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## Translating Asian Bioethics into developing global Biocultures Translational Challenges In Bioethics

Health Care Ethics and Bioethics are not just European phenomena, and they definitely are not identical with the so called Georgetown Mantra (autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence, social justice) nor were they 'invented' in the USA in the last century. The concept and practice of ethics as a respectful and caring attitude towards bios is a phenomenon in all existing cultures and can be found in all known traditions and actually has deeper roots in 2500+ Vedanta and Buddhist traditions in India, and Confucian and Taoist traditions in China. The Chandoya Upanishads first use the slogan 'tat tvam asi', i.e. this (the absolute, he reality, the other, God, Brahman) is also you (i.e. the Self, Atman, the constituent irrepressible reality). In the words of Confucius, such respectful attitude towards bios is culturally different, 'in harmony but not identical', it is 'in harmony as well as diversified' (he er bu tong).<sup>2</sup> This interrelated and interactive understanding of integrated but different bios in all forms and shapes is echoed by the Bhagavad Gita, 'If thus the Lord, the Self, is the essence

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<sup>2</sup> Zhai XM 2011 Diversified and in Harmony, but not Identical, in: Asian Bioethics Review 3(1)31-35

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from which the universe has emerged out as every item of its names and forms, there must be the Self inherent and ever present. The property, by which a thing is a thing and without which it cannot be what it is called, is its Dharma. Thus, the essential quality of sugar because of which it is sugar, without which it is not sugar, is its sweetness. Therefore, sweetness is the Dharma of sugar; in the same way heat is the Dharma of fire; light is the Dharma of sun. The Dharma of man is his essential inherent divinity, the Self in him'.<sup>3</sup> In the developing culture of global communication, conflict, and cooperation, the specific 'diversified' attitudes and understandings of respecting and caring for bios in all its forms we need to translate these and other bioethical traditions, concepts and practices from one cultural biotope to the other one, all of which are moving towards new forms of conflict and/or cooperation in the developing 21st century. Actually, diversity in the universe of bios and also in human visions, and acts can be seen as natural richness, rather than a deficiency, as expressed in the Hellenistic concept of the 'logos spematikos'.

### **Asian ethics is “bio-ethics” – practical, natural, non-intellectual**

Asian ethics is closely related to an integrative and integrating understanding of bios, life. Also, schools of (bio-) ethics in Hindu, Buddhist, Confucian, and Daoist traditions have influenced each other and intertwined over the millennia, integrating and interacting their own ways. The basic classical Hindu and Buddhist understanding of bios is that 'all life is suffering (dukkha)'. Dukkha is one of the 'four noble' insights: 'cause of craving (tanha), end of suffering, getting rid of craving, method to use in overcoming suffering', which is an eightfold path: '(1) right view: proper knowledge about illness, how a person becomes ill, endures illness and is released from illness; (2) right aspiration: prepare to renounce attachment to the world; (3) right speech: must not lie, slander; (4) right action: abstain from taking life; (5) right livelihood: put away wrong livelihood; (6) right effort: prevent potential evil from arising and get rid of evil; (7) right mindfulness: avoid and overcome craving and dejection; (8) right concentration: move toward purity of mind and equanimity'<sup>4</sup>.

The integrated message of 'tat tvam asi', i.e. 'this is also you'- according to Kishore results in the following connotations, which would be an excellent list to be discussed in the ethics of bios today everywhere in the world: '1. There is no difference between cause and effect, subject and object, means and ends. – 2. Treat

<sup>3</sup> Chinmayananda S 2013 *The Art of Man Making, I: Talks on the Bhavagad-gita*, Mumbai:Chinmaya Prakashan, 512f

<sup>4</sup> Tai MC 2008 *The Way of Asian Bioethics*. Princeton Intern Publishing, p. 100f

others as you would like to be treated by others. – 3. Whatever you do, there will be no change to the fundamental level. – 4. You would always survive as a constituent of the universe. – 5. Universe is the expression of holism, synergism, and complementarity. – 6. Nothing can be added or subtracted to the universe. – 7. Science only discovers, it cannot create anything new. – 8. Mortality and immortality are sheer human perceptions. – 9. Everything in Nature is divine. – 10. There is nothing superior or inferior in the Nature. Concept of Homo Sapiens as higher is being purely subjective'.<sup>5</sup>

The special properties of the human species bios, find their expression in the Dharma of humans, i.e. in human virtues, such as love (contemplating and feeling each other's pain and distress as one's own, readiness to sacrifice for others, closeness to all human beings regardless of their regional, cultural or religious affiliation or social, moral or intellectual capability), trust (absence of suspicion about the intention of others, obligation of all human beings not to betray hopes and expectations of fellow humans), righteousness (capacity to distinguish between right and wrong), truthfulness (integration between mind and talk breeding honesty), forgiveness (recognizing that all humans are fallible and commit non-disagreeable acts), tolerance (reviewing one's own concepts and understanding an offender's position), sacrifice (helping others at the cost of one's own comfort, security and assets), beneficence (protecting and promoting the interests of others), compassion (working hard to alleviate the suffering of others), reverence (accepting wisdom from the blessed and sacred, bestowing enlightenment)<sup>6</sup>.

Kishore translates the human Dharma into the following principles for bioethics: '1. There is inherent dignity in every object of Nature. – 2. All fellow beings, other forms of life and objects are worthy of respect. – 3. Protecting the environment means protecting yourself. – 4. It is the duty of all human beings to help those who are in need. – 5. In the event of conflict, the interest of the weaker shall prevail over the stronger. – 6. Man's existence is essentially holistic and it is therefore mandatory on his part to protect nature. - 7. Human virtues are not dependent on religious, cultural, social, economic or political milieu. They are intrinsic human traits, having universal presence and application, capable of addressing the challenge emerging out of advancing biotechnology. - 8. While interacting with fellow beings or an object of Nature the voice of the divine Self (tat) is the best guide to differentiate between right and wrong. - 9. The modern concepts of autonomy, nonmaleficence, beneficence and justice being treated as foundations of Bioethics are only partial reflections of human virtues of Dharma. Bioethics is rooted in much wider

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<sup>5</sup> Kishore RR 2015 [President, Indian Society for Health Law and Ethics] written communication of 08-16-2015

<sup>6</sup> Kishore RR 2015, l.c.

foundations. Love, compassion, and sacrifice provide the most sacred and effective tools to heal the sufferer. – 10. The easiest way to make life meaningful and divine is to care for the welfare of others as reflected in the following thoughts “May all be happy; may all be free of disease; may all look for the good of others; may no one suffer” (prayer composed by Adi Sankara. Similarly, the expression of altruism and human solidarity are deeply entrenched in Indian cultural thought as a duty to donate. In the Holy Gita which is equivalent to the Holy Bible or Quran, the donation has been described as a pious act in the following verse: “Donation at the appropriate place and time to a needy person without expectation of anything in return is a pious human duty” (verse 20, chapter 17, Holy Gita).<sup>7</sup>

In Confucian ethics everything is based on the bios of the family. ‘Filial piety’ is the most basic and encompassing virtue for all persons: my individual body comes from my parents, neighborhood and nation are a big family around the emperor, the Son of Heaven. ‘Tao’ is the way, the one-and-only truly and virtuous natural way of life, ‘eternal, spontaneous, nameless, and indescribable’: ‘when this Tao is possessed by an individual, it becomes his character or virtue (te) ... , as the way of life, it denotes simplicity, spontaneity, tranquility, and most important of all, non-action. Non action (wu-wei) is not literally inactivity but rather taking no action that is contrary to Nature. In other words, we must let nature take its own course without an attempt to change it’. Michael Tai refers to Confucius’ Analects (27:8) ‘A man of humanity will never seek to live at the expense of injuring humanity, He would rather sacrifice his life in order to realize humanity’<sup>8</sup>. A truly bio-ethical report of a most extreme model of caring for others – other lives – is the narrative that Buddha in one of his former lives offered and sacrificed himself as food to a hungry tigress and her dozen hungry cubs. If we want to oversimplify, we may say, that while European conceptual and cultural orientation basically is built on the model of salvation history, moving from here to there, from this world to another better one; Asian reasoning orients itself on the returning natural cycles of bios and related challenges.

## Caring for health – who is a good doctor?

Caring for health and for a bios in harmony is a social, collective, and individual tasks. This is expressed by the most famous quote of Confucian physician Sun Simiao of the Tang Dynasty<sup>9</sup>: ‘A superior doctor takes care of the state, an average

<sup>7</sup> Kishore, l.c.

<sup>8</sup> Tai, l.c.97-99

<sup>9</sup> Sun Simiao [7.century] ‘The most important Prescriptions worth 1000 Pieces of Gold’, Ni Peimin 1999 Confucian Virtues and Personal Health, in: Confucian Bioethics, Fan R ed., Kluwer, p. 31.

doctor takes care of the person, and an inferior doctor takes care of the disease'. Here, the general health of the society including reduction of conflict and support of harmony and cooperation, also specific educational and political measures in public health come first, are the prime obligation of the 'good doctor' and define him or her. The Imperial Letters publicized yearly by the Emperor and widely distributed and read everywhere routinely had two basic topics of advice for [a] harmonious and healthy living by social conflict management and healthy lifestyle and [b] for best agricultural practices. The more technical support of individual and family health is medical and nutritional, given by the 'average doctor'; this includes primarily nutrition-and-lifestyle and the recommendation and prescription of anti-aging remedies such as ginseng; the average doctor was paid in form of a retainer regularly as long as the patient was healthy and well. In Sun Simiao's model the 'inferior doctors' are those, which we are concerned with body repair such as car mechanics, such as doctors acting alike car mechanics and engineers in hospitals and in private practices of today. These would be the 'doctors' the so-called Georgetown Mantra has been developed for and been confused with true bio-ethics. All there type of doctors are presented on a virtue-and-skill base and trained in a 'rule of man', not in a 'rule of law', which only recently during the last 20 years slowly has become a new feature in formerly Confucian societies.

Naturally, the superior physician and the good physician are concerned about a wide variety of health matters in caring for health and harmony: social harmony in family and neighborhood, healthy living within a healthy environment and housing according to the seasons, good individual healthy lifestyle and nutrition, avoidance of stress and temper, mental, special psychological and physical antiaging measures as a primary tool for individuals prior and above repairs of bodily or mental functions. Prevention and anti-aging played and still play an important role in Chinese medicine, as this quote by a legendary emperor demonstrates: 'The sages did not wait until the sickness is there to cure the sickness, they cure it before it takes place ... If one only waits until the sickness is there and then uses medicine to cure it, that is no different from waiting until one is thirsty and then starting to dig a well'.<sup>10</sup> How are modern health care systems around the world doing when measured against such an ancient bioethical strategy? If we want to oversimplify, we may say, that Asian traditions in medical ethics have focused on keeping healthy, while Western medical practice of today has developed into a most successful medical repair practice.

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<sup>10</sup> Quoted by Ni Peimin, lc.

Of course, physicians in the East as in the West were bound by codes of conduct, well related to Codes of Conduct in similar professions important for the safety and harmony of society, such as the four Western knightly virtues of prudence, fortitude, temperance, and justice, which together with the three Christian virtues of faith, Hope and love made the seven core virtues of the Christian knight and crusaders. Confucian doctor Sun Simiao holds: 'A Great Physician should not pay attention to status, wealth or age; neither should he question whether the particular person is attractive or unattractive, whether he is an enemy or friend, whether he is a Chinese or a foreigner, or finally, whether he is uneducated or educated. He should meet everyone on equal grounds. He should always act as if he were thinking of his close relatives'.<sup>11</sup> This matches very well with the professional virtue standard of Hippocrates' Oath as the conceptual foundation of Western medicine: 'Into whatever houses I go, I will do so only for the benefit of the sick, avoiding all willful injustice and harm, in particular all forms of sexual relationship with women, also with men, free men and slaves'.<sup>12</sup> Protection of patient's privacy and the requirement for highest professional standards in both ethics and expertise were and are central issues in physician's ethics. An interesting difference is the close and stabilizing connection made by Simiao to classical Confucian family ethics.

### **Interaction expert – lay person [doctor – patient]**

We find close interaction and integration between virtues of the expert and virtues of the customer, both relating to each other and requesting the other side to do her part. Different to modern medical education, classical Chinese education starts with a preclinical 'philosophicum', while we start with a preclinical 'physicum'. While modern patient's ethics starts with 'informed consent', classical Asian patient's advice focuses on compliance and self-management of health matters. Here are the first requirements of two lists of ten interactive rules for doctors and patients: For the doctor 'commitment to humaneness ... bring help to the people and do good ... be well versed in Confucian teachings as they are of great help all the time ... knowing to read the pulse', thereafter only expertise in diagnosis and therapy disease and finally 'prefer humanness and honesty over making money, as there are differences between the poor and the rich but only form of medication'. This list is matched by a list for patients: 'choose "enlightened" (ming-i) physicians, who are

<sup>11</sup> Quoted from Simiao's book 'On the Absolute Sincerity of Great Physicians', by Qiu Renzong 1988 *Medicine, the Art of Humanness*, in: *J Medicine and Philosophy* 13(2)277-300.

<sup>12</sup> Quoted in Sass HM 1999 *Medizin und Ethik*, 352.

careful because life and death follow very closely each other ... be compliant in taking medications ... start therapy early', also stress reduction and appropriate nutrition and lifestyle, finally ... 'don't be scared to spend money .. I ask you what is more important Life or material goods?'<sup>13</sup>

As far as patient's health care ethics is concerned, we have the Western dietetics tradition of the so-called six res non naturales of Hippocrates and Galenus 'light and air [aer], eating and drinking [cibus and potes], movement and relaxation [motus et quies], sleep and alertness [somnus et vigilia], digestion and hygiene [secretum et excreta], control of sex and other drives [affectus animi]. But such an advice mostly had been esoteric and not widely promoted by the state or the medical profession<sup>14</sup>. Only in the Age of Reason we had also in health care a sort of applied enlightenment, such as popular handbooks for the lay people, many articles in the Encyclopedie of Diderot and d'Alembert, the book by Methodist Bishop Wesley<sup>15</sup> to his followers. Contemporary repair medicine and public health has widely forgotten these dietetics virtues and rules which up to recently have such a great influence in Asian health care. While repair medicine is progressing everywhere in the world, modern cyberspace-based health literacy services could be made available in all languages with easy to understand terminology; but they are not flourishing and that might be part of the modern culture and not just a deficiency in public health programs and the total absence of 'excellent doctors' as described by Sun Simiao.

The Indian Vedanta tradition asks that I myself find inner balance and my own Self to be happy, even when sick or poor or uncomfortable; the same is true for the social bios of society: 'Without this inward balance and the readiness to act well in the world outside, how can an individual ever successfully face his own problems in life? And when each individual fails to face the challenges outside him, since the community is made up of individuals, the community will not be able to face its own or the nations problems'. However, there are experts and doctors available to help those who struggle with disease, despair, and phobia: 'When one is ill,

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<sup>13</sup> Quoted in Sass HM ed 1999, l.c. 352-353.

<sup>14</sup> Friedrich Hoffmann, the founder of the Medical School in Halle an der Saale, Jahr's home town, summarized those rules in 1700, but very interestingly adds as a 7<sup>th</sup> point a warning caution against 'doctors': '1. Stay away from everything which is unusual! -2. Be careful with changes as routine often becomes our second nature! - 3. Be happy and balanced, that is the best remedy! - 4. Stay in clean air, well-tempered, as long as possible! - 5. Buy the best nutrition which goes easily in and out of the body! - 6. Choose foods according to your bodily activity and relaxation! - 7. When you love to be healthy, run away from physicians and from all drugs!' The added 7<sup>th</sup> rule is already a reflex on a growing paternalism of experts over a harmony of life which in most situations can be and should be achieved by the individual person herself or himself; cf. Mueller IW, 1991, *Iatrogene Theorie und aerztliche Praxis. Historische Forschungen...*, Stuttgart, 260.

<sup>15</sup> John Wesley 1791 *Primitive Physick*, and other medical publications by Bishop Wesley; cf. Maddox RL 2007 *John Wesley on Holistic Medicine*, in: *Methodist History*, 46(1):4-33 [excerpts from 'Primitive Physick' pp.27-33].

apparently seriously, to one's own well-wishers and relations, it is a great and tragic problem. But the doctor who can diagnose the disease properly and knows the medicine which is available in plenty in the local market, then to that physician it is no more a problem.. Thus life is a problem only when we know not how to meet life's challenges around us.. IN the Bhagavad-gita, the man-making science of the Upanishads is brought out of the forests to serve us where we are suffering – in the marketplace, in the slum huts, in the drawing rooms, in the commune and at the barricades!<sup>16</sup>

## Virtues, principles, laws, and rules

The all-embracing and predominant rule in old Vedic reasoning is 'tat tvam asi' – 'this is also you'<sup>17</sup>, i.e. the unseen worlds and the worlds of plants, animals, lands, suffering and happiness are also me, a part of me and I am a part of them; we can interpret this Hindu and Buddhist commitment to non-duality as the most inclusive and integrating vision of 'bioethics'. This does not mean, that 'one size fits all', people have a different and very personal 'dharma' and everyone has his or her own fate. Diversity among forms of life, and in particular also among humans is not a strange concept in harmony-oriented Asian thought: we are 'diversified, but not identical'<sup>18</sup> says Confucius. This comes close to the insight of enlightened European Rabbi Moses Mendelsohn: 'Brethren, if you want true peacefulness in God, let us not lie about consensus when plurality seemed to have been the plan and the goal of providence. Non one among us reasons and feels precisely the same way the fellow human does. Why do we hide from each other in masquerades in the most important issues of our lives, as God not without reason has given each of us his/her own image and face'.<sup>19</sup> Very close to the Jewish philosopher Mendelsohn is the Muslim lawyer and scholar Abu Hanifa, founder of the influential Muslim Hanafi Law School, in quoting the Prophet Mohamed, who recommended debate to solve social and interreligious controversies, rather than killings and tortures as we face it today from and among self-righteous followers of the prophet: 'Differences of opinion in the congregation must be considered as a special grace of Allah'. As we

<sup>16</sup> Chinmayananda, l.c., 14f

<sup>17</sup> Raphael, Ed 1992 The pathway of non-duality, Advaitavada: an approach to some key-points of Gaudapada's Asparšavāda and Śaṅkara's Advaita Vedanta by means of a series of questions answered by an Asparśin. Iia: Philosophy Series. Motilal Banarsidass

<sup>18</sup> Confucius 'Lun Yu' 13:23; quoted and applied to the 21st century intercultural scene by Zhai XM 2011 Diversified but not identical. Harmonizing International Guidelines with Cultural Values and National Traditions, in: Asian Bioethics Review 3(1)31-35

<sup>19</sup> Mendelsohn M 1819 'Jerusalem oder über religiöse Macht und Judentum' Ofen: Burian, p. 201.



have already different faces, hair, color of skin, bodies and brains, why should our cultures and societies be uniform as those of the bees and ants probably are. If we have different opinions, we have to talk! World history shows us quite a number of successful and relatively long sustained cultures and communities from which we can learn.

There are two levels of dharma in humans: Sadharana Dharma applies to everyone and requests truthfulness, no-harm, generosity, but there is also the personal Svadharma Dharma which defines my class, gender, age, personal fate; Dharma governs the 'elan vital', it is the force of all life, individual and collective. Originally a Sanskrit word, meaning the pattern and destiny of 'living right' is not only a Buddhist maxim, but also known in the Confucian traditions of self-responsibility and specific situational responsibility in the private and professional setting. Mencius said: 'Between father and son, there should be affection, between ruler and minister, there should be righteousness, between husband and wife there should be attention in their separate functions, between old and young, there should be a proper order, and between friends there should be faithfulness'.<sup>20</sup>

We can learn more about the various Asian approaches to bios, ethics and in particular the ethics and care for health, when looking at various sets of virtues and principles in comparison with the so-called Georgetown mantra 'autonomy, non-maleficence, beneficence, social justice' as based on the 1978 Belmont Report's principles 'respect for persons, beneficence, justice'<sup>21</sup> and the EU set of values 'autonomy, dignity, integrity, vulnerability'<sup>22</sup>. Kishore summarizes from the Indian perspective the following virtues which constitute 'dharma': love, trust, righteousness, compassion, tolerance, fairness, forgiveness, beneficence, sacrifice, and concern for the weak'. Out of these character traits of a truly educated and cultured person derive the moral values of 'justice, equality, autonomy, benignancy, altruism, human solidarity, respect for the dead, respect for other forms of life, and preservation of life'<sup>23</sup>.- Tai focuses on a set of five principles 'rooted in Asian culture': 'ahimsa or nonmaleficence, compassion, respect, righteousness, dharma or responsibility'<sup>24</sup>. Dharma, as already mentioned, a sanskrit word meaning the pattern and destiny of 'living right' is not only a Buddhist maxim, but also known

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<sup>20</sup> Cf Sass HM 2007 Bioethics and Biopolitics, Xian: press.fmmu.sn.cn, 201

<sup>21</sup> Belmont Report 1979, Ethical Principles and Guidelines for the Protection of Human Subjects of Research, Federal Register 44 (76): 23191–7

<sup>22</sup> Rendtorff JD 2002 Basic Ethical Principles in European Bioethics and Biolaw, in: *Medicine, Health Care and Philosophy* 5(3):235-244

<sup>23</sup> Kishore RR 2003 End of Life Issues and Moral Certainty. A Discovery through Hinduism, in: *Eubios Asian and Intern Journal* 13:210-213

<sup>24</sup> Tai, l.c.,187ff

in Confucian traditions of self-responsibility and specific situational responsibility in the private and professional setting. Mencius said: ‘Between father and son, there should be affection, between ruler and minister, there should be righteousness, between husband and wife there should be attention in their separate functions, between old and young, there should be a proper order, and between friends there should be faithfulness’<sup>25</sup>.

Instead of a conclusion

What are the differences in Western and Eastern Bio-Ethics? Tai in a foundational article on ‘An Asian Perspective of Western and Eastern Principles in a Globalized Bioethics’ discusses the difference between ‘foundational values’ and ‘derivate applications’ of those values which might be different in different cultures: ‘Universality pertains exclusively to foundational values, not to derivate applications. Therefore, respect for individual autonomy as we know it in the Western European tradition, is a good bioethics and the familial collective approach in decision-making in the East, especially in Hindu-Chinese cultures, should be considered good ... Global bioethics has to be based on the respect for the richness of human cultures and the fragility of the physical and social environments that sustain human life’<sup>26</sup>. Maybe they both and all other concrete approaches to the ethics of bios are just derivates from major very simple modes of reasoned respect and reasoned practice.

In Francesco Assisi’s ‘Laudes Creaturarum’ of 1224 we read a praise of the cosmos as the all enfaming bios. ‘All praise is Yours, all glory, all honor, and all blessing. To You, alone, Most High, do they belong. No mortal lips are worthy to pronounce Your name. Be praised, my Lord, through all Your creatures, especially through my lord Brother Sun, who brings the day; and You give light through him. And he is beautiful and radiant in all his splendor! Of You, Most High, he bears the likeness. Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Moon and the stars; in the heavens You have

<sup>25</sup> Mencius, in: *The Chinese Classics*, ed Legge J 1895, NY: Oxford U Press, vol 2. – At a recent conference of the Guangdong Life Culture Association 2014, I modified Mencius’ quest for our times this way: ‘: ‘Between partners on Alibaba and Amazon platforms there should be mutual respect; between internet friends on social sites there should be fairness and trust; between colleagues in professional cyberspace sites there should be scientific integrity; between neighbors in hutongs and modern high-rise there should be neighborly solidarity, respect and mutual aid; between providers and users of e-health information sites there should be clear terminology for the lay users and reliable and unbiased and verifiable consultation by the providers; between doctor and patient there should be adequate compassion and care, and an suitable balance between respect for the doctor’s responsibility and for the patient’s autonomy, between teacher and student there should be indoctrination-free and fact-based information and critical and value-based discourse; between different ethnic or religions, communities in society there should be mutual respect, mutual aid and tolerance; between provinces of a state there should be competition in respect of national laws and cultures; between sovereign states there should be respect for human and civil rights; between states, communities, corporations and individuals there should be cooperation and competition in protecting and cultivating natural and cultural environments habitats’.

<sup>26</sup> Tai 2011, in: *Asian Bioethics Review* 3(1)28

made them bright, precious and beautiful. Be praised, my Lord, through Brothers Wind and Air, and clouds and storms, and all the weather, through which You give Your creatures sustenance. Be praised, my Lord, through Sister Water; she is very useful, and humble, and precious, and pure. Be praised, my Lord, through Brother Fire, through whom You brighten the night. He is beautiful and cheerful, and powerful and strong. Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Mother Earth, who feeds us and rules us, and produces various fruits with colored flowers and herbs. Be praised, my Lord, through those who forgive for love of You; through those who endure sickness and trial. Happy those who endure in peace, for by You, Most High, they will be crowned. Be praised, my Lord, through our sister Bodily Death, from whose embrace no living person can escape. Woe to those who die in mortal sin! Happy those she finds doing Your most holy will. The second death can do no harm to them. Praise and bless my Lord, and give thanks, and serve Him with great humility’.

The 2700 year old Vedic reminder ‘tat tvam asi’ from the Chandogya Upanishads is just the same as Fritz Jahr’s 1926 ‘Respect every living being on principle as an end itself and treat it, if possible, as such’. And is Jesus, who grow up in the tradition of Mosaic law, minimal answer ‘honor your God and do good to your neighbor’ not just one millimeter away from the Confucian ‘filial piety’ or from following the ‘wuwei’ natural non-extreme flow of good action? Mosaic Law already had the overreaching quest for ‘pekuach nefesh’, i.e. saving of life when breaking the Sabbath regulations.<sup>27</sup> - Chinese leader Deng Xiao Peng once said ‘it does not matter, whether the cat is white or black, important is that she catches mice’; I think that Buddha, Confucius, and Jesus very well could agree with Deng on recognizing the moral and cultural result of human ethics towards bios, whatever narrative supports such actions. Would we then rather concentrate on reviewing the various integrations of our basic 8-C human species biological properties - Communication and Cooperation, Competence and Compassion, Calculation and Contemplation, Competition and Cultivation<sup>28</sup> – and recognize theories and principles as specific

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<sup>27</sup> If a child or even only a dog falls into the water on a Sabbath, the rules of honoring God’s request of not working on Sabbaths must be broken. An oral Muslim tradition hadith refers to a prostitute who used her leather shoe to fill water in and allowed a thirty cat to drink; the Prophet said ‘all of her sins were forgiven because of her compassion’.

<sup>28</sup> Sass HM 2014 What is Bios and how to Protect and Promote its Cultivation? In: The International Symposium on Bioculturology 2014, Guangdong Life Culture Association, Dongguan 2014-11-7/8, p. 1-12; see also my paper ‘Integrating Bioethics in the New Epoch’, at 13<sup>th</sup> Losinj Days of Bioethics, May 2014.- Contemporary Confucian scholars in studying Mencius have proposed an empirical bioethical biocultural model, such as the one by Hershock PD 2012 *Valuing Diversity*. Buddhist Reflection on realizing a more equitable global Future. Suny Press, p. 58: ‘What distinguishes human nature from animal nature is that human beings are disposed to enchant the ordinary, turning eating into cuisine; transforming warning cries and howls of pain into poetry and song; deepening and expanding uterine groupings into the growing of families, communities and nations; and transmuted

forms of narratives, stabilizing orientational landmarks and conceptual positioning systems in the support of the cultivation, application, and implementation of those naturally given 8 C's in various ways. There are cats of different color and breed and there are religions and ideologies of different contents and concepts, priorities and liturgies; what counts is that cats catch mice and that humans and human cultures 'do good', 'do right', 'do not harm', 'respect life', - and that always has been done in many different ways via our natural biological 'constitutive relational dynamics' and supported by different narratives, theories, reciprocities, and incentives. But given the dynamics of bios, it cannot be excluded that the future of bioethics in Asia and everywhere will be an amorphous uncharacteristic and unreasoned 'mixture of everything'<sup>29</sup>.

A classical Confucian biocultural narrative on the Great Harmony of cosmological and individual and communal bios can and should be translated into the modern world of bioethics and provide guidance for the 21st century and beyond <sup>30</sup>: 'Heaven is my father and Earth is my mother, and even such a small creature as I finds an intimate place in their midst. Therefore that which fills the universe I regard as my body and that which directs the universe I consider as my nature. All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions. - The great ruler (the Emperor) is the eldest son of my parents (Heaven and Earth), and the great ministers are his stewards. Respect the aged; this is the way to treat them as elders should be treated. Show deep love toward the orphaned and the weak, this is the way to treat them as the young should be treated. The sage identifies his character with that of Heaven and Earth, and the worthy is the most outstanding man. Even those who are tired, infirm, crippled, or sick, those who have no brothers or children, wives or husbands, are all my brothers who are in distress and have no one to turn to. -When the time comes, to keep him from harm, this is the care of a son. To rejoice in Heaven and to have no anxiety, this is filial piety at its purest. - He who disobeys (the rule of bios) violates virtue. He who destroys humanity is a robber. He who promotes evil lacks (ethical) capacity. But he, who puts his moral

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procreative sex into romantic love and spiritual merger. Humans differ distinctively from other animals in respect of their capacities-for and apparent commitment-to qualitatively transforming every day. From a Confucian perspective, our distinctively human nature is to express remarkably strong propensities for appreciating – that is, progressively enriching and being enriched – our constitutive relational dynamics'.

<sup>29</sup> Under discussion are issues of family consent or decision making, paternalism vs patient's of family's wishes, conflict between public health and patient care, cf. Nie JB et al. 2015 Medical Professionalism in China and the US, in: *J Clinical Ethics* 26(1)48-60.

<sup>30</sup> Chang Tsai (1020-1077) *The Western Inscription*, in: *A Source in Chinese Philosophy*, Chan WT ed., Princeton University Press, p. 497-498, 1972; for the role of ritual in 'recovering' the original property of the 'Great Harmony' of bios in Confucian reasoning cf. Chow KW 1993 *Ritual, Cosmology and Ontology*, in: *Philosophy East and West* 43(2)201-228.

nature into practice and brings his physical existence into complete fulfillment, can match (Heaven and Earth). - One who knows the rules of transformation will skillfully carry forward the undertakings (of Heaven and Earth), and one who penetrates spirit to the highest degree will skillfully carry out their will. - Do nothing shameful in the recesses of your own house and thus bring no dishonor to them. Preserve your mind and nourish your nature and thus (serve them) with untiring effort. - Wealth, honor, blessing, and benefits are meant for the enrichment of my life, while poverty, humble station, and sorrow are meant to help me to fulfillment. - In life I follow and serve (Heaven and Earth); in death I will be at peace.'

Does this Confucian challenge to the harmonious integration of the cosmological and individual bios resonate with the 'Laudes Creaturarum' of Francesco Assisi and come close to the prayer of Jesus: 'Our Father in Heavens, respected be your Name. Your Kingdom come, your Will be done, on Earth as in Heavens. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those, who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil. For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.'<sup>31</sup>

In both prayers, we first have the overall general picture and framework of the world of bios, thereafter the challenges to human and social bios, i.e. to the individual human being to integrate well into that integrated harmony of bios by and not acting against the harmony of bios. Interestingly, the family-oriented Confucian tradition meditates from an individual perspective of the 'I', while the Western person-and-individuality based point of view uses the collective 'We' of the community. Do we see the European model of the 'logos spermatikos' and the Confucian 'in harmony but not identical' working been approved and confirmed in challenging the practice and theory of integrated and integrating practical ethics of bios? How do we translate these and other traditions into the future bios of our individual, social, and environmental bios and its cultures? Are they still alive and vital or will they transform into other visions and tools? It will depend on us as individuals, communities and cultures to use those old orientational tools and translate them into our own individual, social and cultural biotopes.

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<sup>31</sup> Matthew 6:9

Hans-Martin Sass

## Translacijski izazovi u bioetici<sup>32</sup>

### Prevođenje azijske bioetike u razvijanje globalne biokulture

Etika zdravstvene skrbi i bioetika nisu samo europski fenomeni, te one definitivno nisu identične s takozvanom Georgetown mantrom (autonomija, neškodljivost, dobročinstvo, socijalna pravednost) niti su 'izumljene' u SAD-u u prošlom stoljeću. Koncept i praksa etike kao stava punog poštovanja i brižnosti prema biosu jest fenomen u svim postojećim kulturama i može biti pronađen u svim poznatim tradicijama te zapravo ima dublje korijene u 2500+ Vedanti i budističkoj tradiciji u Indiji, odnosno konfucijanskoj i taoističkoj tradiciji u Kini. Chandoya Upanishade prvi put koriste slogan 'tat tvam asi', tj. ovo (apsolut, realnost, drugo, Bog, Brahman) jest također ti (tj. Sebstvo, Atman, konstituirajuća neukrotiva realnost). Konfucijevim riječima, takav stav pun poštovanja prema biosu je kulturalno različit, "u harmoniji, ali ne identičan", on je "jednako u harmoniji kao što je raznolik" (he er bu tong).<sup>33</sup> Ovo međupovezano i interaktivno razumijevanje integriranog ali raznolikog biosa u svim njegovim formama i oblicima odjekuje u Bhagavad Giti: "Ako dakle Gospod, Jastvo, jest suština iz koje je svemir nastao kao svaki predmet njegovih imena i oblika, mora biti Sebstvo inherentno i uvijek prisutno... Svojstvo po kojemu je stvar stvar i bez koje ne može biti ono čime se naziva jest njegova Dharma. Stoga bitna kvaliteta šećera, zbog čega jest šećer, a bez koje nije šećer, jest njegova slatkoća. Dakle, slatkoća je Dharma šećera; na isti način na koji je toplina Dharma vatre; svjetlo je Dharma Sunca. Dharma čovjeka je njemu esencijalno svojstvena božanstvenost, Sebstvo u njemu".<sup>34</sup> U razvijajućoj kulturi globalnih komunikacija, konflikata i kooperacije, specifičnih "raznolikih" stavova i razumijevanja poštovanja biosa u svim njegovim formama i oblicima, mi moramo prevesti te i ostale bioetičke tradicije, pojmove i prakse s jednog kulturalnog biotopa na drugi, od kojih se svi kreću prema novim oblicima konflikta i/ili kooperacije u razvijajućem 21. stoljeću. Zapravo, raznolikost u univerzumu biosa i u ljudskim vizijama i činovima može biti viđena kao prirodno bogatstvo, radije negoli manjkavost, kao što je izraženo u helenističkom konceptu 'logosa spematikosa'.

<sup>32</sup> Ranija verzija prezentirana je na međunarodnoj konferenciji na Sveučilištu u Rijeci u lipnju 2015. Zahvalno priznajem potporu koju je ovome radu dala Hrvatska zaklada za znanost pod projektom 7853 – "Europska bioetika na djelu / EuroBioAct", Sveučilišta u Rijeci, projektni broj 844-10-1344 – "Korijeni bioetike – američki i europski doprinosi konstrukciji jedinstvene povijesti". Ovaj članak daje pregled iz europske perspektive milenijnski stare bioetičke tradicije azijskih kultura te prevodi pojmove i stavove u razvijajući i integrirajući model globalnog bioetičkog diskursa. Zahvalno upućujem na razgovore sa svojim kolegama i prijateljima R. R. Kishoreom, Michaelom Chengtek Taiem i Xiaomeijem Zhajem u pripremanju ovog članka.

<sup>33</sup> Zhai XM 2011 Diversified and in Harmony, but not Identical, in: Asian Bioethics Review 3(1)31-35

<sup>34</sup> Chinmayananda S 2013 The Art of Man Making, I: Talks on the Bhavagad-gita, Mumbai:Chinmaya Prakashan, 512f