China presuppose that the relationship between their faith and Western culture is extrinsic rather than intrinsic, their position is not much different from that of Liu Xiaofeng. Indeed, both they and Liu have in some sense presupposed the existence of a “core” or a divine word that transcends cultures and which is not cloaked in any culture. Yet they fundamentally disagree on how the relationship between traditional Chinese culture and Christianity is to be viewed.

Theological indigenization serves an evangelistic function. Negatively speaking, it is intended to lessen antagonism Chinese (especially those who adore traditional Chinese culture) may feel towards Christianity. Positively speaking, it aims at helping Chinese to understand and accept the gospel more easily. Theological indigenization also serves an apologetic function: it helps to correct the view that Christianity is a “foreign religion” that is less than suitable for Chinese. In showing that the belief systems of Christianity and indigenous traditions are not incompatible, it argues that Chinese Christians do not have to renounce their own traditional culture and cultural identity. Thus, despite their criticisms on indigenous culture and their attempts to renovate it, the proponents of indigenous theology always presuppose the compatibility of Christianity and Chinese culture: Christian faith does not in itself abolish the latter.²⁷ Just as some apologetic theologies postulate a contact point or some common ground between Christianity and a certain culture, contributors to Chinese indigenous theology like to appeal to Matthew 5:17–18 in arguing that their faith does not abolish indigenous culture, but fulfils it.²⁸ On the contrary, Liu Xiaofeng’s theology

²⁶ Liang Yancheng 梁燕城, “Huitong yu zhuanhua” 會通與轉化 [Communication and transformation], in *Huitong yu zhuanhua* 會通與轉化, ed. Cai Renhou 蔡仁厚 *et al.* (Taipei: Yuzhouguang, 1985), 187–88.

²⁷ Pang Deming 龐德明, “Cong jidujiao shenxue bensehua de jingli tan dao Zhongguo shenxue bensehua de wenti” 從基督教神學本色化的經歷談到中國神學本色化的問題 [A discussion on the question of indigenization in Chinese theology from the experience of the indigenization of Christian theology], *Wenyi*, no. 1 (1982): 9.

²⁸ He Shiming, “Wo dui ‘bense shenxue’ de yixie yijian,” 12–13.

lays more weight on the conflict and divergence between Christian theology and traditional Chinese culture or intellectual system, without taking into consideration the possibility of their reconciliation. Liu even puts forwards theological arguments to show that the conflicts between the two systems are inevitable.

Liu's Sino-Christian theology, in his own words, "goes out from the conceptual framework of indigenization or sinification and faces the Christ event directly. . . . as to the construction of Sino-Christian theology, sinification is not an issue."²⁹ Liu's basic contention is this: "Christian theology should be the result of the encounter of the Word of God and human life experience rather than the encounter of the Word of God and an ethnic intellectual system."³⁰ Liu argues that the Christ event necessarily comes into conflict with all existing ethnic religions:

The intellectual system of Christian theology is based on a historically and individually presented salvation message, which is a post-religious event in the sense that the Christ event took place after all ethnic as well as ancient imperial religious systems. Therefore, fundamental conflicts must arise between it and all existing ethnic religions.³¹

It is questionable for Liu to view human life experience and ethnic intellectual systems as entities standing in opposition to each other. For an ethnic intellectual system can more or less reflect and even have influence on the life experience of some human individuals. His statement concerning Christian theology—that the encounter of the divine Word and human life experience, rather than that of the divine Word and ethnic intellectual systems, gives rise to Christian theology—is too simplistic.

From the perspective of apologetics, ethnic intellectual systems may give rise to criticisms on and misunderstanding of the Christian faith, which cannot be overlooked by those who theologize in the Chinese context. In other words, precisely because the revelation of God in Christ inevitably comes into conflict with any ethnic intellectual systems, Christian theology must be prepared to meet this challenge. In fact the early Christian apologists had to meet such challenges in the

²⁹ Liu Xiaofeng, "Xiandai yujing zhong de hanyu jidushenxue," 42.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 47.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 40.

Greco-Roman world; thus apologetic theology is as it were a result of the encounter of Christianity and ethnic intellectual systems.³² Liu's above mentioned statement is only assumed or asserted to be true rather than historically grounded.

Among modern theologians, Tillich also puts much emphasis on the encounter of the individual (with his or her existential problems) and the Word of God, and his method of correlation is designed to connect them with each other. Tillich points out that human beings interpret their existential situations ethically, scientifically, artistically and even politically.³³ In that sense Christian theology is related to ethnic intellectual systems, through which theologians may analyze the individual's existential questions, so as to show that the Christian salvation message may offer solutions to existential problems inherent in an ethnic intellectual system. In Tillich's method of correlation, it is not necessary to view an ethnic intellectual system negatively as a conceptual framework that confines or distorts Christian theology; on the contrary, theologians may use it to interpret the Christian salvation message more effectively. Thus, in contrast to Liu Xiaofeng, Tillich has a more positive attitude towards non-Christian religions, not viewing them as incompatible or unconnected with Christianity.

The above quoted passages from Liu Xiaofeng's writings suffice to show the influence Barth's theology has had on him. Liu indeed has referred to Barth's view that the Christ event is post-religious, critiques all religions and brings to light their crisis.³⁴ Simon Kwan (關瑞文) argues that Liu's position owes to Barthian influence, and gives a critique of it via hermeneutical theory.³⁵ Here I would only point out four things that would be requisite for further theological assessment of Liu's position. First, Liu's position does not wholly represent Barth's. Second, it contradicts his own views on other matters. Third, it can by no means represent the mainstream Christian theological tradition. Lastly, it may hinder further development of Sino-theology.

The first thing we must reckon with is the fact that Liu Xiaofeng's emphasis on the opposition between the Christ event and religion pri-

³² For the Greek context of early Christian apologetics, see Robert Grant, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1988); for Latin context, see Xiaochao Wang, *Christianity and Imperial Culture* (Leiden: Brill, 1998).

³³ Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, 3–4.

³⁴ What Liu Xiaofeng quotes is from the fourth chapter of Barth's commentary on Romans. See Liu Xiaofeng, "Xiandai yujing zhong de hanyu jidushenxue," 41.

³⁵ Guan Ruiwen, "Ping Liu Xiaofeng de hanyu jidushenxue," 220–39.

marily originated from his reading of the early Barth, which had not taken into consideration his fully elaborated standpoint. In the second half-volume of his *Church Dogmatics*, Barth made it plain that religion is unbelief and that revelation is the *Aufhebung* (often translated into English as “abolition”) of religion.³⁶ However, at the very beginning of the same section (§ 17) Barth sums up his view on this matter thus:

The revelation of God in the outpouring of the Holy Spirit is the judging but also reconciling presence of God in the world of human religion, that is, in the realm of man’s attempt to justify and to sanctify himself before a capricious and arbitrary picture of God. The Church is the locus of true religion, so far as through grace it lives by Grace.³⁷

Barth’s notion of revelation as the *Aufhebung* of religion is not to be understood from a historical perspective as the emergence of Christianity that brings to an end all other religious or ethnic intellectual systems. As a matter of fact, since Christianity appeared, pre-Christian religions such as Judaism have continued to exist and new ones (such as Islam) have emerged. Barth’s notion of religion, therefore, is to be understood in theological terms, referring to human beings’ attempts to attain justification on their own and to their consequential rejection of God’s forgiving grace. Thus defined, “religion” does not only refer to all non-Christian religions, for such self-saving religious efforts are also found in Christianity. Further, as Barth has made clear, since the proposition that “religion is unbelief”

aims only to repeat the judgment of God, it does not involve any human renunciation of human values, any contesting of the true and the good and the beautiful which a closer inspection will reveal in almost all religions, and which we naturally expect to find in abundant measure in our own religion, if we hold to it with any conviction.³⁸

In Barth’s usage *Aufhebung* does not only mean negation. For Hegel *aufheben* (“to sublate”) and its cognates can mean “to lift up,” “to abolish” or “to preserve.”³⁹ Thus, the English word “abolition” fails to

³⁶ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. I, Part 2, trans. G. T. Thomson and H. Knight (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956), 280–361, esp. 280, 297.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 280.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 300.

³⁹ Michael Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 283–85.

express the term's different senses. As the above cited passage from the *Church Dogmatics* clearly states, the presence of God in the religious world is both "judging" and "reconciling." "The abolishing of religion by revelation," Barth writes, "need not mean only its negation: the judgment that religion is unbelief. Religion can just as well be exalted in revelation, even though the judgment still stands."⁴⁰ Besides stating that revelation is the *Aufhebung* of religion, Barth also affirms that it is revelation that makes true religion possible. Christianity, so to speak, is a by-product of the Christ event. Although Christianity can become a true religion or "the locus of true religion," just as a sinner is justified not by anything good in himself or herself but by divine grace and election,⁴¹ it cannot be denied that it is the Christ event or revelation that makes true religion possible. Therefore, revelation and religion are not merely mutually negating or exclusive; religion can be as it were exalted by revelation. Barth's understanding of religion is too complicate to explicate here, but it is certain that, although Barth did not express approval for constructive and open dialogue with other religions, as did Tillich, his attitude towards religion was not as negative and extreme as Liu Xiaofeng's.

Whereas he appeals to Barth, a giant of neo-orthodoxy and dialectic theology, in critiquing the idea of indigenous theology, Liu Xiaofeng also appeals to Ernst Troeltsch, a champion of liberal theology, in affirming individualism in theology. Liu is well aware of the wide divergence between their theological approaches. Yet he believes that they have their own merits and are both indispensable to modern theology, and that twenty-first-century theology may turn out to be the result of a blending or a synthesis of them. However, Liu has not explicated how they could be integrated or synthesized, and how their mutual exclusion could be overcome if it is at all possible.⁴²

Viewed from the perspective of the history of Christian tradition, Barth's position can be traced back to Tatian and Tertullian, who believed Greek philosophy and religion to have nothing to do with Christian theology as much as Athens has had nothing to do with Jerusalem. Contrary to the critical and exclusivist stance represented by Tatian and Tertullian, Justin Martyr insisted that Christian faith could be harmo-

⁴⁰ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, Vol. I, Part 2, 326.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 325–26.

⁴² Tillich once said that his theology is an attempt to overcome the contradictions between these two types of theology. Paul Tillich, *The Protestant Era*, abridged edition, trans. James Luther Adams (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), xxii–xxiv.

nized with Greek philosophy.⁴³ Jaroslav Pelikan has shown that the mainstream attitude of Christianity towards classical thought, at least before the Renaissance, was a legacy of Justin's thought.⁴⁴ According to this tradition, Christianity is the "end" of religion in the sense that it is not to destroy all religions, but to fulfil their *telos*. In his *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions* Tillich points out that in its encounter with other religions or quasi-religions, including ethnic intellectual systems, Christianity is dialectically related to them: it neither wholly negates nor wholly affirms them.⁴⁵ With this dialectic relationship, which must be viewed as a strength of Christianity, many originally non-Christian ideas have assimilated into it.⁴⁶

The editorial preface to the first issue of *Logos and Pneuma* (Dao-feng 道風), the flagship journal of the Institute of Sino-Christian Studies, states that one of the objectives of Sino-theology is "to contribute to the establishment of theological studies in the Chinese-language academic realm, so as to develop a dialogical relationship with Confucian, Daoist and Buddhist thought as well as different strands of modernist thought."⁴⁷ Nevertheless, Liu Xiaofeng's theological position would make it very difficult to attain this objective. For instance, in his exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity he holds a one-sided view of the relationship between the doctrine and ethnic intellectual systems, and places great stress on their fundamental differences, thus neglecting any contributions the latter could make.⁴⁸ The ethnic monotheism of Judaism has prevented many Jewish people from accepting the doctrine of Jesus's divinity and the Trinity; yet without the intellectual input of Jewish monotheism, Christian trinitarianism would not have been formed and Jesus Christ would have been viewed as one among the pantheon. Ethnic intellectual systems—not least those developed in the Chinese world—can play a positive role in the pluralistic development of ecumenical theology. Faced with the ecological crisis, Western thinkers have recently pointed out that how Asian religions (including

⁴³ Lai Pinchao 賴品超, *Kaifang yu weishen: Tianlike de shenxue yu zongjiao duihua* 開放與委身：田立克的神學與宗教對話 [Openness and commitment: Paul Tillich's theology and interreligious dialogue] (Hong Kong: Christian Study Centre on Chinese Religion and Culture, 2000), 282–90.

⁴⁴ Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition, Vol. 1* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), 41.

⁴⁵ Paul Tillich, *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1964), 29 ff.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 51.

⁴⁷ *Daofeng*, no. 1 (1994): 8–9.

⁴⁸ Liu Xiaofeng, *Geti xinyang yu wenhua lilun*.

traditional Chinese religions) view nature has afforded Westerners revealing and useful insights as to their reflection on the relationship between humanity and nature.⁴⁹ Western theologians such as Jürgen Moltmann have expressed their appreciation and commendation of traditional Chinese religions for their understanding of nature as well as their pursuit of harmony.⁵⁰ As to the exploration of possible contributions traditional Chinese intellectual systems could make to Christian theology, Chinese theologians should assume more responsibility than Christians with other cultural backgrounds. To treat Christianity and traditional Chinese intellectual systems as unrelated or mutually exclusive entities, and thus to write off the value of traditional Chinese religious and cultural traditions, might severely limit the unique contribution Sino-theology could make to Christian theology worldwide.

The thrust of Sino-Christian theology, understood in the broad sense of the term, had long been theological indigenization, whose keynote was to affirm both the merits of Chinese culture and the possibility of its integration with Christianity. But such indigenizing efforts often fell short of thorough and critical assessment of traditional culture and as a result reinforced a Sino-centric or Confucian-centric attitude towards Chinese culture. Besides, how indigenous theology was actually constructed came under criticisms; there was, for instance, criticism for making too much accommodation to indigenous intellectual traditions. Moreover, in view of the fact that the importance of traditional culture has been trailing away in the contemporary Chinese context, whether or not indigenous theology is still necessary or urgently needed must be rethought.⁵¹ In challenging and criticizing the approach of theological indigenization, proponents of Sino-theology (in its narrow sense) such as Liu Xiaofeng and He Guanghu 何光滬 have tried to blaze a trail; such an endeavour, of course, is significant and commendable.⁵² In fact,

⁴⁹ See J. Biard Callicott and Roger T. Ames, eds., *Nature in Asian Tradition of Thought* (Albany: State University of New York, 1989).

⁵⁰ See Jürgen Moltmann, *God in Creation*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM, 1985), 321n5; *Creating a Just Future*, trans. John Bowden (London: SCM, 1989), 87–101.

⁵¹ See Wu Liming 吳利明, “Cong wenhua cengmian tantao bensehua wenti” 從文化層面探討本色化問題 [A discussion of indigenization from the perspective of culture], *Wenyi* 6 (1983): 12–20; Lai Pinchao, “Cong Kebu kan Ye–fo duihua zai hanyu chujing de qianlu” 從柯布看耶佛對話在漢語處境的前路 [The prospect of Buddhist–Christian dialogue in Chinese context from the perspective of Cobb], in *Chuancheng yu shiming* 傳承與使命, ed. Chen Guangpei 陳廣培 (Hong Kong: Daofengshan jidujiao conglin, 1998), 119–20.

⁵² Compared with Liu Xiaofeng, He Guanghu’s critique of indigenous theology is rather moderate and cogent. See He Guanghu, “Hanyu shenxue de genju yu yiyi” 漢語神學

it is quite understandable that contributors to Sino-theology (in its broad sense) have markedly different attitudes towards indigenous theology or traditional Chinese culture, which is highly pluralistic; modern Chinese intellectuals also made markedly different assessments of indigenous culture—from neo-Confucians' positive attitude towards it to the negative attitude adopted by more and more Chinese intellectuals in the post-May Fourth era. Inevitably, Christianity also provides critiques of traditional Chinese culture, but a balanced and fair Christian assessment of it should also reckon with its merits or potential contributions. John Baillie remarks on Barth's view about religion:

I cannot doubt that it provides for us a kind of urgently need remedy, which can correct several mistakes that we incline to commit recently; but this remedy is carried out in such an offensive and scornful manner, and the dose is also so mercilessly heavy that finally I find that I have to decline to swallow it and at the same time doubt the prescription itself.⁵³

Liu Xiaofeng's criticism on the indigenization project may be viewed as a much needed reminder for contemporary indigenous theologians. However, he might have overdosed his "remedy" by completely dismissing indigenous theology and one-sidedly and overly emphasizing the conflicts between Christianity and traditional culture or ethnic intellectual systems, which might consequently throw his theological prescription into doubt.

4. CONCLUDING REMARK

In this paper, the author attempts to argue that there are many deficiencies in Liu Xiaofeng's notion of Sino-theology, including the contrast he makes between Sino-theology and indigenous theology. The approach to Sino-theology proposed by him is merely one of the possible approaches to do Christian theology in the Chinese-speaking context.

的根據與意義 [The ground and the significance of Sino-theology], *Weizhen xuekan* = *Regent Chinese Journal* 2 (1996): 39–47.

⁵³ John Baillie, *The Sense of the Presence of God* (London: Oxford University Press, 1962), 182.

Since the contemporary situation of Sino-theology (in its broad sense) and the challenge it is facing are pluralistic, a diversified development of theology is inevitable. Compared with the diversified and pluralistic developments of Western theology, Sino-theology at most remains at its infancy stage. There is no need and no hurry to give an exclusive definition of Sino-theology to confine it to a determinant type. On the contrary, if colleagues of Sino-theology could first take into consideration those types of theology that still need to be developed, the development of Sino-theology (in its broad sense) may be more prosperous and healthy.

This paper further suggests that instead of understanding the theological endeavours of the cultural Christians in terms of philosophical formulation of the individual's faith, it may be better to understand their endeavours in terms of apologetics, which may help the church leaders to understand the positive contributions these endeavours can make to the Christian churches. According to this understanding, even though some of the proponents of Sino-theology are not church members and there are some inadequacies in their theological proposals, the Christian churches need not take an antagonistic attitude towards them. It is because the theological endeavours of the cultural Christians, knowingly or not, will benefit, directly or indirectly, the theological development as well as the evangelization in the Chinese-speaking world as a whole.

BOOK REVIEW

BENNETT, Harold V. *Injustice Made Legal: Deuteronomic Law and the Plight of Widows, Strangers, and Orphans in Ancient Israel*. Grand Rapids, Mich.: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2002. xiii + 209 pp., ISBN 0802839-096.

Harold V. Bennett's *Injustice Made Legal* presents a strong critique of the representations, social meaning and context of the making of Deuteronomy's laws on the poor in ancient Israel. Bennett draws on the insights of critical legal theory, feminist theory and critical race theory, and reexamines the complicated relationship that existed between the Israelite elites and the marginal groups. He uses a sociological approach to reconstruct the social, economic and political contradictions that underlined Deuteronomy's perception of the poor. The Deuteronomic Law was a mechanism of control that the Israelite monarchy used to govern the poor. The biblical welfare system was created to impose a set of moral values among the widows, strangers and orphans and to regulate their social behaviour. It focused on safeguarding the interests of the ruling elites rather than addressing the suffering and misery of the poor. This development revealed the expansion of the state's power and its penetration into the lower sectors of the society during the Omride dynasty in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Thus, the biblical laws claiming to protect the poor turned out to have institutionalized the very injustices against the widows, strangers and orphans. It appears that the use of such laws to control people is a common feature of government in both ancient and modern times. This historical situation still parallels with the oppression of Blacks and other non-white populations within the United States and Europe today.

Thematically Bennett highlights for us the complicated relationship between laws and society in ancient Israel. He draws attention to the process by which the laws gradually became identified as an effective mechanism of social control and welfare distribution. This process of identification demonstrates the specific transcendental visions of a utopia among the Jewish prophets and priests while enabling the elites to establish a hierarchical society in a fashion similar to the neighbouring kingdoms of Israel. Bennett succeeds in this by applying contemporary social and cultural theories to critique the drafting and contents of Deuteronomy's laws on the poor. This analytical approach of examining the legal system illustrates the biases and problems of the laws as well as the changes in the collective rights of widows, strangers and orphans.

A minor methodological problem in Bennett's analysis concerns the conceptualization of the Israeli society. It appears to be oversimplified to characterize ancient Israel as an agrarian society in Marxist terms. It is very problematic to apply the twentieth-century social-scientific understanding of agrarian world to a study of any ancient society. In the Old Testament, there are many stories of travellers, merchants, tribal communities, strangers, migrants and soldiers, all of them being constantly on the move and even rootless as opposed to the traditional image of land-bound peasantry. It may be more appropriate to conceptualize ancient Israel as a highly mobile society rather than a territorially-based peasant world. It is precisely because of this reason that the Omride dynasty decided to regulate the behaviour of the widows, strangers and orphans. Since they were not land-bound at all, they were more difficult to control.

Nevertheless, Bennett has given us a critical account of the Deuteronomic Law on the poor in ancient Israel which should be studied by all social scientists and historians as well as Christian church leaders today. Church leaders should take note in serving the poor. There are numerous references to the poor in the scriptures. The Church is supposed to be an inclusive community and to discriminate against no one because of their gender, race, ethnicity and class background. Given its mission to evangelize and promote justice, the Church should be in solidarity with the poor around the world, especially in its efforts to defend them against inequalities and exploitation.

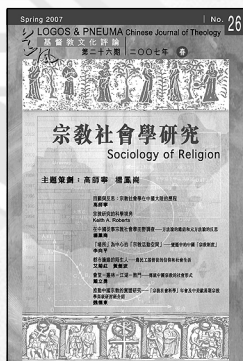
The Christians in the developing world have set a fine example of what the Church of the poor should be. For instance, the Korean Catholics and Protestants were inspired by Liberation Theology in Latin America to engage in a radical movement known as the "People's Theology" (*Minjung Sinhak*), which stressed the Koreanization of

Christianity, the pursuit of social justice, human rights and democracy, and the protection of the poor. The Korean churches went so far as to create a united front with radical students, trade unionists and farmers in nonviolent protests against the authoritarian state from the 1970s to the 1980s. A similar development can be discerned in the Philippines where the Roman Catholic Church played a decisive role in the struggle against injustices and the overthrow of Ferdinand Marcos in the “People Power Revolution” in February 1986. The Catholic Church was an integral part of the political and social structure in the Philippines. Its extensive resources and powerful institutional mechanism enabled the Church to become a strong critic of Marcos’ authoritarian rule and from there to take over where the state had failed to protect the civil society. In Hong Kong, the Catholic Church was actively involved in the popular struggle for democracy, human rights and social welfare after 1997. The challenges that the Catholic Church posed to the Chinese Communist leaders in Beijing had to do with its independent interpretations of political authority and state-society relations, its concern for the poor, and its ability to mobilize ordinary Catholics in social and political struggles.¹

Underlying these examples are the efforts of the Church to make conscience an integral part of their societies and to reposition itself as a champion of the poor. They have added an ethical dimension to political debate and action by challenging the state’s attempt to dehumanize the poor. As a result, a new form of inclusive politics that transcends ideological, religious, and cultural boundaries has emerged. The Christian values of love, forgiveness, tolerance and reconciliation are manifested in the global campaign for the rights of the poor.

Injustice Made Legal is an excellent reference work. It is thoroughly researched, full of insightful details and highly readable from beginning to end. It should be essential reading for those interested in the dynamics of religion in ancient Israel, Old Testament studies and contemporary Christian ethics.

¹ For details, see Tun-Jen Cheng and Deborah A Brown, eds., *Religious Organizations and Democratization: Case Studies from Contemporary Asia* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 2006).



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