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Chapter Five: Inter-religious Dialogue and Education: Three Historic Encounters between Christianity, Buddhism and Confucianism,

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Abstract: This chapter adopts a historical approach to consider three encounters between China and Europe, when core educational and religious values from each civilization had a profound and transformative experience of interaction. In each encounter we will note how Christianity was enriched and enhanced through respectful dialogue with Buddhist, Daoist and Confucian adherents. The chapter seeks to draw lessons from history on how respectful dialogue among religions can enrich education even under circumstances of geo-political imbalance and imperialist threat or domination.

Most chapters in this book deal with current issues of religion and schooling or higher education while this chapter seeks to provide a broad historical frame for reflection on ways in which dialogue across religions and civilizations have resulted in educational enrichment. The 20th century was dominated by competing macro theories of modernization and socialist construction, which predicted increasing secularism and the gradual dying out of religion. Yet with the end of the Cold War in 1991, it became evident that persisting and deep-rooted values of religion that have shaped education since the earliest times were essential to human wellbeing in the new global age.

The decade of the 1990s was characterized by both the clash of civilizations, depicted in Samuel Huntington's much quoted article (1993) and a dialogue among civilizations, encouraged by the United Nations (Hayhoe, 2001).

An important task for education in the 21st century is thus the re-integration of religious and spiritual understanding into forms of education that nurture the whole person,

including spiritual, psychological, aesthetic and cognitive dimensions, a core concern of this volume. It is also a time for rebalancing the influences of the European heritage with those of other civilizations whose historic contributions to education around the world were submerged as a result of the triumph of European science and the successive influences of a series of European trading empires - the Portuguese, Dutch and British, then the competing influences of the United States and the Soviet Union over the 20th century. Given my personal engagement with educational values and patterns from China over several decades, in this chapter I seek to illustrate the kinds of reciprocal learning that could create a renewed holism through interaction between East Asia and the West, though I acknowledge also the rich religious heritage of other regions, which are dealt with in other chapters of this book.

The chapter begins by considering two influential academics of the 20th century whose scholarship kept alive the spiritual heritage of Christianity and Confucianism through decades in which secularism and ever increasing academic specialization dominated the research literature. Author of *The Company of Strangers* (1981) *To Know as We are Known* (1983) and *The Courage to Teach* (1998), Parker Palmer developed an influential literature on the necessity of the spiritual element in the work of teachers at all levels of education. His recent book, *The Heart of Higher Education* (with scientist Arthur Zajonc, 2010) elaborates a vision for holistic education which only spiritual renewal can bring. On the Confucian side, William Theodore de Bary, former Provost of Columbia University, devoted a lifetime to researching and teaching the classical civilizations of East Asia, and communicating the spiritual vitality of the Confucian tradition. This was over a period when it was violently attacked in Maoist China as the cause of China's backwardness, and at the same identified as responsible for the economic success of the East Asian tigers by sociologists who paid little attention to its spiritual dimension. (Vogel, 1991) De Bary highlighted its rich spiritual content, with titles such as *Approaches to the Oriental Classics* (1958), *The Buddhist Tradition* (1969), *Neo-Confucian Orthodoxy and the Learning of the Mind and Heart* (1981) and *East Asian Civilization: A Dialogue in Five Stages* (1987). From his most recent book, *The Great Civilized Conversation: Education for a World Community* (2013), emerges a vision for

the spiritual revitalization of education in the 21st century, that draws on this East Asian heritage in ways that may be seen as complementary to the Christian heritage.

The intention of this chapter is to show the possibilities of reciprocal learning between these two spiritual heritages by looking at three historical encounters between Christianity, Confucianism and Buddhism in the Chinese context. The focus will be on the process of dialogue and reciprocal learning in each encounter, in order to discern both the attitudes and actions that made possible a mutually enriching holism in the resulting experiences of education.

The first encounter took place in 635 CE, when a group of Syrian monks from the Church of the East travelled across the Silk Road and were welcomed by leading scholar officials of China's Tang Dynasty. They translated Christian texts into Chinese, developed an indigenous Christian literature and became integrated within local Chinese life of the 7th and 8th centuries. Only in the mid-9th century were they suppressed, alongside of Buddhists (Palmer, 2001, 233), leaving behind a stone stele and written texts, which were rediscovered in the 17th and early 20th centuries. These provide insights into the ways in which this remarkable encounter broadened and deepened their spiritual understanding in the context of an emerging economic relationship between Europe and China through the movement of traders across the Silk Road from Mesopotamia to the Chinese empire.

The second encounter took place seven centuries later in the late 16th Century, a time when Portuguese traders had established sea routes to East Asia. This was a time when China had become alert to the threat of emerging European economic encroachments and was far less open than it had been under the great Tang dynasty. Thus Matteo Ricci, an Italian Jesuit who felt called to establish a Christian mission in China, moved very gradually from Macau through southern China to Beijing, gaining the trust of local scholar officials at each stage along the way. He established connections through scholarly discussion, the introduction of scientific knowledge, religious teaching and publications, such that his work had a longlasting influence in both China and Europe.

The third encounter took place 300 years later, when China's last dynasty, the Qing, was facing collapse as the Opium Wars of 1840 and 1852, and the subsequent unequal treaties created conditions of openness to Western merchants and missionaries that were deeply resented. Under these circumstances Welsh Baptist missionary Timothy Richard fostered interactions with both Buddhist and Confucian officials that would contribute to China's self-strengthening. The university he helped to establish in Shanxi Province with British Boxer indemnity funding was handed over to full Chinese control less than a decade after its founding and achieved a remarkable balance between Chinese and Western, religious and secular knowledge in its curriculum.

Keepers of the spiritual in 20th Century Education

Before elaborating on the three historic encounters that are the main focus of this chapter, I will consider the work of Parker Palmer and William Theodore de Bary, in order to create a frame for reflecting on the process of inter-religious dialogue. In *The Heart of Higher Education* (2010), Palmer provides the following dynamic depiction of a truly integrative education:

Human knowing, rightly understood, has paradoxical roots – mind and heart, hard data and soft intuition, individual thought and communal sifting and winnowing..... Integrative education aims to “think the world together” rather than “think it apart,” to know the world in a way that empowers educated people to act on behalf of wholeness rather than fragmentation. (Palmer & Zajonc, 2010, 22)

Given the atomistic and competitive nature of the hidden curriculum in most higher institutions, he calls for an examination of the very foundations of education and the creation of learning spaces that facilitate a pedagogy shaped by “relational principles and practices” (*ibid.*, 29). In terms of the moral dimensions of learning, he notes that “an integrative pedagogy is more likely to lead to moral engagement because it engages more of the learner's self and teaches by means of engagement: the curriculum and the “hidden curriculum” in such a pedagogy support a way of knowing that involves much if not all of the whole self in learning about the world.”(*ibid.*, 32)

In a subsequent chapter dealing with the practice of integrative education, Palmer notes that “integrative education... will always be an adventurous, exploratory and discovery-

oriented form of learning that will never accommodate itself to the foregone conclusions and predictable outcomes on which standardized tests are built...”(*ibid.*, 39). He further insists there must be “capacity to hold a paradox” and a clear “heart-mind connection.”(*ibid.*, 41, 42). He also notes that “the great spiritual traditions...were centuries ahead of science in positing the interconnectedness of reality that physicists and others now proclaim”..... and thus “an integrative higher education can play a role in that process of illumination.” (*ibid.*, 48)

From here Palmer hands over the volume to his co-author, Arthur Zajonc, professor of physics at Amherst College, who points to the way in which post-relativity physics has challenged the positivism, objectivism and orientation towards increasing specialization that marked the sciences of the 18th and 19th centuries. By contrast, “the new physics encourages an epistemology that knits together the observer and the creative world in an indissoluble manner” (*ibid.*, 67). There is a fascinating discussion of light as particle and wave and the development of quantum theory that challenged the understanding of wholes as “merely parts juxtaposed and bound together by forces,” (*ibid.*, 79) The lesson learned from this is fundamental to integrative education: “The universe was and is a whole, but the method by which we chose to observe the universe fragmented it, and we mistakenly assumed our method gave us a true reflection of reality.” (*ibid.*, 79)

Zajonc goes on to depict the practice of contemplative inquiry as an expression of the *epistemology of love* and by definition a practice that must be carried out collectively or in community. The seven stages that he proposes for this practice might be viewed as a set of guideposts or principles that can be seen in the inter-religious encounters considered in detail later in the chapter. Here are Zajonc’s phases: *respect* or a positive ethical orientation to our object of study; *gentleness* in contrast to the Baconian notion of “extracting” nature’s secrets; *intimacy*, that retains clarity and balanced judgement while close-up to the subject of study; *vulnerability* or an openness to the other that involves learning to be comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty; *participation* in the unfolding phenomena - a living out of ourselves into the other; *transformation* by experience in

accord with the object of contemplation and finally, *imaginative insight* – born of an intimate participation in the course of things (*ibid.*, 94-96).

Let me turn now to William Theodore de Bary, who promoted the spiritual in education based on his in-depth understanding of the East Asian classics. His efforts began in the 1950s, when he was developing a core curriculum at Columbia through the selection of classical texts “that had proven themselves capable of speaking to generations of humankind in terms that could still be meaningful to their own life and times, reaching into their hearts and touching them personally.” (DeBary, 2013, 27) He noted how distinguished European writers and thinkers had engaged with the Chinese classics in the 17th and 18th centuries yet this was not “a substantial engagement with Chinese culture and civilization in its mature forms.” (*ibid.*, 36) It was thus important to “extend the conversation to 21st century education in ways that do justice to the Asian classics not just as museum pieces but as part of the historical process to be factored into an emerging world civilization.” (*ibid.*)

In describing how he had read the Confucian *Analects* with students over a period of sixty years, de Bary pointed out the moral and spiritual lesson at the heart of the *Analects*: “To be unembittered even if one is not recognized, is that not to be a truly noble person?” “Here the *junzi* refers to the traditional leadership elite, an aristocratic class born to privileged status of would-be rulers. But Confucius emphasizes the learning process for what it takes to be worthy of a leadership role or become an exemplary person; in other words, that it means to command respect as a person, whether or not one finds oneself in a position to lead or rule. Thus he reconceives the traditional concept of *junzi* from that of nobleman to one that emphasizes the noble person as one whose personal character, not status, establishes him as a model to be followed....” (*ibid.*, 64)

Bringing together the perspectives from Parker and Zajonc on the American side and de Bary on the East Asian side, we can see a vision for a more holistic approach to education in the 21st century which could be fostered through a revival of the spiritual dimension of education, from the classroom level to that of inter-civilizational understanding. The next

three sections of this chapter looks at three encounters between Christianity and the religions of China at very different historical periods with a particular focus on understanding how Christian spiritual practices and educational thought were enriched by inter-religious dialogue.

The First Encounter: Orthodox Christianity meets Buddhism & Daoism

This first encounter took place in 635 CE just two years after the death of Mohammed at a time when the Syrian based Church of the East was reaching out to India, Afghanistan, Persia and various parts of the Sassanian empire. (Palmer, 2001) The journey of 21 monks across the Silk Road to Chang'an, China's capital during the Great Tang Dynasty, culminated in the formation of numerous Christian communities. The earliest was located very close to Lou Guan Tai, the most sacred centre of Daoism, where Lao Zi was thought to have left his *Classic of the Way (Dao De Jing)* to his followers as he went off into the Far West. The fact that the Tang Emperor assigned this location to the Religion of Light from the Far West showed China's openness and confidence in this period.

What actually happened in this encounter is shrouded in mist and could have been forgotten by history had not the Chinese Christians carved a stone stele with a detailed account of the life of these Christian communities between 635 and 781 CE. All were suppressed in 845, along with Buddhist institutions, through an edict by an emperor concerned by the extent of Buddhist power. The burial of the stele meant little was known until it was unearthed in 1623, more than six hundred years later.

The other source materials that reveal various facets in this encounter are a series of Jesus Sutras, buried in 1005 CE along with a large quantity of Buddhist scrolls in a cave in Dun Huang, Northwest China, and rediscovered in 1907. Of the ten sutras, several are translations from the Syriac, the earliest being dated 641 CE while others are original Chinese texts. A careful reading of these texts reveals a great deal about these early Christian communities and the influence of Buddhism and Daoism on their thought and language. One of the buildings, erected in 635 CE as a library for the monastery, is still

standing and has recently been turned into a major tourist site with statuary, a cultural centre and other facilities opened to the public in 2014 to celebrate this historical encounter.

In terms of actions, what we can learn about these early Syrian and Chinese Christians is that they adopted vegetarianism, in line with Buddhist practice, they refused to own slaves, though it was common among the Buddhist majority of the time, they insisted on equality for women and they were committed to living together in mutual learning and respect. Their stele was written in both the Chinese and Syriac languages and the earlier texts were translations from Syriac, while later ones were expressions of indigenous belief and worship.

In terms of thought and conceptualization, we can see a Christian faith that was enriched and enlarged by exposure to and interaction with Buddhism and Daoism. The language of the stele expresses this beautifully in its opening lines:

“In the beginning was the natural constant, the true stillness of the Origin and the primordial void of the Most High. Then, the spirit of the voice emerged as the Most High Lord, moving in mysterious ways to enlighten the Holy Ones. He is Joshua, my True Lord of the Void, who embodies the three subtle and wondrous bodies, and who was condemned to the cross, so that the people of the four directions can be saved....” (Palmer, 2001, 225)

The text goes on to outline the main teachings of Christianity, while stating that the truth “cannot be named,” but if forced to give it a name, it can be called “The Religion of Light.” Images are drawn from both Buddhist and Daoist thought: “abstinence to subdue thoughts of desire,” (*ibid.*, 226) “a Way that does not have a common name.... a message mysterious and wonderful beyond our understanding.” (*ibid.*, 227)

In summary the Christians are called “to penetrate the mysteries, to bless with a good conscience, to be great and yet empty, to return to stillness and be forgiving, to be compassionate and to deliver all people, to do good deeds and help people to reach the other shore.” (*ibid.*, 229).

Of the eight sutras that were recovered from the Dun Huang Caves, the first set of four were written in Chang An between 640 and 660 CE, one translated from Syriac, another

possibly from Greek and the third and fourth being compilations from various sources. While containing an accurate description of the core events of the life and teaching of Christ and the Christian Gospel, these texts are expressed in Daoist and Buddhist language.

In the first text the Daoist term “qi” for breath or spirit is used, and given credit for enabling Jesus to escape from the hold of death. (*ibid.*, 66) Buddhist influence is evident in the way Jesus is presented as a bodhisattva who helps others find the way by shining a light on reality, so that truth could prevail. (*ibid.*, 66) In the second sutra, the five skandas are discussed (form, sensation, perception, mental formations and consciousness), and Jesus is depicted as God clothed in human flesh so as to liberate human beings by taking on these five fetters. However, in this Christian version, human bodies, thoughts and behaviours are not only seen as fetters but, if used appropriately, “the five Skandas... all become strong and worship the one Sacred Spirit for their creation and for the image they have been made in.”(*ibid.*, 144)

The second set of four sutras were written later by Chinese monks, and have been described as liturgical sutras or a kind of prayer book. The first of the four, written in 720 CE, is called “Taking Refuge in the Trinity.” Palmer notes the remarkable achievement of the Church of the East in developing a truly indigenous theology and terminology, with the use of phrases such as “the Jade-faced One,” with jade being highly prized in the Chinese context, a supreme metaphor for purity and eternity (*ibid.*, 179). The other three sutras are almost certainly written by Jing Jing, the Chinese monk, who composed the stele and they can be dated to about 780 CE.

The opening lines of “The Christian Liturgy in Praise of the Three Sacred Powers,” the third of Jing Jing’s creations, probably best illustrates the reciprocal learning that had taken place – the enlargement of Christian thought and expression through its indigenization in local Daoist and Buddhist language:

The highest skies are in love with you, the great earth opens its palms in peace.
Our truest being is anchored in your purity, you are Allaha, Compassionate Father of the three,

Everything praises you, sounding its true note, All the enlightened chant praises
 Every being takes refuge in you and the light of your Holy Compassion frees us all,
 Beyond knowing, beyond words, You are the truth, steadfast for all time
 Compassionate Father, Radiant Son, Pure Wind King – three in one. (*ibid.*, 203)

Allaha seems to be adapted from Elohim in the Old Testament, fitting with the Buddhist term for Arhat, a perfected being, while the Holy Spirit is called the Pure Wind King, bringing the Spirit close to Chinese sensitivity. Jesus, the Light of the World in John's Gospel, is the Radiant Son. What we see is both an adaptation that makes Christianity understandable in a Chinese world and an enhancement of Christianity as its truths are expressed in Chinese cultural terms.

Clearly, the spiritual was an integral foundation for all knowledge in this period of history, and the reciprocal learning that took place in this encounter made possible deep understanding between two very different educational traditions that resulted in enlargement. The processes identified by Zajonc - respect, gentleness, intimacy, vulnerability, participation and transformation can all be seen to some degree in the texts left by these Syrian and Chinese Christians. The fact that they were invited to participate in official ceremonies alongside Buddhists and Daoists and were permitted to establish their own distinctive communities in China is a remarkable testimony to tolerance and openness under the Tang Dynasty.

The Second Encounter: Roman Catholic Christianity meets Confucianism

It was a very different China in the later 16th century, when Matteo Ricci responded to a call to establish a mission there. Under the Wanli Emperor of the late Ming dynasty (1572-1620) China was suffering decline and facing encroachments from the Manchus to the North, which culminated in the collapse of the dynasty in 1642. There was also considerable awareness of the rising power of Europe, particularly through the Portuguese trading ships plying their way via Goa to Macau, a trading port rented from the Chinese empire from 1557 and made into a colony in the 19th Century. Their ships took luxury goods back from China, only much later bringing products from Europe. Meanwhile the Spanish were establishing their influence in the Philippines. The Chinese

emperor was aware of the threat posed by these European powers and determined to protect China's territory and prevent foreigners from entering.

Matteo Ricci arrived in Macau in 1582, after spending a couple of years in Goa on India's West coast, to prepare for his great venture. He dedicated himself to mastering spoken and written Chinese, also preparing scientific books and gifts such as the astrolab, clock and clavichord. The first entry to China from Macau was in March of 1583, when Ricci and fellow Jesuit Michele Ruggieri attended a trade fair in Guangzhou along with some Portuguese merchants. Rather than returning to Macau they then proceeded to the nearby city of Zhaoqing where they had petitioned a local official for permission to establish a residence. There they settled for several years, establishing relationships with local officials, receiving people in their home and focusing on developing a catechism in Chinese as well as introducing valued knowledge from Europe, such as map making, clock making and geometry. Given that Buddhism was undergoing a revival at the time, they were first viewed by the Confucian literati as Buddhist monks, and they dressed accordingly, while seeking to introduce Christianity. By 1586, they had twelve converts, all of whom came from a lay Buddhist background and viewed Ricci and Ruggieri as monks who had come from India. (Hsia, 2010)

When the Confucian official who had sponsored them moved higher, Ricci and his colleagues were driven out of Zhaoqing but found a way to move north to Shaoguan through the network of officials and literati they had come to know. Their home had become a magnet for those interested in the books, maps and instruments they had brought. With this move they also decided to identify with the Confucian literati, changing from the robes associated with Buddhist monks to the scholarly apparel of Confucian literati. (*ibid.*,135) While living in Shaoguan, Ricci translated three of the four books of Confucius into Latin and came to view early Confucian texts as a set of moral teachings with a belief in Heaven as a deity that aligned closely with Christianity. This approach led to a deepening of relations with powerful Confucian literati and in 1592 a move on to Nanchang, the capital of Jiangxi province.

In Nanchang, Ricci's career took off as he "entered the inner corridors and chambers of Ming society." (*ibid.*, 141) The city was a centre of scholarship in a province that had a vibrant intellectual life and more academies than any other province. Here he wrote and published two books in Chinese. The first, entitled *On Friendship (Jiaoyoulun)*, became a best seller while the second, *A Treatise on Memnomic Arts (Xiguo jifa)*, was of great interest in a society where successful examination preparation was the key to advancement. (Spence, 1984) His network of connections with high level officials grew exponentially, since scholars came from all over to meet and converse with the "Man of the Mountain from the Great Western Region," as he signed himself in his publications. (Hsia, 2010, 156)

In 1598 he moved on to Nanjing, early southern capital of the Ming dynasty, after a first visit to Beijing, where he had stayed two months. This invitation north had come through his network of contacts, and the widespread admiration of his map of the world. Nanjing proved a good location over a four year period for solidifying his achievements and preparing for the culminating move to Beijing in 1602. There he would live out his final years and be laid to rest in the celestial capital that had become his adopted home. Crowning achievements were his *True Meaning of the Lord of Heaven (Tianzhu shiyi)*, which introduced Christianity within a Confucian frame and the conversion of a number of influential officials, including Paul Xu Guangqi, who rose to the status of prime minister in the Chinese empire.

In the content of his writing, Ricci took a position alongside of those Confucian scholars who were critical of Buddhist and Daoist influences and wished to strengthen social governance and moral rectitude through the inculcation of knowledge from the earliest Confucian classics in all levels of society. Within Confucianism, Ricci distinguished between the rationalized version of Confucian thought that had emerged as Song neo-Confucianism (*lixue*) and the early Confucianism of the Han dynasty (202 BCE to 220 CE), where he detected a more explicit theology in the presentation of Heaven and Heaven's purposes. On this basis of these early Confucian texts, Ricci felt he could introduce Christian teachings as a fulfillment of Chinese classical teaching that was

parallel to the ways in which Aquinas had presented Christian theology as a fulfillment of Greek classical understanding.

If we think in terms of action, Ricci's slow and careful progress from the periphery to China's heart of power, building friendship, gaining trust and introducing advanced scientific knowledge, alongside Christian teaching, demonstrated respect, a growing intimacy, and considerable vulnerability – including the loss to illness of several close Jesuit colleagues. One can also see an ever deepening participation that resulted in his personal transformation, not in terms of any diminution of his Christian commitment, rather its enlargement and a vision of what Confucianism had to say to Europe. Although it was to be 1687, decades after Ricci's death in 1610, before *Confucius Sinarum Philosophus* was published in Europe, Ricci is credited with laying the foundations of Western Sinology (Mungello, 1989), also with creating conditions wherein China was seen for a time as a model for Europe both in terms of its patterns of meritocratic governance and elements of its traditional science in the areas of agriculture and engineering. (Maverick, 1946). Finally, the fact that Ricci never thought of returning to Europe, but died and was buried in the land he had adopted, showed the depth of the connections he had built through friendships, collaborative scholarship and mastery of the language.

Only some decades after his death, when the Chinese rites crisis broke out, did it become evident how remarkable this reciprocity was in a time of rising European global dominance. From the 1640s, Dominican missionaries associated with the Spanish influence in the Philippines began to accuse the Jesuits of an unacceptable accommodation to Confucian rites and ceremonies. All that needs to be said about the controversy here is that the Chinese Emperor issued a decree in 1706 that only missionaries who followed the "Ricci practice of allowing Christians to observe the rites" (Noll, 1992, 27) could remain in China. The Vatican, for its part, condemned the Chinese rites, a decision that was not reversed until 1939! Catholic missionaries were driven out of China and the Society of Jesus was also suppressed in Europe between 1767 and 1824.

It is thus easy to see how remarkable was Ricci's vision and openness to genuine reciprocity, given the times in which he lived!

As for holistic education, the famous Ratio Studiorum, adopted by the Jesuits in 1599, was intended to support "the balanced development of intellect and will, of mind and spirit." (Jiang, 2014, 61) A foundation was laid in the Latin and Greek classics, and on this basis the humanities, poetry, history, moral philosophy, mathematics and science were studied, with theology as the culminating field. The Jesuit order distinguished itself as an order committed to education around the world, and this curriculum was adapted to many different geographical and civilizational contexts in the hundreds of colleges subsequently developed. In the case of China, the Jesuits returned in 1840, not long after the society was rehabilitated in 1824, founding the College St Ignace (*Xuhui Gongxue*) in Xu Jia Hui, a district of Shanghai associated with the family of Paul Xu Guangqi, the most influential of the scholar officials who had become Catholic under the influence of Matteo Ricci.

Probably the educator of modern China who made the most consistent effort to develop a holistic education in the 19th and 20th centuries was Ma Xiangbo. He came to the College St Ignace as a student at the age of 12 in 1852, rose to be principal of the college and a member of the Jesuit order, and developed a vision for a higher curriculum that would have a foundation in both the Chinese and the European classics, and build upon them knowledge of mathematics, sciences, geography, history and modern languages. Frustrated by the imperialistic attitudes of French Jesuits at the time, he left the Order to serve in major national self-strengthening projects for several decades. In 1903 he returned to the Order to get help in establishing a modern university and donated his considerable family property to this end. The struggle for space to create a holistic curriculum that integrated the best from the European and Chinese heritages in a period of China's external humiliation and internal political disarray took him through the establishment of l'Université Aurore (Zhendan) in 1903, Fudan (a revived Aurore) in 1905 and finally Furen University in 1927. (Hayhoe, 1988)

Furen's curriculum paralleled the features of the Ratio Studiorum, though American Benedictines took over in 1927, then the German order of the Divine Word in 1933, a connection which enabled the university to remain open in Beijing right through the devastating period of Japanese occupation and subsequent civil war. Ma Xiangbo felt the Benedictines could bring in modern scientific understanding from an American context while also valuing the European scholastic tradition and embracing China's Confucian heritage. He was confident that Furen would not be "just another foreign enclave on Chinese soil." (*ibid.*, 56)

Although Furen moved to Taiwan in the late 1940s, and its Beijing campus was given to Beijing Normal University in 1952, its spirit of a holistic education that embraces both the European and Chinese classics is now being revived, with the establishment of liberal arts programs in some of China's top universities. A recent study of these programs in three Shanghai universities by Jesuit scholar Youguo Jiang (2014) contains interesting insights into how reciprocal learning across civilizations is making possible an education that connects the cognitive, aesthetic, moral and religious dimensions of learning. This volume also gives some insight into the remarkable track record in Jesuit education for the ideas around "learning from religion" that are presented as a third approach to religious education in Chapter 14. It also adds weight to the view that people who are confident of their own religious beliefs and commitments may be more open and positive towards those with whom they differed religiously than those with negative attitudes to religion, which is noted in Chapter 13.

The Third Encounter: Protestant Christianity meets Buddhism and Confucianism

If the context of Matteo Ricci's encounter with China was shaped by an emerging sense of threat in face of burgeoning Portuguese and Spanish trading interests this threat had exploded into deep resentment at the unequal treaties imposed by Western powers after the Opium Wars of 1840 and 1852. It was no wonder that the Protestant missionaries in China came to be viewed by Chinese officials as cultural imperialists, using education and religious teaching to further the interests of foreign powers. It was also

understandable that the Boxer Rebellion of 1899, when members of a secret Chinese organization who believed themselves invincible attacked all Westerners they could find, missionaries constituted the majority of those who lost their lives. It was over the difficult years leading up to the Boxer Rebellion and the collapse of the Qing Empire in 1911 that Welsh Baptist missionary Timothy Richard lived and worked in China, from 1871 to 1916.

Richard was born in a small farming community in Wales. Welsh was his mother tongue and education in a local theological college prepared him for ordination in the Baptist Church. As a student he protested against the emphasis on classical Greek and Latin texts coming from the university and pushed for a more practical, science oriented curriculum, an early indication that he would not be interested in promoting a British university model in China! (Johnson, 2014)

Richard moved to China as a Baptist missionary at the age of 27 and began his career with village evangelism. Within a short time, however, he felt called to interact with “those who are worthy,” following Matthew 10:11: “Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave.” This led him to build close connections with officials, scholars and religious leaders including Confucian, Buddhist and Islamic thinkers. Like Matteo Ricci, he committed himself to mastering the Chinese language and reached a level where he could translate scientific texts into Chinese as well as classical texts from Chinese into English.

In terms of action, Richard was deeply concerned by the poverty and backwardness he saw all around him, and soon realized that only serious reform efforts by Chinese officialdom could bring about change. In the later 1870s he took up famine relief for a time and then made tremendous efforts to get support for the development of modern higher education, envisioning one college in each of China’s provinces. When he failed to get the Baptist mission to support this vision, he turned his efforts to the promotion of scientific literature, serving as General Director of the Society for the Diffusion of Christian and General Knowledge from 1891 to 1915.

Finally the opportunity to create a modern institution of higher education arose after the Boxer Rebellion of 1899 and the imposition of an Indemnity by the Western powers to pay for the lost lives of diplomats and missionaries. Due to his extensive connections to Chinese officialdom, Richard was selected to negotiate on behalf of the British, and so became the co-founder of the Imperial University of Shanxi in Taiyuan in 1902. Substantive funding was channelled from Shanxi province to the new institution as their contribution to the indemnity payment. The negotiations for the founding of this new institution, with separate Colleges of Chinese and Western Learning, were complex. Perhaps the most remarkable feature was the fact that it was handed over to full Chinese jurisdiction in 1909 and was never seen as a British university in China. Richard handpicked missionaries from England, Germany and Sweden for teaching and leadership in the College of Western Studies, and arranged for translation of textbooks in all the major subject areas into Chinese. All students were first enrolled in the College of Chinese learning, in order to have a foundation in Chinese classical culture and then took up advanced studies in the College of Western learning which enabled them to get degrees at the Masters and Doctoral level.

Clearly, Richard had no wish to serve the interests of British cultural imperialism by establishing a British university model. Rather he thought in terms of introducing advanced scientific knowledge that would nurture future leaders who would make China strong. Main subjects in the curriculum of the College of Western Learning included mathematics, physics, chemistry, zoology, geography, law, history & gymnastics, while all students were expected to take a core course in comparative morals and religions, which included the teaching of Christianity as well as other religions.

In spite of China's perceived and evident weakness over this period, Richard acted in a spirit of reciprocity, clearly seeing the value of introducing Chinese moral and religious teachings to the West. He was particularly struck by parallels he saw between core concepts of Mahayana Buddhism and the Christian Gospel, and he therefore translated elements of China's Lotus Sutra into English in a text that was published in 1910 under

the title *The New Testament of Higher Buddhism*. In his introduction to this text, Richard wrote the following lines:

In China we possess the lofty Ethics of Confucius, advocating Benevolence, Righteousness, Propriety, Knowledge and Mutual Confidence, in as strong and eloquent language as that of any of the Hebrew prophets. With regard to the doctrine of Immortality taught in the New Testament to Western nations – we find that in the Far East there is what might be called a Fifth Gospel or the “Lotus Gospel,” which for fifteen centuries has shone throughout the Buddhist world in China, Korea and Japan with such brilliancy that countless millions trust to its light alone for their hope of Immortal Life.....the wonderful truths taught therein have precisely the same ring as those taught in the fourth Gospel about the *Life*, the *Light* and the *Love*. The bearing of the Cross, by patient endurance of wrong and undeserved insults, is also inculcated over and over again, in the same gentle language as that of the Apostle of Love himself. (Richard, 1910, 134)

Richard’s commitment to dialogue between Christianity and both Buddhism and Confucianism and his respect for these religions was reflected in his strenuous efforts for peace as well as his educational vision. In 1896 he put forward a proposal for a “League of Peace for Princes” and he was tireless in his efforts to facilitate dialogue among leaders in China, Japan, Korea, England and the United States. While visiting Boston and Paris in 1900, he proposed an “international parliament of man” to create and apply international law. (Johnson, 2014, 123) With the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese war his mediation and relief efforts as Shanghai’s Red Cross Secretary won him great respect. In 1905, he served as a delegate to the Lucerne Peace Conference “which he addressed with his proposal to create a federation to ensure universal peace” (*ibid.*, 124), a proposal that was to be taken to the next conference at the Hague. In 1906 he visited American President Theodore Roosevelt shortly after he was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts to resolve the Russo-Japanese War.

Richard died in London in 1919, the year in which the League of Nations was founded. Unusually for a Baptist missionary, he requested cremation and his ashes were laid to rest in London’s earliest crematorium in Golders Green. The simple plaque identifying his cubicle in one of the columbaria is inscribed as follows: “In Most Happy Memory of

Timothy Richard, Li T'i Mo-T'ai. Blessed are the Peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God.” (*ibid.*,150)

His interactions with Confucian, Buddhist and Islamic leaders within China and more widely, the university he co-founded and his endeavours for Chinese science, for higher education and for peace over a 45 years period can be viewed as stages that included respect, gentleness, intimacy, vulnerability, participation and transformation. They constituted a strengthening rather than a diminution of his Christian faith and an openness to dialogue that shone brightly in a time of war and imperialist expansion. He might be seen as an educator whose vision anticipated the founding of UNESCO and exemplified the famous words in the preamble to its constitution in 1945: “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.”

Conclusion: Inter-religious Understanding and Education

Unlike other chapters in this volume, which deal with current issues of religion and schooling in different parts of the world, this chapter has highlighted three historic encounters between different forms of Christianity and the religions of China. Each has illustrated the possibility of learning through dialogue across religions and civilizations at a deep level, even under conditions of geo-political threat and imbalance. Alopen and the group of Syrian monks he led to China established communities that nurtured spiritual understanding and respect between Chinese and European civilization just as economic and trade relations were emerging between China and Europe across the Silk Road. Matteo Ricci left an enduring example of the seven phases Zajonc’s epistemology of love, and an intellectual and spiritual legacy that influenced China while also enabling European thinkers to benefit from ideas of governance and higher education emanating from China’s classical civilization. In his forty five years in China Timothy Richard demonstrated a commitment to education for inter-religious understanding that overflowed into proposals and actions for world peace that have been seen as anticipating the mission of UNESCO after WW2. In each of the three encounters there was an evident enlargement and expansion of understanding on both sides as distinctive religious and spiritual traditions interacted at a deep level.

Hopefully this chapter can provide a backdrop to later chapters in this volume, especially those in Part Three, that deal with religion and conflict resolution. It has become increasingly clear that the secularization of modern society anticipated in both structural functionalist and Marxist theories of social change, has not taken place. Religion remains vitally important for many in the modern world and the ability of educational institutions to deal with it appropriately is a key concern. Chapter Twelve on the desecularization of Russian schools after the collapse of the Soviet Union illustrates the importance of balance and breadth in bringing religion back into the school curriculum, while Chapter Thirteen shows how the teaching of Christianity can contribute to peace building and conflict resolution in the complex historical context of Northern Ireland. Chapter Fourteen outlines approaches to religious education that may serve to counter violent extremism and its emphasis on encouraging dialogue and learning from religion resonates with the encounters depicted in this chapter.

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