

Christianity and Culture III

Summary

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— Language, Cognition, Ethics and Actio esthetica —

Tomonobu IMAMICHI

There are two ways, through which we think on the Christian culture: the one belongs to the reductive universalisation of Christian phenomena to the general religious culture, and the other belongs to the Christian theology based on the Bible and ecclesiastic traditions: My paper is of the second way, namely it is a theological study.

According to my observation, there are four very relevant problems concerning the essential core of Christian culture, namely language, cognition, ethics and actio esthetica. Language has been uttered from prophets as human translation of the divine speech, because the essential relation between God and mankind is “face to face”, dialogical relation. Cognition is in Christianity the system of axiology, because God is integration of every value. Persona as created object is far more important than artifactual culture. But the deed of charity as the act of ethics is the best glory of humanity. So actio esthetica, for which the glory is the end, is important.

On persona

— Through ethica ad rem (Ethics towards things) —

Noriko HASHIMOTO

Human beings are always faced with crises: one is external, attacks from the surrounding natural phenomena, against which human beings have structured a system of technology; the other is inner and spiritual, the abuse of science and technology in a technological conjuncture with conscience. Although technology itself is good, the absence of ethics is most dangerous.

Gabriel Marcel, in his book in 1951, warned of a crisis of dehumanisation by technology: technology makes the human existence a function and “a thing”. According to Marcel, human

beings considered technology as an object of idolatry which finally became self-idolatry; technology reduced the human spirit to “sous-human”.

The author proposes the problem of person (persona) as the most important one. The way of thinking is through *ethica ad rem* (ethics towards things) : the difference between thing and artwork by Martin Heidegger is helpful, because our attitude towards artworks is dialogical and similar to our altitude towards personal existence. The Kant’s indication, “a person must be an object for acts, not a medium”, and Nishida Kitaro’s thought, “a person must be a unifying power of the cosmos by pure experience”, are contrary, but mutually complementary.

Finally the author indicates that personalitas is the merely temporal development of persona.

Particularity, University, and Christianity in Multicultural Era

— From Multiculturalism to the New Natural Law Theory —

Makoto KAWAMI

It is said that the present era is “multicultural era.” But it is a misunderstanding that “only” the present age is multicultural. There is, however, a special reason at the normative level to call the present age “multicultural era.” Nowadays many people have begun insisting on a new normative framework, the “multicultural” solution of disputes, which approves cultural differences positively, instead of the “non-cultural” or “mono-cultural” solution based on modern individualism or democracy. “Multiculturalism” theories are the main theories with which they try to ground their thinking theoretically. However, this paper attempts to point out that a framework grounded in “multiculturalism” is insufficient and presents the “new natural law theory” as the theoretical foundation of the framework for this multicultural era.

The new natural law theory proposes a framework based on the “universal” basic goods, not denying “particularity” but rather affirming it positively. This is because basic goods are “incommensurable,” “pre-moral,” and “self-evident common denominators.” Global and developmental dialogues between different people would become possible in such a framework as it tries to locate “universality” and “particularity” integrally.

Finally I will attempt to point out that the new natural law theory will not only fuse various particularities in multicultural era on the horizon of universality, but also open the way to listen to Christianity’s message.

“The Adventures of Pinocchio” and Culture Based on a Christian Tradition

Koichiro MAENOSONO

Collodi, the writer of “Pinocchio,” wrote this work in order to bring pleasure to children. However, going beyond the intentions of the writer, the writer's vehement criticism in regards to the society of Italy directly following the state unification is written into the story. Furthermore, we can see many Christian messages within this tale.

Essay on the *Deposition* of Jean-Baptiste Jouvenet (Paris, musée du Louvre)

Yoshiki ONO

In 1697, Parisians saw a great altarpiece installed at the church of Capuchins in the place Louis-le-Grand, which Louis XIV ordered to reconstruct recently. It was Jean-Baptiste Jouvenet that produced this masterpiece representing the Deposition (fig. 1), one of the most popular subjects inspired by the Holy Writ. According to Louis Réau (note 12), the archetype of this image goes back to the 9th century, when we see only three characters - dead Christ, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus. As time went by, this simple scheme became more and more complicated with characters increasing in number.

Influenced profoundly by such works as well as the social backgrounds of the time, Jouvenet invented a vigorous and original painting. Among the examples our painter seemed to refer to, none could stimulate his interest more than the works of Rubens (fig. 6) or Le Brun (fig. 9). Keeping these in mind, Jouvenet created a painting full of religious and dramatic feelings, which led him to the classicism of Nicolas Poussin. Comparing the man who supports the dead Christ in the middle of ladder in Le Brun (fig. 11) and Jouvenet (fig. 12), we could appreciate how the latter absorbed and transformed the former to produce this masterpiece.

Konchirisan no riyaku, or a Merit of Contrition (1603)

— Its Significant Roles for the Japanese Christians under the Suppression and Persecution —

Shinzo KAWAMURA, S. J.

Among manuscripts which originated in the sixteenth and seventeenth century Japanese Christian church, there exists a booklet entitled *Konchirisan no riyaku* (1603) which explains the importance of contrition in the sacrament of penance. This handwritten material was probably based on a book in a series entitled *Kirishitan ban* or the Jesuit mission press (but the

published version is not available). Traditionally, it is taught that the sacrament of penance consists of three penitential acts: contrition in the heart, confession to the priest, and satisfaction by good works, followed by a sacerdotal act, that is, absolution, the forgiveness to sins of the penitent. But this booklet teaches that if penitents had a true and perfect contrition, without confession to the priest, they could attain the reconciliation with God, even if they were in the state of mortal sin. This teaching seems to be quite exceptional in the atmosphere of the Council of Trent, which re-emphasized the importance of confession to a priest at least once a year, and in cases the penitents were in the state of mortal sin, confession should never be omitted. However, for the Japanese Christians weakened by governmental suppression and the lack of priests, the teaching of true contrition without confession became a saving message. They could resume their life of faith through this unique penitential system, even if they were regarded as apostates owing to having stepped on the *Fumie*, or a copper tablet with a crucifix used during the persecution. The booklet continued to give spiritual encouragement to the hidden Christians, who did not have any ecclesiastical support for over 250 years.

**Chinese Translation of J.F.Martinet's *Catechism of Nature* by William Muirhead
— Reproduced Text with an Introduction —**

Toshifumi YATSUMIMI

From the beginning of the nineteenth century to the middle, a lot of Chinese language books were written by Western protestant missionaries in order to transmit Christianity and Western civilization to the Chinese people. Wylie's *Memorials* (1867) lists such 777 books. The first introductory book on general science might be William Muirhead's translation (1851). Until recently, however, the text has been unknown to us. In January 2000, I obtained its copy, hand written by a Japanese of those days. This essay describes an outline of the book and reproduces an original text. By comparison, Muirhead's work was identified as a translation of J.F. Martinet's *Kleine katechismus der natuur voor kinderen* from the English enlarged edition (1818). The English and the original Dutch editions were distributed widely under the influence of natural theology. The reason why such a science and religion book was chosen to be as a original text by Muirhead, could be explained not that he sided with religion, but that the science-religion combination was ordinary in the popular science at that time.