

## Three Speeches: In Honor of Cobb, Griffin, and Berry

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### I. Celebrating The Legacy and Lure of John B. Cobb, Jr.'s Process Theology

*This is the speech I delivered at "The Legacy and Lure of Professor Dr. John B. Cobb, Jr." Conference at Claremont School of Theology, February 14-16, 2008.*

Sometimes the past all of a sudden reappears in one's present life as a surprise, thus letting one acknowledge that the past is causally efficacious to the present, but in the manner of what Kitaro Nishida designates continuity-in-discontinuity. A few weeks ago when I was trying to take down books from the shelves in my office in preparation for my retirement at the end of this coming March from Keiwa College, for whom I have been assiduously working in the double capacity of Professor of Philosophy/Theology and Chaplain since 1991, there suddenly appeared from the back of many books two precious volumes of English manuscripts which I had completed while at Claremont in 1984 and 1985. They are respectively entitled "Buddhist Christianity: Toward a Renewal of Missiology in the Light of Process Theology and the Nishida School" and "Christ, Buddha, and Dostoevsky: Apologetic Theology in a New Key."

"Ah, for so many years," I said to myself, "I have been blockaded by these hectic college responsibilities from enjoying and re-appreciating the reality of these manuscripts which had actually given me the impetus to initiate with Francis H. Cook (UC Riverside) in 1985 the AAR Seminar on 'Process Thought, the Nishida School of Buddhist Philosophy in Comparative Perspective' (1985-1991) and its background academic base, the East-West Process Studies Project within Center for Process Studies." By taking a look at the latter manuscript I was gradually brought back into a fresh contact with the atmosphere in which I wrote seven chapters in it, especially Chapter

## VII: "The Newness of John Cobb's Theology in Process: A Critical Exposition From an Analogical Perspective."

### 1. *Tillich and Cobb: Where the Newness of Cobb's Theology Lies*

Basically, what I want to say concerning John Cobb's theology in process is already there, I sense. Therefore, in this short presentation in the symposium on "Interreligious Dialogue" let me first introduce to you the basic contents of the chapter that have something to do with a critical comparison of Cobb's theology with that of Paul Tillich with regard to the question of how the systematic theologian should deal with the issue of interreligious dialogue (especially one with Buddhists) properly.

As is clear in the chapter and elsewhere, my method of celebrating the legacy and lure of John Cobb's theology in process consists of two elements: an inquiry into the Cobbean questions and a reappraisal of the Cobbean answers. If one did not make a clear distinction between these two elements in Cobb's theology, one would be doomed to just repeat his ideas in one's own terms without carefully scrutinizing the exact theological value of them against the background of the advance of theology over the past several decades in raising and answering crucial theological questions especially those concerning interreligious dialogue in our case. Celebrating the legacy and lure of Cobb's theology, therefore, must in due measure be inclusive of this critical "question-and-answer" approach, I believe.

Praising the merit of Cobb's theology in a direct manner does not necessarily mean that it is an academic act of celebrating the legacy of his theology as a whole. Celebration is a critical (as well as joyful) business, I would say, if it is an academic affair. If it was not critical enough, celebrating the legacy of an academic enterprise, such as Cobb's, would become an "inside business" alone, while closing its doors to the world at large, thereby minimizing the "universal" value of that which is celebrated in our midst. The universal value of Cobb's process theology is centering around the matters of interreligious dialogue with Buddhism, ecology and natural sciences, and the God-image and feminism, as one may justifiably presume.<sup>1</sup> But let me confine my concern here for the first item. Properly theologically speaking, the first item has its locus theologicus only within the domain of apologetic theology as it has been brought to the foreground

of theological arena in the 20th century and beyond by Paul Tillich's great work, represented by an article on "The Two Types of Philosophy of Religion" (1946), *Systematic Theology* (1951), and *Christianity and the Encounter of the World Religions* (1963). You might be intrigued by the correlative works appearing on the side of Cobb: the 1977 article on "Buddhist Emptiness and the Christian God," *A Christian Natural Theology: Based on the Thought of Alfred North Whitehead* (1965, 2nd ed., 2007), and *Beyond Dialogue: Toward a Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism* (1982).

Indeed, the newness of Cobb's theology can be found precisely here—in the threefold but integral enterprise of the systematic theologian: that is, philosophy of religion, systematic theology as apologetic theology, and interreligious dialogue, these three disciplines occurring as one venture in creative synthesis. Cobb's theology differs from Tillich's greatly because it is based on the process thought of Whitehead metaphysically; and yet it copes with the Tillichian questions to the full systematic-theologically. Hence, it may safely be said that whereas in the Cobbean answers you can find Cobb's uplifted Whiteheadian mind at work, in the Cobbean questions you can find a groaning Tillichian inquiry into the many-faceted reality of the situation down here. Let me show one interesting example of this contrast below by quoting two passages, one from Tillich and the other from Cobb:

The question of the two Absolutes can be answered only by the identification of the philosophical Absolute with the *one* element of the religious Absolute. The *Deus est esse* is the basis of all philosophy of religion.<sup>2</sup>

To be empty is to be perfectly open to what is there, whatever that may be. It is to be completely defenseless and with nothing to defend. One is thus perfectly full, for one is constituted by the dependent origination of the whole world. This process is ultimate reality, at once Nirvana and Samsara. This is quite different from the usual understanding of being!<sup>3</sup>

As is clear here, Cobb as a philosopher of religion has broken through the impasse of the Western notion of *esse* by means of the Buddhist awakening to the dependent origination of the whole world. He differentiates between the act of Emptying and the Empty One as God, thus making sense of the Whiteheadian knowledge of "creativity and God" by means of his passing over to the domain of Buddhist Emptiness and of coming back to the domain of the Christian God as a systematic theologian as apologetic theologian.

Here the Tillichian method of correlation is also broken through, because when Cobb passes over to the Buddhist domain of emptying as it empties itself, he is already freed from the Tillichian idea that what lies in the situation is just existential question(s) alone, but not answer(s). For Tillich, the Christian message is the only answer to any existential question; but for Cobb, it is rightful that one goes beyond dialogue to learn and be transformed by what lies on the side of Buddhist emptying. This does not, however, mean that one has converted to Buddhism; rather, it solely means that one has listened to the truthfulness of the Buddhist witness because one believes that whatever is truthful is to be esteemed on the Christian principle, the Truth. As a result, the newness of Cobb's theology has arrived by virtue of what Cobb calls a "mutual transformation." I think Sandra and Chris have brilliantly testified to the rich connotation of this Cobbean category in relation to the Jewish and Buddhist cases.<sup>4</sup>

## ***2. Whitehead and Cobb: Two Phases of Appropriation***

As is manifest above, Cobb's breaking through the impasse of the Western notion of *esse* as identified with God is successful due to his reliance upon two sources, Whitehead's metaphysics and Buddhism. However, at this juncture we have to acknowledge that Cobb doesn't get his impetus of doing theology in *vacuo*. I think Tillich's importance as a problem-poser is to be taken seriously.

Now, it seems to me that although Whitehead's influence over Cobb is great, the former's idea that God is the outcome of creativity presents a serious theological question. Whitehead appears as a problem-poser himself to Cobb. Cobb struggles with the Whiteheadian question, it seems to me. It is precisely in reply to this question that Cobb opts for the idea of the non-subordination of God as the religious ultimate (*qua* ultimate actuality) to

creativity as the metaphysical ultimate (*qua* ultimate reality). There would be no reality that goes beyond and above God as the source of our faith. Worship should not be regarded as subordinate to Buddhist enlightenment or manifestation, Cobb reasons. As far as the problem of non-subordination is concerned, Cobb seems to be relying upon and appropriating Whitehead's metaphysics as a logic of distinction.

However, it is manifest that Whitehead's idea that God is the primordial characterization of creativity connotes a logic of relationality between creativity and God as well. This second phase of appropriating Whitehead's conceptuality is promoted positively by Cobb in understanding Amida's locus theologicus as *Sambhogakaya* or *Upaya Dharmakaya* who is *Dharmata Dharmakaya* "for us" as characterized by wisdom and compassion.<sup>5</sup> I truly believe that Cobb's discovery of God "as" creativity as primordially characterized as the Christian-Whiteheadian theology of understanding Amida in relation to *Dharmata Dharmakaya* (Jpn., *Hossho Hosshin*) is a shining spot in the history of interreligious dialogue as a whole. On the other hand, however, I have a serious question: What about Whitehead's idea that God is primordially characterizing creativity? What exactly is the meaning of this particular locus theologicus of the Deity Whitehead espoused?

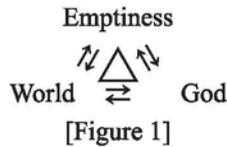
### ***3. My Own Proposal for a Whiteheadian Metaphysical Theology: Toward a Theology of God as the Principle of Loyalty in the Universe***

I believe the notion of subordination itself has to be broken through, as in the case of Barth's theology. Barth regards the Son as obedient to the Father, *der Gehorsam des Sohnes Gottes*, as central in the doctrine of reconciliation. Likewise, I can notice in Whitehead's notion of God as characterizing creativity God's loyalty to creativity. I have developed my theology of God as the principle of loyalty in the universe in an article entitled "Principle for Interpreting Christ/Buddha: Katsumi Takizawa and John B. Cobb, Jr." in the 1983 issue of *Buddhist-Christian Studies*. In it I wrote:

God's loyalty to creativity is the ultimate culmination of the relationship of "individuation" of particulars to the universal in the universe. In this sense, my use of this notion for God is an attempt at theological

appropriation or "apotheosis" of Josiah Royce's philosophy of loyalty.  
(88)

My theology of loyalty consists of three principles: (i) God is loyal to creativity/emptiness; (ii) Creativity is devoid of actuality/character; Emptiness empties itself; and (iii) God is the only one in the universe who can and actually does evoke loyalty/faith/obedience in us creatures. Let me draw a figure below in order to articulate my vision of a theology of loyalty. I have two ways of explaining this figure: logic of presupposition and logic of inclusion: <sup>6</sup>



Explanation 1:  $\rightarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow$   
 $WE = WG + GE$

The world's direct relatedness (loyalty) to emptiness is paradoxically commensurate with the world's relatedness (loyalty) to God plus God's relatedness (loyalty) to emptiness. This is the picture of the logic of presupposition.

Explanation 2:  $\rightarrow \rightarrow \rightarrow$   
 $EW = EG + GW$

Emptiness's direct relatedness (manifestation) to the world is paradoxically commensurate with emptiness's relatedness (primordial manifestation) to God plus God's relatedness (incarnation) to the world. This is the picture of the logic of inclusion.

### Conclusions:

The Cobbean idea of the Christian witness to Buddhists is a shining idea in that it initiates a new missiology: missiology is not a business promoting proselytism, but is an approach toward the intra-dialogical witness. From this viewpoint, in my 2001 book *Ryokan in a Global Age* I reiterated and renewed Cobb's idea that "Amida is Christ!" within the context of a Never-

Despising-Anyone *Bodhisattva*-figure appearing in Ryokan's *Hokke-san* (In Praise of the Hokke or Lotus Sutra) in these words:

From the viewpoint of this further and richer knowledge of the kenotic Christ as "Never-Despising-Anyone," it appears really fitting that Jesus prayed on the cross, saying "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing," precisely when some people standing by scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" (see Luke 23:34-35) For we really come to notice here that at this very moment Jesus is authentically revealing Himself, namely, as "Never-Despising-Anyone," the Savior. This is what we Christians can learn from the Buddhists who are pursuing the way of Never-Despising-Anyone, as in the case of Zen Master Ryokan.<sup>7</sup>

In this new format of Christology (which I might call the proposal for a Never-Despising-Anyone Christology) what is crucial in Whiteheadian terms is, let me emphasize, the fact the theistic figure of Never-Despising-Anyone as Christ is "envisagementally with us creatures" under the potential phase of our existence where "we are still sinners" (cf. Rom. 5:40) while, however, praying for our forgiveness and salvation that are to be realized under the phase of the ever-nascent concrescence of our existence in the future.

Thus, we can say, conversely, that what is revealed here in one and the same breath, on the other hand, is the truth that in Jesus as the Christ the Buddhist ideal of "Never-Despising-Anyone" is a naked, incarnate, "historical" actuality pure and simple. Here it is highly recommendable for us now to see, with John Cobb, that "[I]t is in Palestine, rather than in India, that history, when it is read as centering in Jesus, provides the strongest basis for believing that we are saved by grace through faith."<sup>8</sup> From my perspective of an intra-dialogical witness to Jesus as the Christ, it is important now that what Cobb says in reference to Amida (as Christ) is interchangeable with my own apologetic reference to the Never-Despising-Anyone *Bodhisattva* (as Christ) this time addressed to those in the Lotus Sutra camp. The intra-dialogical witness is a new possibility of Buddhist-

Christian apologetics.

As a novel type of the Christian witness, I began creating a Christian nembutsu: Iesous Xristos Immanuel Amen! (IXIA!). In 2006 at Salzburg I composed a hymn, "Soli Deo Gloria Amen. Iesous Xristos Immanuel Amen." Let me finish by singing it.

(Written on February 13, 2008.)

## **II. Introducing Professor Dr. David Ray Griffin**

*I delivered this speech prior to Dr. Griffin's keynote address "Ethics and the Fabric of the Universe" at the 30th Anniversary of Japan Society for Process Studies at Aomori Public College, October 24, 2008.*

I am very glad and honored to introduce Professor David Ray Griffin, professor of philosophy of religion (emeritus) at Claremont School of Theology, to my colleagues this morning, on this occasion of celebrating the 30th Anniversary of Japan Society for Process Studies at Aomori Public College, October 24-26, 2008. This is our historic moment as the Society; and we are very much privileged to have with us Professor Griffin, one of the nominees of the Nobel Peace Prize of this year 2008. The person who gave this information to me is the most esteemed teacher of David and me and many of you, Professor John B. Cobb, Jr. Dr. Cobb sent David to us today.

I believe Professor Griffin was with us in Japan at least two times in the past, first at the Second International Whitehead Conference at Nanzan University in 1984, and second at the Process and Peace Conference at Kansai Seminar House in 1987. This time Professor Griffin is our keynote speaker and the title of his address is "Ethics and the Fabric of the Universe."

As his former student, let me just refer to my personal knowledge about him which I believe none of the audience might have. In 1976 I went to Claremont School of Theology to study Process Theology with John Cobb and David Griffin; and I took David's course on Liberation Theologies as well as John Cobb's course on Whitehead's Philosophy and Its Religious

Relevance. And on the first day in his class I have learned an excellent characteristic of David's theology or philosophy of religion. Do you know what? It's the art of yelling. In the middle of the class hour we had a coffee break for about ten to fifteen minutes. After the break Professor Griffin was already waiting for students to come back to the classroom from the Broken Loaf (Cafeteria) of Claremont School of Theology; but some were sort of too late. Then our professor suggested those of us standing near him, saying, "Yell over to them, yell!" So I got the idea of yelling when some people are not really attentive.

Even though charming in his smile, David Griffin is a yelling voice full of spirit and intelligence and morality in the midst of a dark age, such as ours, threatened by 9/11 and other horrible incidents, as you know very well. In Biblical terms, he is I think obedient to Jesus' words: "Whatever I tell you in the dark, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops" (Matt.10:27).

As some of you might know, Professor Griffin is one of some 60 theologians worldwide included in the *Handbook of Christian Theologians* in 1996; and is the recipient of the Book Prize of the Scientific and Medical Network in 2000 (for *Religion and Scientific Naturalism*); and also is the winner of the Helios Foundation Award in 2006 (for *The New Pearl Harbor and The 9/11 Commission Report: Omissions and Distortions*). With regard to his editorial positions, he was editor of The SUNY Series in Constructive Postmodern Thought (1987-2004), which published 31 volumes; and is also editor of The Forum in *Process Studies*.

Among 20 or so books authored by David is *Process Theology: An Introductory Exposition* (with John B. Cobb, Jr.) (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976) which is available in Japanese through my translation (Tokyo: Shinkyō Shuppansha, 1978<sup>1</sup>, 1993<sup>2</sup>). And among his 188 articles and chapters is, you see, a very crucial Whiteheadian essay for the future "Being Bold: Anticipating a Whiteheadian Century" (*Process Studies*, 31/2, 2002, 3-15). This morning Professor Griffin, I believe, will be re-articulating his vision of a Whiteheadian boldness, which is reminiscent (as far as I am concerned) of Kitaro Nishida's last essay entitled "The Logic of Place and the Religious Worldview" in the sense that both thinkers are attentive enough to the importance of the religious worldview as it is undergirded

metaphysically in order for us to be able to hope for better days on Earth ethically or politically.

Now let us listen to his voice, not mine any more.

(Written on October 22, 2008)

### **III. A Tribute to Dr. Thomas Berry: In Dialogue with Whitehead, Basho, and Ryokan**

*This tribute to Dr. Thomas Berry was written and submitted in response to the invitation of Dr. Herman Greene, executive director of The Center for Ecozoic Studies, on September 30, 2008.*

In celebrating the legacy of Thomas Berry Herman Greene's following words, written in a critically appreciative vein, sound profoundly charming to my mind:

In the Berry community, the Universe Story is often presented as a timeline, a factual account of the history of the universe, though never only that. As I worked through these things over a period of years, I began to see there is a different way of understanding where the universe is in Thomas Berry's and Brian Swimme's Universe Story than in the timeline they present.<sup>9</sup>

In so saying Greene pays attention to the fact that the Universe Story as presented in *The Universe Story* is clearly something more than the telling of the scientific account of the universe. At the very beginning, as Greene notices, the authors separate their work from the work of science.<sup>10</sup> For they state, "The scientists have arrived at detailed accounts of the cosmos but have focused exclusively on the physical dimensions and have ignored the human dimension of the universe. [As a result] we have fractured our educational system into its scientific and its humanistic aspects, as though these were somehow independent of each other."<sup>11</sup>

What is crucial here is to differentiate between scientific or physical cosmology concerned with mechanistic facts and philosophical cosmology

concerned with the web of relationships within the universe. As Greene says, in tandem with Swimme's and Berry's vision of a new cosmology in terms of which we perceive that we live in a cosmogenetic universe, a universe with a story,

The universe cannot be understood apart from any being in the universe because all beings are expressions of the universe. This being the case the universe can be understood not only from our understandings of how beings emerged in the universe, but also from our understanding of what those particular beings that emerged late in the universe's history say about the universe. The universe is no longer 'out there' for humans, it is also 'in here' in ourselves.<sup>12</sup>

Here a new vision of the universe is presented in such a way that the emergence of particular beings is inherently inclusive of the future events as they explicate it. This vision reminds me of Whitehead's idea of "envisagement" which he explains with these words:

Finally, to sum up this train of thought, the underlying activity [i.e., creativity] , as conceived apart from the fact of realization, has three types of envisagement. These are: first, the envisagement of eternal objects; secondly, the envisagement of possibilities of value in respect to the synthesis of eternal objects; and lastly, the envisagement of the actual matter of fact which must enter into the total situation which is achievable by the addition of the future.<sup>13</sup>

The third type of envisagement is valid here. What Whitehead says by this is that there is no fact as a mere fact in the universe. Rather, it is envisaged to be entering into the total situation which is achievable only by the addition of the future events. Let me speak of this state of affairs as the fact-future-entirety linkage. Scientific cosmology deals with machanic facts; but organic cosmology deals with the holistic linkage inclusive of the actual matter of fact, the future, and the total situation of the universe.

If Berry's understanding of the Universe Story can be taken to be akin to Whitehead's idea of the third type of envisagement in some way or another,

the Story may certainly be expressed in some poetic form as well, as by Basho (1643-94) in the following haiku:

Furu ike ya!  
Kawazu tobikomu,  
Mizu no oto.

The old pond, ah! (Stage A)  
A frog jumps in: (Stage B)  
The water's sound! (Stage C)

According to D. T. Suzuki, this haiku poem was a reply Basho presented to his Zen master Buccho, when the latter asked him, saying, "What Buddhism is there even before the moss has grown greener?"<sup>14</sup> And this interchange (Jpn., *mondo*) was preceded by an ordinary greeting by Buccho, "How are you getting on these days?" and by Basho's answer, "After the recent rain the moss has grown greener than ever." Explicating the real intention implied in the haiku, Suzuki writes:

This question is tantamount to Christ saying, "I am even before Abraham was." The Zen master wants to know who this "I" is. With Christians probably the mere assertion, "I am," was enough, but in Zen the question must be asked and a more concrete answer must be forthcoming. For this is an essential part of Zen intuition. So Buccho asked, "What is there even before the world came into existence?" That is to say, "Where is God even before he uttered, 'Let there be light?'" Buccho the Zen master is not just talking about the recent rainfall and the green moss growing fresher; what he wants to know about is the cosmic landscape prior to the creation of all things. When is timeless time? Is it no more than an empty concept? If it is not, we must be able to describe it somehow for others. Basho's answer was, "A frog jumps into the water, and hear the sound!"<sup>15</sup>

At this juncture it would be to the point if I mentioned that this haiku consists of three phases, each of which is brilliantly explicating by Suzuki as

we shall see below. Incidentally, it is noticeable in this connection that Basho's oral answer at the time it was uttered did not have the first line, 'the old pond,' which he reportedly added later on to make a complete haiku of seventeen syllables. This fact shows that 'the old pond' for Basho is the ineffable Reality in its essence. Now let us see what Suzuki says:

[Stage A] Basho's old pond lies on the other side of eternity, where timeless time is. It is "old," indeed, that there is nothing more ancient. No scale of consciousness can measure it. It is whence all things come, it is the source of this world of particulars, yet in itself it shows no particularization. We come to it when we go beyond the "rainfall" and "the moss growing greener." But when this is intellectually conceived, it becomes an idea and begins to have an existence outside this world of particulars, thus making itself an object of intellection.

[Stage B] It is by intuition alone that this timelessness of the Unconscious is taken hold of. And this intuitive grasp of Reality never takes place when a world of Emptiness is assumed outside of our everyday world of the senses; for these two worlds, sensual and supersensual, are not separate but one. Therefore the poet sees into his Unconscious not through the stillness of the old pond but through the sound stirred up by the jumping frog.

[Stage C] Without the sound there is not seeing on the part of Basho into the Unconscious, in which lies the source of creative activities and upon which all true artists draw for their inspiration.<sup>16</sup>

It seems to me that stage B is the stage of concrescence (self-creative activity) by an agent: in Basho's case, a frog. And at stage C there arises a crucial question: 'Is the water's sound the sound of the frog or of the old pond?' Let me answer, saying, 'Of course, it is the sound of both at once i.e., the sound of the individual and the Trans-individual Reality.' It is an inseparable sound of unity, thus manifesting pure experience (or life-in-unity) in itself. As such, it resounds and leads us into a deep reflection upon what lies at the base of stage A.

Basho's "the water's sound," it seems to me, is correlative to Swimme's and Berry's understanding that "[T]he universe is integral in its functioning"<sup>17</sup>

and that "[I]n everything that acts, it is the universe acting." <sup>18</sup> It is what "mystical communion" is all about which both scientific inquiry and poetry have as their purpose.

Finally, let me turn to the issue of the Great Work. I quote a passage from Greene's essay under consideration:

Telling the Universe Story is very important in the Great Work. The Great Work is to re-integrate humans into the dynamics of Earth with the understanding that Earth is a communion of subjects and not a collection of objects. The Universe Story gives us language for an integral understanding of human and nature and awakens awe at the grandeur of existence. When thinking of the new cosmology, however, one should recall that Thomas has also said "ecology is a functional cosmology" and that our effort is to bring into being an ecozoic society. <sup>19</sup>

Another Japanese Zen poet Ryokan (1758-1831) practiced what Berry refers to as "ecology as a functional cosmology" to the full when he left the following tanka before departing this life on his deathbed:

Katami tote  
Nanika nokosan  
Haru wa hana  
Natsu hototogisu  
Aki wa momijiba

I would like to leave  
Something as a memory:  
Flowers in spring,  
Cuckoos in summer,  
Tinted leaves in fall <sup>20</sup>

Ryokan's memento was the entire universe as it will be unfolding of itself in manifold ways of its beauty, not his ego-centered achievements of whatever kind. He also created a tanka such as the following while being ill in bed:

Waga nochi o  
 Tasuke tamae to  
 Tanomu mi wa  
 Moto no chikai no  
 Sugata nari keru

While beseeching thee  
 For mercy after my death  
 Lo I find myself  
 Already embodying  
 The Original Vow now! <sup>21</sup>

The truth which inheres in this tanka is commensurate with the insight of Paul Tillich into the mystery of faith which he discloses with these words: "He who speaks through us is he who is spoken to." <sup>22</sup> It is only by envisaging rightly the future events, whether the future generations or our own future life, that we are able to be at one with the universe here and now. For the universe (as what Jorge Luis Nobo calls the "Creative-Receptacle, or existential matrix") is sensitive to "its own successive states of actual and potential determinateness." <sup>23</sup> Nobo states, "This sensitivity of the matrix to itself is what Whitehead referred to as an envisagement belonging to the underlying activity of the universe." <sup>24</sup>

Nobo's words of wisdom herein disclosed are, I think, compatible with Kitaro Nishida's correlative insight which he expresses in these words: "When absolute free will turns and views itself, or, in Boehme's terms, when the objectless will looks back on itself, the infinite creative development of this world is set up." <sup>25</sup> In the matter of philosophical cosmology East and West go hand in hand in the midst of mutual learning and mutual witnessing. There is no need for developing another meta-narrative to be imposed by the West on others, as Paul Knitter fears. <sup>26</sup> And I believe Dr. Thomas Berry agrees with me.

(Written on September 30, 2008)

## Notes:

- 1 See John B. Cobb Jr. and David Tracy, *Talking about God: Doing Theology in the Context of Modern Pluralism* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1983).
- 2 Paul Tillich, *Theology of Culture* (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1959), p. 22.
- 3 John B. Cobb Jr., *Beyond Dialogue: Toward a Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982), p. 90; hereafter cited as BD.
- 4 See Sandra B. Lubarsky, "John Cobb and Interreligious Dialogue" and Christopher Ives, "Skillful Means of Transformation: John Cobb's Approach to Dialogue and Pluralism."
- 5 See Cobb, BD, 106, 130.
- 6 See Tokiyuki Nobuhara, *God and Analogy: In Search of a New Possibility of Natural Theology* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1982), p. 423.
- 7 Tokiyuki Nobuhara, *Ryokan in a Global Age* (Niigata: Kokodo, 2001), p. E39; hereafter cited as RGA.
- 8 Cobb, BD, 140.
- 9 Herman Greene, "Where is the Universe in the Universe Story?," 11.
- 10 Ibid., 12.
- 11 Brian Swimme and Thomas Berry, *The Universe Story: From the Primordial Flaring Forth to the Ecozoic Era* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1992), 1.
- 12 Greene, "Where is the Universe...," 13-14.
- 13 Alfred North Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (New York: The Free Press, 1967), 105.
- 14 Daisetz T. Suzuki, *Zen and Japanese Culture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 239).
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Ibid., 241-2.
- 17 *The Universe Story*, 27.
- 18 Ibid.
- 19 Greene, op.cit., 24.
- 20 See Sanford Goldstein, Shigeo Mizuguchi, and Fujisato Kitajima, trans. *Ryokan: Selected Tanka Haiku* (Niigata: Kokodo, 2000), 116, 181. This is one of the poems Yasunari Kawabata (1899-1972) referred to in his Nobel Prize address in Stockholm in 1968 entitled "Japan, the Beautiful, and Myself."
- 21 See Nobuhara, RGA, E35.
- 22 Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Vol. 3* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1963), 192.
- 23 Jorge Luis Nobo, *Whitehead's Metaphysics of Extension and Solidarity* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986), 308.
- 24 Ibid.
- 25 Kitaro Nishida, *Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness*, trans. Valdo H. Viglielmo, Yoshinori Takeuchi and Joseph S. O'Leary (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 143.
- 26 See Greene, op.cit., 3.