

## **A Chinese Christian: the Transformation of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Catholic Church in John C. H. Wu's Perspective<sup>1</sup>**

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### 一位中國基督徒 —— 從吳經熊先生的觀點 看 20 世紀天主教教會的轉變

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[ABSTRACT] John Ching Hsiung Wu (吳經熊, 1899-1986), undoubtedly was a prominent figure in the field of Law, Philosophy, translation and Christianity in 20<sup>th</sup> Century China. His experience, writings and understanding of the Catholic faith since his encounter of St. Thérèse of Lisieux open a way for Chinese to connect the faith with Chinese culture. With his East-West knowledge, his literature presents in the Chinese classics an elegant manner. Many books were translated, including the psalms and the New Testament, which are surprisingly outstanding in terms of presenting Christianity in a true Chinese manner. His way of being a “Chinese Christian” serves as a

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model for both preserving traditional Chinese values and philosophy, yet interweaving it with the Christian faith. After he returned and settled in Taiwan in 1966, he dedicated his life to realizing his idea of a “Cultural Renaissance” (文化復興), in which he envisioned it as the ultimate goal to achieve in order to transform Eastern and Western Society. He foresees that Christianity can properly integrate both Eastern and Western culture. Yet both parties must search for and strengthen their own roots before true dialogue and integration can take place. This article attempts to understand how he contributed to his idea of a Cultural Renaissance, by means of his principles, selected books and articles.

## Introduction

China had been under a predominating colonial expansion since the Opium War in the Qing Dynasty. On October 24, 1844, the treaty of Whampoa was signed on the corvette L'Archimede between France and China.<sup>3</sup> From that time Christianity has often been associated with imperialism in the eyes of the Chinese. Missionaries and church-related activities were protected by the foreign powers who signed treaties with the Qing government. In addition to this, the delay of inculturation in 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century China has complicated the situation, which caused accumulating resentment among those who were politically persecuted by imperialism. It could be well said that the image of imperialism with Christianity was firmly associated. Gradually this created another extreme that Nationalism began to fight back against the colonial powers, especially in China and Asia.

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<sup>3</sup> Jean-Pierre Charbonnier, *Christians in China A.D. 600 to 2000*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2007. p. 319.

A number of Chinese Christians, on the other hand, came out and supported the church. To name just a few: intellectuals like Ma Xiangbo (馬相伯), Lu Bohung (陸伯鴻) and Father Lou Tseng Tsiang (陸徵祥), etc., together tried their best to express the Christian faith to Chinese intellectuals as best they could. Examples are Ma Xiangbo's attempt to translate Bible, and countless philanthropic activities and civil services by other Catholics.

John C. H. Wu, though converting to Catholicism a bit later than the previous figures, is unquestionably a legend in the history of Catholicism China. Born in China on March 28, 1899 during the late Qing Dynasty, like many well-known officials and scholars at that time in China, he went abroad and finished his Doctor of Law in 1921 at the University of Michigan. As a young jurist, he became well known for his contributions to jurisprudence and many other judicial developments. His civil services were quite distinguished and spectacular: He served as a judge and national legislator in Shanghai during the reign of the Republic of China. At that time he had already become famous as "Solomon sits in Judgment" and "Bao Zheng" (包青天). As Vice Chairman of the National Constitution Drafting Committee, he and others drafted China's first national constitution initiating contemporary jurisprudence development in China. He also represented China at the U.N. Founding Conference in San Francisco in 1945, and helped to translate the U.N. constitution into Chinese.<sup>4</sup>

His contribution was certainly not limited to jurisprudence. After he went to Hong Kong to escape from the Sino-Japanese War, in gratitude to St. Thérèse of Lisieux's mystical experience, he converted to Catholicism in 1938. Since then as a scholar, he

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<sup>4</sup> Benedict Keith Ip, "John C. H. Wu – a man thinks beyond East and West", in *Macau Daily Times*, April 24, 2013

contributed greatly to the study of Chinese philosophy, religion and literature. His greatest legacy to the Church would be his translation of the Psalms and the New Testament into Classical Chinese. The translation of the New Testament was accomplished when he served as China's envoy to the Vatican from 1946-1949. The English journal "T'ien Hsia Monthly" founded with his good friends became his channel through which he nurtured his philosophy and disseminated translations of Chinese literature. His autobiography – Beyond East and West – serving as his most important conversion story, has been translated into French, German, Chinese, and many other languages. It was once the favorite book to be at table-readings among Catholic communities.

Dr. John Wu loves his country as well as his Christian faith. He dedicated his whole life to the development of his country, hopefully to bring about a solution to strengthen it. He also affirmed that Christianity has no contradiction, and indeed is able to integrate with Chinese philosophy and Buddhism. His translations, reflections and perspectives on Chinese philosophy and Christianity are actually his means of sowing the seeds of a "Cultural Renaissance" – which is his core perspective to transform both Eastern and Western Society. Therefore, this article will attempt to illustrate his vision of the "Cultural Renaissance", followed by some examples in his East-West philosophy to show how he approached to it.

### **A Glimpse of John Wu's Characteristic After 1960's**

In 1966, he was invited by Kuomintang to write a biography of Sun Yat-sen, and therefore he chose to return to Taiwan with this opportunity after one and a half decades of residing in US. He was offered an honorary position as Senior Advisor to the Office of the

President of the Republic of China<sup>5</sup>. Soon after his return, the College of Chinese Culture<sup>6</sup> employed him as a Professor of Philosophy, and later at the age of 75, he became the PhD programme director of the College of Chinese Culture.

John Wu loved Confucius because Confucius' writings were centered on joy and harmony, which is worthwhile to proclaim and treasure in Chinese culture<sup>7</sup>. He began to study the Confucian Analects at the early age of 11 in a junior high school. He must have clearly understood and followed Confucius' idea of gradual progress and attainments, although he proclaimed that he surpassed Confucius at the age of 12 because his mind was bent on learning with a sense of humor<sup>8</sup>.

Confucius had said, "By fifty I came to know the will of Heaven"<sup>9</sup> – John Wu realized his golden period in the US when he accomplished many fantastic masterpieces. He knew his fate to be working on East-West cultural dialogue. His research interest now became focused on Asian Studies and Chinese philosophy, that is being an academic, rather than his early status as a jurist and an influential government official. His books and articles were not confined to law only, but were open to religion, natural law, literature, philosophy and cultural dialogue. Unlike the jurisprudence

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<sup>5</sup>Also known as "Senior Advisors to the President" (中華民國總統府資政): "The Office of the President shall have a maximum of 30 senior advisors serving in honorary positions. They shall be appointed by the president to provide opinions and render advice to the president, and their term of office shall not exceed that of the president." See webpage of the office of the President Republic of China (Taiwan): <http://english.president.gov.tw/Default.aspx?tabid=468>

<sup>6</sup>It was renamed as "Chinese Culture University" in 1980.

<sup>7</sup>John C.H. Wu., *Joy In Chinese Philosophy*. Taipei: Center for Public and Business Administration Education, National Chengchi University, 1973. p. 2.

<sup>8</sup><吾十有二而志於學>, 吳經熊,《超越東西方》(北京:社會科學文獻出版社, 2002年),頁43。

<sup>9</sup>《論語·為政》,〈五十而知天命〉

publications of his early age, which were systematic and methodical, he did not limit his writings into any structures or formats. Ideas are simply formulated tool material from any of the literature and philosophy, which could fit into his thoughts, no matter from sacred or secular schools of thought<sup>10</sup>. The image of his passionate thoughts can be seen in John Wu's letter to Thomas Merton. He just let the Spirit be active in and around him<sup>11</sup>.

Succinctly, John Wu, Jr. views his father's entire life and writings to be both "sober" and "inebriated"<sup>12</sup> – One needs to be both rational and emotional to understand God's mystery. If one emphasizes merely a systematic understanding of the faith, it will only impede one's experience of faith. Rather, like Dr. John Wu's writings, he let the Spirit arrange Eastern and Western literature into rational thoughts. His holistic approach leads him to rethink how his vision of a world can be transcended in a way that can truly go beyond East and West. Certainly it was the influence of Chinese culture that drove him from his interior mind, that is, to arrive at the integrity of the position of the Mean, the universality of the objects of the world, the dignity of humanity, and the trust of a supreme being who governs the order of the universe<sup>13</sup>.

Therefore, to outline and systematically describe his ideas may seem improper, especially in narrating his East-West philosophy.

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<sup>10</sup>郭果七,《吳經熊·中國人亦基督徒》(台北:光啟文化事業,2006年),頁25.

<sup>11</sup>Wu, John Jr., "A Lovely Day for a Friendship: the Spiritual and Intellectual Relationship between Thomas Merton and John Wu as Suggested in Their Correspondence," in *Merton Annual: Studies in Culture, Spirituality and Social Concerns*, 4 (1997), p. 25

<sup>12</sup>Wu, John Jr., "'Sober-Inebriated': An Introduction to the John Wu-Thomas Merton Letters" (paper presented in The International Conference on John C. H. Wu at Wenzao Ursuline College of Languages, Kaohsiung, Taiwan, April 12-13, 2013)

<sup>13</sup>Christian, M. (2004). 《東西方之間的法律哲學》 *Rechtsphilosophie zwischen Ost und West*, (北京:中國政法大學出版社),頁203-204.

His writings and philosophies are like a thousand kinds of flowers blooming in front of your eyes. Just as his parable for understanding the second epistle to the Corinthians, “For if we are beside ourselves, it is for God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.”<sup>14</sup> John Wu must have experienced a feeling of “divine madness”. St. Paul also went through the state of “perfectly sane and sober in his dealings with the world for the sake of the faithful.”<sup>15</sup> Just allow me to use his words to elucidate his art of writing:

“Only when our interior life has moved beyond reason can we conduct ourselves with perfect reasonableness in the world of human relations. Only when we love God without measure can we fulfill our duties toward men in the full measure.”

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## **His Attempt to Search for the Root of Chinese Culture – the Doctrine of the Mean**

Six years before Dr. John Wu's death, he published his last anthology “The fountain of interior happiness”<sup>17</sup>. This anthology consists of 14 articles, of which 6 had already been included in other books, and 8 were newly compiled. Considering originality, 2 articles give firm perspectives on the way of pursuing interior happiness. These particular two, namely “The direction of the development of Chinese Culture”<sup>18</sup> and “Chinese Culture and World Peace”<sup>19</sup>, can be

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<sup>14</sup>2 Corinthians 5:13, NRSV

<sup>15</sup>John C.H. Wu, *Chinese Humanism And Christian Spirituality*. New York: St. John's University Press, 1965. p. 162.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid.

<sup>17</sup>吳經熊，〈內心悅樂之源泉〉（台北：東大圖書公司，1981年），頁28。

<sup>18</sup>Ibid. <中國文化的發展方向>.

<sup>19</sup>Ibid. <中華文化與世界和平>.

treated as his final integration of the thoughts he had throughout his life. Indeed, the two articles also made use of examples from his previous articles on East-West cultural comparisons, as well as his biographies of President Chiang and Sun Yat-sen. The fact he pointed out was, “in order to advance the country, as well as to be able to communicate on the level which is beyond East and West, the only way is to begin the “Cultural Renaissance”<sup>20</sup>.

He begins to elaborate this idea by offering a counter-question to himself, “You are indeed a Chinese, which by nature belongs to being oriental. How can you go beyond East and West?”<sup>21</sup> He uses a quote from the Book of Documents (尚書) to express his understanding of the doctrine of the Mean (中庸之道)<sup>22</sup>:

人心惟危，	The mind of man is restless,
道心惟微	the essence of Tao is subtle and deep;
惟精惟一，	If one wants to inherit the essence of Tao,
允執厥中	the only approach is to abide by the
	Mean.

With these 16 words, John Wu emphasizes the importance of the essence of Tao: Wei (微) does not refer to smallness, but subtleness (微妙). Xunzi (313BC – 238 BC) used the similar sentence<sup>23</sup> to explain how Emperor Shun (舜) applies moral principles to attain the subtleness of Tao, and to govern his people. Therefore, one must hold firm to this essence of Tao in order to react

<sup>20</sup> Ibid, <中國文化的發展方向>, 頁 40.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, 27.

<sup>22</sup> 《尚書·大禹謨》

<sup>23</sup> 《荀子·解蔽》：『昔者舜之治天下也，不以事詔而萬物成。處一之危，其榮滿側；養一之微，榮矣而未知。故《道經》曰：「人心之危，道心之微。」』



to the human being's ever-changing mind. It shows that the source of culture is within the essence of Tao<sup>24</sup>.

The idea of the “Mean” can be further illustrated in the Book of doctrine of the Mean. Using the same famous example of Emperor Shun, Confucius said, “(Emperor) Shun was so wise! He liked to question people and delighted in listening to everyday speech. He would cover up people's bad points and disclose their goodness. He snatched up their excesses and facilitated their balanced nature for the benefit of all. It was in this way that Shun made himself into what he was”<sup>25</sup>. Yao, the legendary Chinese ancient Emperor before Emperor Shun, also used the same example to explain this concept. Yao said, “Oh! you, Shun, the Heaven-determined order of succession now rests in your person. Sincerely hold fast to the due Mean. If there shall be distress and want within the four seas, the Heavenly revenue will come to a perpetual end”<sup>26</sup>. The idea of “abiding by the Mean” will eventually create a society of peace, understanding and harmony.

We believed that the true nature of Eastern and Western culture are both rooted in the same essence – the eastern term of searching for Tao, and the western term of searching for conscience<sup>27</sup>. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the East has been adopting an extreme way, namely wholesale westernization, to learn from the west, yet ignoring a thorough understanding of the heart of culture. The West, too,

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<sup>24</sup>吳經熊，《內心悅樂之源泉》（台北：東大圖書公司，1981年），頁28。

<sup>25</sup>《中庸》：「舜其大知也與。舜好問而好察邇言。隱惡而揚善，執其兩端，用其中於民，其斯以為舜乎。」A. Charles Muller. "The Doctrine of the Mean (Zhongyong) 中庸." Last modified 2010. <http://www.acmuller.net/con-dao/docofmean.html> [April 5, 2013]

<sup>26</sup>《論語·堯曰》：「咨！爾舜！天之曆數在爾躬，允執其中。四海困窮，天祿永終。」中國經典電子版工程，〈Confucian Analects〉 Last modified

1983. <[http://www.cnculture.net/ebook/jing/sishu/lunyu\\_en/13.html](http://www.cnculture.net/ebook/jing/sishu/lunyu_en/13.html)>. [April 5, 2013].

<sup>27</sup>吳經熊，《內心悅樂之源泉》（台北：東大圖書公司，1981年），頁28。

focuses too much on the real, empirical and structural phenomenon (a posteriori), which gradually loses the connection to a priori. Fortunately, he observed an increasing group of intellectuals had already noticed this phenomenon and shifted their emphasis into a connection with Greek, Roman philosophy, as well as Christianity.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, on the way of searching for one's root of culture, John Wu thinks that the West may attain the goal faster than the East, and in turn, help the East to cultivate this spirit<sup>29</sup>.

He further develops his idea by offering some examples and derivatives. To revive humanity which Chinese culture treasures a lot, one cannot solely rely on Confucianism. For the Chinese culture, according to Ch'ien Mu (1895-1990), is subtly integrated with Taoism, Buddhism, Mohism, Legalism, and School of Naturalists<sup>30</sup>. However, it was Confucius who could properly reconcile his philosophy with the other beliefs by means of the Doctrine of the Mean: "The superior man is affable, but not adulatory."<sup>31</sup> It is the idea of encompassing a colorful life, and at the same time, the experiences of our life in "an all-pervading unity"<sup>32</sup>. It is only through accepting differences that we can attain a sense of harmony, and abide by the Mean.

## Derivatives of the Doctrine of the Mean

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<sup>28</sup>Ibid, 28.

<sup>29</sup>"Humanity is one, and it is moving beyond East and West. It is only by moving beyond the East and the West that both will be vitally synthesized. If I may venture on a prediction in such unpredictable matters, this vital synthesis will probably be attained first in the West. But once attained, it will spread to the whole world." John C.H. Wu, "Zen (Ch'an): Its Origin and its Modern Significance," *Asian Culture Quarterly* (1970): 8,

<sup>30</sup>吳經熊,《內心悅樂之源泉》(台北:東大圖書公司,1981年),頁30。

<sup>31</sup>《論語·子路》:「君子和而不同。」中國經典電子版工程,〈Confucian Analects〉 Last modified 1983. <[http://www.cnculture.net/ebook/jing/sishu/lunyu\\_en/13.html](http://www.cnculture.net/ebook/jing/sishu/lunyu_en/13.html)>. [April 5, 2013].

<sup>32</sup>《論語·里仁》:「參乎!吾道一以貫之。」

John Wu admits that through the revelation of Christ, he finally recognizes the spiritual treasures across different races. Chuang Tzu (369-286 BC) must have known very clearly the direction of the heaven and earth (天地一指), which points out the whole mystery of the universe, as well as the eternal law of God to us<sup>33</sup>. John Wu's famous quotation of psalm 131<sup>34</sup> can always serve as his compliment of humbleness before the Lord. He believes that every creature and wisdom share the same radiance from Him. "Tao itself", as John Wu stated in his interview, "is merely the compass directing us to the way of Heaven"<sup>35</sup>. He teaches also the same spirit of humbleness to his students and family members. Since he does not like people to tease others with cleverness, he reminds his students frequently to "keep your sword and its blade in its scabbard and do not play at will on the street"<sup>36</sup>. It is indeed commonly known, yet it is so precious to obtain in our daily life. That is the Doctrine of the Mean which John Wu treasures the most.

Everything is art, as well as life too. To discover arts in every aspects of life is an aesthetic experience of humanity<sup>37</sup>. The art of music also shares the concept of harmony, in which the tones and tempos must fit with other notes in general in order to generate a piece of art. Chinese paintings require a very precise combination of the use of inks, strokes, subjects and nature. John Wu accurately

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid, 69.

<sup>34</sup> 吳經熊譯《聖詠釋義》：「我心如小鳥，毛羽未全豐。不作高飛想，依依幽谷中。我心如赤子，乳臭未曾乾。慈母懷中睡，安恬凝一團。昂哉吾義塞！飲水輒思源。世世承流澤，莫忘雨露恩。」

<sup>35</sup> 孔維勤, "和諧就是悅樂 - 訪吳經熊博士," 《益世月刊》, 30 期 (1983 年), 頁 69。

<sup>36</sup> 趙莒玲, "「深藏你的刀鋒和刀刃」: 一代大師吳經熊," 《自由青年》, 676 期 (1985 年), 頁 6。

<sup>37</sup> 吳經熊, 《內心悅樂之源泉》(台北: 東大圖書公司, 1981 年), 頁 32。

points out that the combination of Chinese painting and calligraphy are so natural, and becomes a state where humanity and nature are no longer separated.<sup>38</sup> Such appreciations will eventually elevate art into the expression of Truth, Goodness and Beauty, and “inherit the essence of Tao”<sup>39</sup>.

In his book “Joy in Chinese Philosophy”, he roots his idea “where there is harmony, there is joy” into the interculturalism among Confucianism, Taoism, and Zen Buddhism. Although it seems to be so tiny comparing to his other great writings, it actually summarizes his quest for joy, harmony and the Doctrine of the Mean, which he believes are the core of Chinese culture:

“Generally speaking, Confucian joy springs from the love of learning, the harmony of human relations, and the realization of one’s manhood or humanity; Taoist joy consists in untrammelled freedom and detachment from things mundane, in keeping oneself in tune and harmony with Nature, in self-realization through self-loss; and the joy of Zen is found in seeing one’s true nature and thereby attaining enlightenment, in the pleasant surprise of self-discovery, in the harmonization of the this-worldly with the other-worldly.”<sup>40</sup>

To use one of his examples here on Confucius humanity, Confucianism sees the “whole world as one family with China as a

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid, 34.

<sup>39</sup> 《尚書·大禹謨》：「惟精惟一」

<sup>40</sup> John C.H. Wu, *Joy in Chinese Philosophy* (台北：上智出版社，1999 年)，頁 2。

member.”<sup>41</sup> The vision of Chinese culture aims, at the beginning, at the oneness of mankind. Goethe also concurs with this idea of happiness: “Who is the happiest of men? He who values the merits of others, and in their pleasures takes joy, as though, ‘twere his own.”<sup>42</sup> St. Paul also hails such people that can “rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep”<sup>43</sup>. I cannot agree that if we occasionally share the same ideas, as world citizens, we do not share the same humanity and essence in our mind.

## **Sowing the Seed of Future Quests on Both Christianity and Chinese Culture**

The charisma of John Wu is that he can be very Chinese, in terms of what he thinks, how he acts, as well as his value systems and perspectives. In addition, this special charm is owing to the transition between a traditional and a modern period of thought. He did not just solely memorize traditional Sinology, but was able to find new ways to integrate Western thought and education. During this period, China produced many prominent figures, like Hsu Chih-mo, Ji Xianlin and Hu Shih. Emerging in an ever-changing society, they had many opportunities to proclaim and practice their ideas. Their experiences overseas also enriched their perspectives. They dared to challenge the dominating opinions of the time and tried to shape society with respect to traditional Chinese culture, human dignity and morality.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 12

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p. 15

<sup>43</sup> Ibid

<sup>44</sup> Benedict Keith Ip, “The Chinese Cultural Renaissance and the May Fourth Movement during the Republican era”, in *Macau Daily Times*, May 29, 2013

However, John Wu does not limit himself to Chinese thought. When he was converted to Catholicism, he perceived more deeply and differently about Chinese religious thought and the whole Chinese cosmological idea. In his famous autobiography *Beyond East and West*, he mentioned that he intended to weave a Chinese robe for Christ<sup>45</sup>. It is “right and just” to say that his life was dedicated to communication between the mainstreams of Eastern and Western thoughts, as well as to reflect upon the development of Christianity and Chinese religions.

His definition of “East” and “West” is a generalization of his impressions after life-long observation: “On the whole the Occidental mind works more methodically than the Oriental. The former goes step by step, while the latter jumps at conclusions. The former relies upon ratiocination, while the latter trusts in intuition. The former sees more readily the distinctions where the latter sees only the analogies. The former is more attracted by what is regular, the latter by what is exceptional. The former relies more on one’s own effort, the latter more on Providence.”<sup>46</sup> As Bishop Fulton Sheen summarized into one sentence, “The Oriental thus ends in Fatalism and the Occidental in Pride.”<sup>47</sup>

To be able to go beyond East and West, it is neither going towards East nor West, but going inward to find one’s Holy nature, which is Christ. It is only Christ who can reconcile the discrepancies.<sup>48</sup> To attain this big picture of integrating East and West, John Wu suggests that the Chinese should create a path to

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<sup>45</sup> John C.H. Wu, *Beyond East and West* (超越東西方) (北京：社會科學文獻出版社，2002年)，chap. 19.

<sup>46</sup> John C.H. Wu, *Chinese Humanism And Christian Spirituality*. New York: St. John’s University Press, 1965. 160.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*

understand Chinese religions, philosophies and culture: “To be a true Chinese, at the same time, to absorb the propositions from the West, one must always be neutral and respect the difference between East and West. Do not fall into idolism, and correct those wrongdoings from the West.”<sup>49</sup> The Cultural Renaissance, under his system of thought, is only a prelude in preparation for a greater integration. In his article “Christianity is the only real synthesis possible between East and West”, he said,

“In order to convert the East, we must know how to “baptize” the Eastern culture and philosophy of life. But since the most representative Eastern sages are all mystically inclined, we shall not be able to “baptize” the unless we first delve into a much neglected part of our Christian heritage, the inexhaustible mine of Christian mysticism. To lead the East to Christ, we have to plunge ourselves into “the cloud of unknowing;” we must pray to the Holy Ghost to set our souls free from bondage to the material civilization and to the technical habits of modern times...”<sup>50</sup>

Therefore, it is Christ and Christianity which can realize the true concept of the Doctrine of the Mean, and help the faithful to attain a harmonious and joyful life, in both a material and spiritual perspective, as well as the spirit of true Tao, and the mercy and happiness which Buddhism shares and offers. However, this picture can only be realized when Chinese can overcome the difficulties,

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<sup>49</sup> 吳經熊,《內心悅樂之源泉》(台北:東大圖書公司,1981年),頁37-38。

<sup>50</sup> John C.H. Wu, *Chinese Humanism And Christian Spirituality*. New York: St. John's University Press, 1965. P. 170.

namely, to respect the differences, identify an approach, and to keep searching for the true essence of oneself, which leads to Almighty God.

Since the East and the West each has unique issues to resolve, the needs and approaches are different too. In addition to the concept of the Doctrine of the Mean, John Wu also suggests how the Church's teaching can serve as a catalyst for a better formation and preparation to the faith: "In order to oppose this identification of the West with technical knowledge, Catholic authors must bring forward things in the West which are of real value. Wherever things are true, whatever is modest and just, whatsoever is holy and lovely, if there be any virtue in it, we ought to write about them not to glorify ourselves but to glorify God. Western textbooks of history should be written in the light of a new valuation. The Orient has heard much of heroes and even of dictators, but she has heard little or nothing about the Saints and sages of the West. Everybody knows the name Napoleon, but few know anything about far greater men like Vincent de Paul, Nicolas de Flue, Francis de Sales, John of the Cross, Thomas Aquinas, the Curé d'Ars, and countless others."<sup>51</sup>

The approach which John Wu offers can lead to his ultimate end of integration, but it needs people to sow the seeds of understanding. It will take some time in order to wait for other generations to reap the harvest.<sup>52</sup> In this sense, John Wu made a lot of efforts to build up connections and open as many windows as possible to foster the spirit of communication.

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<sup>51</sup> Pax Romana Journal, "When and How Will East and West: Interview with Dr. John C. H. Wu," 《吳經熊博士逝世十週年紀念學術研討會：補充資料》，頁 4-5。

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p. 2



With the rich and detailed analysis among various scholars concerning the content of his East-West publications, I will simply highlight some of the examples rather than jumping across books and articles to outline his thought<sup>53</sup>. Together with Lin Yutang and other friends who were capable of writing English, early in 1935, they created an English journal “T’ien Hsia Monthly” to promote cultural exchanges. At that time John Wu just wished to excel himself in other areas rather than just his juridical contributions<sup>54</sup>. It actually became his seed plot to nurture his publications and subsequent ideas, such as his famous “The Four Seasons of T’ang Poetry”<sup>55</sup>. The pure incentive of exchanging culture, as Sun Fo confirmed, does not have national boundaries. “It enriches itself just as much by what it gives as by what it takes.”<sup>56</sup>

A reader can simply pick up one of Wu’s books and find out more examples on East-West philosophy. Yet it was the unique experience of St. Thérèse of Lisieux who brought him to understand the vastness of Catholicism, and its potential to integrate other Chinese philosophies and religions. As Laotse advises us, “Keep empty and you will be filled”<sup>57</sup>. St. Thérèse treasures a Taoist heart to let her be free from the material world, to free her hands as far as possible in order not to have anything to be judged on by God. The mysticism of St. Thérèse was so subtle that her contemplative life

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<sup>53</sup> A comprehensive chronological order of his publications can be found at least in the following books: 1) 林雪碧,《學官型天主教徒：吳經熊（1899-1986）生平與學術思想之研究》（香港：香港浸會大學哲學博士論文，2010年）2) 郭果七, 吳經熊《中國人亦基督徒》（台北：光啟出版社，2006年）

<sup>54</sup> John C.H. Wu, 《懷蘭集》（台中：光啟出版社，1963年），頁 78。

<sup>55</sup> In the Editorial Commentary of T’ien Hsia Monthly in October 1938, his friend helped John Wu to respond to the public, on the reason of his absence in terms of publishing the poetries and commentaries.

<sup>56</sup> John C.H. Wu, "Some Random Notes On The Shih Ching," *T'ian Hsia Monthly*, no. January (1936): 9.

<sup>57</sup> Example derived from: Matthias Christian, 《中西文化的交談》（台北：輔仁大學出版社，2004年），頁 237。

was simple in appearance, but fruitful in terms of spiritual nourishment.

### **Conclusion: The “Cultural Renaissance” is Only a Prelude to Prepare for a Comprehensive Renaissance with the World**

In China there were several attempts to promote cultural movements. One of the significant influences must be the May Fourth Movement, which transformed the country into achieving national independence, individual emancipation, and the creation of a new culture through a critical and scientific re-evaluation of the national heritage and selected acceptance of foreign civilizations.<sup>58</sup> Yet, in historical perspective, the intellectual revolution succeeded primarily in introducing Western thought and destroying Chinese traditionalism, rather than creating new systems of thought and new schools of philosophy.<sup>59</sup> It aroused adversity and even hatred towards Christianity, for it defined foreign powers as something which deserved to be removed.<sup>60</sup> Later when the Communist government took control in Greater China, they launched the Cultural Revolution, which was later abused by the political authorities and became a force of mere destruction of core traditional cultures and values. In order to react to the PRC's movement, the ROC government in Taiwan decided to promote the Chinese Cultural Renaissance campaign (中華文化復興運動) in order to fight against the trends of Cultural Revolution. In fact, John Wu was pro-ROC, and so his discussions were in line with this campaign. However,

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<sup>58</sup> Immanuel C.Y. Hsu, *The Rise of Modern China*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. P. 511.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Gianni Criveller, *The Parable of Inculturation of the Gospel in China: A Catholic Viewpoint*. Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong, 2003. P. 38.

there was a slight difference, in the sense that core essences to proclaim is different, and John Wu's Renaissance did not spring hatred against both parties.

The idea of cultivating a "Renaissance" (復興), in John Wu's perspective, complies more or less with the western experience of Renaissance from the 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> century. He believed that China must experience a cultural movement in order to revive the importance of Chinese Culture. John Wu made use of the speeches of President Chiang Kai-Shek in Taiwan in the 1960's when he published the spiritual life of President Chiang in 1975. He described the president's viewpoint of Chinese culture, which he himself also held to, as an ever-flourishing culture. He emphasized that the Chinese Cultural Renaissance does not equal restoration, or any attempts to bring back the past practices. Chinese culture is not static, but it is a living organism. It brings new meaning to the current society and at the same time, it is connected to its traditions. This characteristic makes its life growing, and so perpetual that Chinese culture is still developing nowadays. John Wu made a parable to explain this, "Just as a tree remains unchanged in general, yet its branches, flowers and fruits change according to the seasons"<sup>61</sup>. Therefore, his lifelong attempt to rediscover the root of Chinese culture gives us a very good example to review the nature of the interweaving of the elements of changes amid static circumstances. Reviving Chinese culture is not passive, but a creative feature indeed. "To revive (復) means to recover the lost potential, thus this word implies a sense of resurrection; and to prosper (興) means to create a force to work within society. The core idea here is to proclaim Chinese culture"<sup>62</sup>.

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<sup>61</sup> 吳經熊,《蔣總統的精神生活》(台北:華欣文化事業中心,1975年),頁55。

<sup>62</sup> Ibid, 56.

Unfortunately, the Chinese government nowadays chooses to develop the economy as its sole highest concern, and to neglect the necessary cultural development.

John Wu's idea of bringing both the faith and country into a "whole-person" is anticipative. He cares not only about the future of races, but forecasts how the future of China and the West should be. He uses Chinese values and vivid examples to make connections to the Christian faith. "Wu's spirituality and thinking is an expression of a deep humanism, so important in the Chinese tradition...The goal is the development of man with all his gifts to a full human persona and, finally, the union of all peoples in Christ."<sup>63</sup> At the end, Wu reminds us of the consequences of improper integration:

"If the East does not find the West in Christ, it will never meet the West and love it. If the West does not find the East in Christ, it will never meet the East and love it. If the East is westernized, it becomes worse than the West. If the West is easternized, it becomes worse than the East. If the East and West are married outside of Christ, the union will not last, being the result of a momentary infatuation, which will only produce a monster. Only when they are united in the bosom of Christ will they love each other with the love of Christ, and the union give birth to a new man."<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Matthias Christian, 《中西文化的交談》(台北:輔仁大學出版社, 2004年), 頁335。

<sup>64</sup> John C.H. Wu, *Chinese Humanism And Christian Spirituality*. New York: St. John's University Press, 1965. P. 170.

[摘要] 吳經熊先生（1899-1986）毫無疑問於二十世紀是一位傑出的法學，哲學，翻譯及基督宗教學家。他一生的經驗，著作，和及後與聖德蘭·里修（小德肋撒）的精神相遇對天主教信仰的了解，開啟了一條連接天主教信仰與中國文化的道路。他活用他擁有的東西文化知識，中國經典的優雅在他的文學作品中立體地呈現出來。他翻譯的眾多書籍，包括聖詠及新約全書，讓基督宗教忠實地以中國的方式呈現，取得了驚人出色的成果。他已為一位「中國基督徒」的方法建立了一個榜樣——既能保持中國傳統的價值觀和理念，同時能與基督信仰交織一起。1966年吳經熊先生回到台灣定居之後，他全心致力於實踐他的「文化復興」理念，並以此為終極目標以實現東西方社會的蛻變。因為他預見基督宗教能適當地整合東西方文化。然而，雙方必須在真正的對話與整合發生之前尋找並強化自己的文化根源。本文嘗試由他所構思的原則，書摘和文章，了解他是如何形成所謂「文化復興」的想法。