
The Concept of an Asian Community
and the Unity of Religions
Especially Concerning Buddhism

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On this occasion of the 5th Asian Professors Symposium on Unification Thought, the theme given to me is The Concept of an Asian Community and the Unity of Religions - Especially Concerning Buddhism. I guess this was given as a reproach and an encouragement for me because I have been very idle despite much aid from the sponsoring institute of this symposium. Even though, to tell the truth, I was amazed at the profundity of the theme, I hesitated to accept because it seemed too big to round off for me, an outsider with shallow knowledge, majoring in modern literature. It was while I was researching the theme "Modern Literature and Religion" in the Buddhist Culture Institute, that I met Unification Thought and sympathized with the theory very much.

Actually, today the world situation is changing from the state of political confrontation between the United States and the Soviet Union to one of trade friction between the United States and the newly-risen Asian countries. At the same time, the axis of world politics, economy and culture is shifting from Europe to Asia. Having met Unification Thought, and seeing the world situation today, as a professor, a priest and an Asian member as well, I have come to feel a strong desire to challenge this big theme, and dared to accept and take up my pen in spite of my incapacity. I would be very grateful for any modification of my errors by the

scholars gathered here.

I. Materialistic View and Spiritualistic View

As you know, there are primarily two views of the origin of the world. One says that the origin of the universe is material and that spirit or sense is a reflection, while the other says that the true form of the world is spirit and that all material things are manifestations of it, the former being materialism or historical materialism and the latter being spiritualism. Both are very meaningful ways of thinking when inquiring into the origin or source of the universe, though, we cannot but say, distorted views as well.

Materialists say that all human thought is controlled by the material situation, namely economic conditions. On the contrary, spiritualists say that all material situations and economic conditions are effects of the workings of the human mind. Both of these are one-sided ways of thinking.

Any historical or social movement does not depend only on material and economic conditions or on spiritual human thought, but on both of them. Actually, in one case the economical situation may play an important part in social development, and in another human thought can bring forth a great change in history. Here we must recognize that history has developed through the complicated intertwining or synthetic action of the two material and spiritual aspects. Therefore, we cannot but declare that it is very senseless to administer world affairs by materialism only.

II. Modern Society and Religion

Today is called the day of turbulence and unprecedented rapid changes. Our highly developed machine civilization has shrunk space and shortened time. For example, now the distance between Japan and the United States seems like just one short hop. The change of eras has been very rapid, and it is said that industrial modernization has ended and the post-industrialization process has now begun.

Toshikatsu Sano says in his thesis, "The (inner)

Image has been completely lost in both the inner and the outer life of modern man. In Europe, it is said that people began to lose the Image about 150 years ago, and in Japan 70 or 80 years (ago)." The main cause of the loss of this inner Image is, he says, "We have made desperate efforts for technical development, while we have crushed the most important thing--the Image. Behind the rapid technical development, the Image has vanished from people's minds." He continues, "What becomes the mental condition of a man who lives only with machines without the Image? Man who feels no protection from the Image becomes solitary, lacking heart, and moves only dynamically. The assemblage of such men forms a loveless world filled with brutality." Thus he says that the spiritual condition of modern man living in this highly developed machine civilization is characterized by such words as solitude, self-alienation and discontinuity.

If people remain in this situation much longer, I think that dehumanization will develop into the final ruin of mankind. In order to prevent this, we must find the way to recover from alienation and dehumanization, and restore the original human nature. It is only through religion that we can regain the courage to live with self-confidence in this age of insecurity and confusion. I firmly believe that Buddhists will play a great role in this work.

III. The Relation Between Buddhism and Modern Society

What is Buddhism, which is in keen demand by modern man living in this time of confusion? Buddhism originally means "the teaching of the Buddha" and also "the teaching to become a Buddha." Shakyamuni, born in India, attained Enlightenment and became a Buddha. He taught the truth that he attained on the basis of certain traditional teachings. After the death of Shakyamuni, his teaching was systematically reorganized and classified into the three documents of sutra, precepts and theory. The doctrines contained in these three documents are now generically called Buddhism.

Buddhism is divided into two main genealogies, Mahayana and Hinayana. Hinayana Buddhism teaches that man can enter the tranquility of Nirvana through

conversion and ascetic practices centering on three stages of Sanpo-in, which means the theory of mind-only. Likewise, Mahayana Buddhism teaches that, centering on three stages of Jisso-in, the theory of the real state of things, man can enter Nirvana. Then what are Sanpo-in and Jisso-in?

Sanpo-in

- a. All things are transient and pass away.
- b. All things appear and disappear depending upon the law of causality.
- c. Through destroying and wiping out worldly desires, man can cross the painful ocean of life and death.

Jisso-in

Here, I would like to explain in more simple words. Shakyamuni says in his teaching that man has many pains such as;

- a. the pain of parting with loved ones
- b. the pain of meeting with hateful people
- c. the pain of never-satisfied desire
- d. the pain of over-satisfied desire

He says that all these pains are born from karma (fate), and that in order to be free from such karma man has to remove all evil by doing good and purifying his life. This can be done by observing the doctrine of the Six Paramitas, which means the six ways of Purification.

The Six Paramitas

1. to give alms without any expectations or conditions
2. to obey the ten precepts in order not to fall (ex. Don't kill, Don't rob... etc)
3. to endure every trial
4. to appreciate the value of things
5. to reflect upon oneself in tranquility
6. to sympathize with others

In Zen, there are such words as, "heaven and earth in one root, all things in one body," which came from Shakyamuni's saying, "all human beings and all things in the universe are living under the protection of Amitabha." He says that as heaven and earth and all things have been born from one single Mind and all exist

in deep mutual relationship, all human beings naturally have to live in mutual reliance. This righteous way of life taught in Buddhism is, I believe, keenly demanded of the people living in this chaotic age of the collapse of family and social rule, rapacious destruction of nature and the rise of a curious new materialistic and selfish generation.

We can of course distinguish and memorize things through our bodily eyes, but without opening our spiritual eyes we will never perceive the real fact that even a single blade of grass has vivid life within it. Therefore, in this time of confusion we must open our spiritual eyes and realize the fact that we all are living obliged to our parents, society, nation, mankind, and heaven and earth, and we must return the obligations of our indebtedness to others even little by little, which, I think, is human duty. For example, we Japanese have been greatly obliged to China, Korea and other nations in the area of culture since the days of the Nara period, so Japan must repay its obligations to these countries, returning alms and support to other poor Asian nations instead of exploitation and plunder.

IV. The Existential Emptiness of Modern Man and the Teaching of Shinran

When we talk about modern man, we always refer to words such as anxiety, solitude and alienation. What is the real cause of these sickly factors of mind? Erich Fromm said, "Today a great number of commodities are being supplied and man exists as only a consumer of them, therefore the feeling of mere 'passive receptivity' has grown up, while the feeling of active motion toward the world has been lost. This is the morbid characteristic of the mental state man of today." For this reason he is always seized by the feeling of helplessness, loneliness and estrangement. In fact, today almost all household work such as cooking, washing and even preparing the bath can be carried out by pushing buttons. All are managed, not in active voice, but in passive voice. To make matters worse, people waste their spare time, a result of our highly developed machine civilization, with TV, radio, sports, mah-jong, horse racing, bicycle races, wine, etc....

They are trying to relieve their tedium, but on the contrary, their feelings of anxiety have been increased more and more in these situations. It can be said that the characteristic mental state of modern man is the loss of spiritual balance, as seen in the split between thought and feeling, mind and mental affairs, fact and passions. Fromm said, "When the fusion of the two functions of thought and feeling is disrupted, thought will be reduced to schizophrenic mental activity, which is called the 'hypertrophy of intelligence,' and feeling will degenerate into psychoneurotic passions that hurt or injure others' lives." Surely this might be the day of "all people becoming idiots," just as someone said in the postwar period, and also the day of an unprecedented prevalence of schizophrenia.

The extreme development of mass media and information management by computer has invaded our privacy, and the apartment lifestyle has brought about the nuclear family, which breaks strong family ties or personal touch among people. All of these circumstances and situations are creating a shallow personality who can easily put himself under the control of others. Victor E. Frankl dissected modern man as follows; "Man tries to anaesthetize himself by speeding up in order to escape from his inner emptiness. Surely speed is a kind of relief for a man of today who has no purpose to live, no substance in life but only existential emptiness." Thus he says that it is natural that speed maniacs prevail today, when every ideal or purpose, tradition or rule is being destroyed.

The motorcycle gang passing by before our eyes certainly endorses his words. Frankl also analyzes that, "Today people love to live under the idea of gathering. This gathering is not the community or society, but mere mass. In this mass the individual personality is choked off and every person is standardized." He continues, "Men of today who love to abandon themselves and refuse to bear social responsibility are willingly falling into this irresponsible mass." Actually, we can see these indications particularly in leftist unions, ideological groups and Marxist countries.

Now, let's consider Shinran's teaching, which still has significant meaning for the chaotic times described

above. It was also an era of confusion when Shinran entered the priesthood and forsook the world. He saw the great fall of the arrogant Heike family, which had been proud of its endless prosperity. Seeing so much death, homelessness and desolation from the disturbances of battle, he realized the uncertainty of life as taught in the words of Buddha, "All creatures absolutely die" or "All who meet, absolutely are parted." Then Shinran called on Honen, a high priest who taught the great power of eager repetition of the sacred name of Amitabha, through which many afflicted people had been given peace and salvation beyond their differences in social standing, and became his disciple. I am sure that Shinran's teaching would surely exhibit the way to solve many problems today. Having received Honen's teaching, Shinran realized that there are two worlds: one is the earthly world of man (the world of decadence and muddiness), and the other is the heavenly world of Amitabha (the world of indescribable wonderfulness born from the oath of Amitabha).

He also realized that there are two oceans: one is the painful ocean of life and death (the muddy ocean of earthly desires), and the other is the ocean of the wisdom of righteousness (the ocean of indescribable wonderfulness or the ocean of treasures of virtue). Shinran lived as one of these sentient beings himself and said, "We cannot choose the circumstances of our birth, but after birth we have the right to live equally. But please remember that we are not living by our own power but by the great Compassion of Amitabha. Therefore everyone has a holy mission to be performed during his lifetime. The mission is to become Buddha through repeating the sacred name of Amitabha and to benefit all living things in the world with deep compassion and mercy." These Words of Shinran about "how to live" and "how to perform man's mission" should again be given to those people today who live in the midst of anxiety, solitude and alination.

V. The Trend of Alternative Judgement and Coexistence in Asia

The alternative way of judgement, in other words, the way of thinking by making a choice between two things or

affairs, has without notice come into widely accepted use everywhere these days. This I think, is the very cause of many struggles of our time. People are divided into two opposite positions such as; Marxist vs. liberal, capitalist vs. laborer, bourgeoisie vs. proletariat, unionists vs. non-unionists, employers vs. employees and the government party vs. the opposition party. When they persist in their own position and denounce the opposite side as their enemy, the gap between the two cannot but be widened, and mutual distrust and alienation will be incurred. The press primarily should play the role of providing leadership for a rudderless society. If they merely accuse their opponents as enemies on the basis of an alternative way of judgement, the feeling of mutual distrust will only be deepened.

Surprisingly, even religions, whose primary purpose should certainly be peace, have caused many struggles so far, such as bloody struggles between Catholics, Protestants and Islam. Can we expect these religions that are struggling with each other to contribute to the peace of Asia or the happiness of mankind? No, never. Hiromichi Shoto says, "Observing the people struggling because of their faiths, I noticed the fact that they are, without exception, monotheists." Then why does monotheism cause struggles? He continues:

"In monotheism, God is absolute and superior to man, and created nature is not the partner with which man can harmonize or assimilate but an opponent that man must rule.

Here, everything and everyone is divided into two positions, enemy or friend. This theory of dual alternative judgement is the main characteristic of monotheism."

Thus, in the monotheistic world, all people, whether they like it or not, are divided into the two opposite positions of enemies vs. friends, and are made to deepen or increase their feelings of hate. Is it possible for mankind to coexist in peace and prosperity through such simplistic thinking as dividing all things into black vs. white and enemy vs. friend, deciding that the black or enemy is always evil? True peace and coexistent prosperity among all mankind can only be possible when man ceases to cling only to his own religion or

ideology, has "tolerance to accept and forgive others," and makes efforts and talks with others toward "a more right way."

VI. The Transmission of Buddhism in Asia and its Present Status

Buddhism originated in India and was first transmitted to Sri Lanka and other Southeast Asian countries. In Southeast Asia, this included Mahayana (esoteric) Buddhism. Mahayana was transmitted to Vietnam through China, while it was introduced to Tibet from India and then spread to Mongolia. Soon after the beginning of the Christian era Buddhism, both Mahanaya and Hinayana, was transmitted by way of Central Asia to China, and Mahanaya flourished there. Buddhism was transmitted to the Korean Peninsula in the following way, in 372 A.D. the Buddhist scriptures were sent to Koguryo from China, in 384 the Indian priest Marana introduced Buddhism to Paekche, and it was transmitted to Shilla through Koguryo in the 5th century. To Japan, it is said that Buddhist statues and scriptures were introduced in 538 from Paekche.

Then let us look at the present state of Buddhism in these Asian countries.

1. India

In India, the cradle of Buddhism, it flourished centering on the basin of the Ganges River, but it gradually declined because it was corrupted by trying to accommodate itself to people who couldn't understand its lofty theories, and because it denied the traditional caste system. Buddhism only barely remains in the border districts near Burma and Nepal. However, in recent years a Buddhist revival movement has arisen in many places in India working toward the restoration of original Buddhism.

2. Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka, formerly known as Ceylon and located off the southern tip of the Indian continent, is a Buddhist country where almost all the people are

Buddhists. The strict doctrines are well established and have been a spiritual prop to the people so far.

3. Burma

In the days of King Asoka in the 3rd century B.C., two high priests of India visited Burma with the Buddhist scriptures. Burma is a multiracial nation, with 85% of its population Buddhist. People's lives are based upon Buddhism, and they hope and pray to Amitabha for the safety and peace of their families, relatives and themselves. This country was changed into a socialist country through a military coup d'etat in 1962, but the basis of their spiritual life is still Buddhism.

4. Thailand

With eager and warm protection by successive kings, Thailand has become the greatest Buddhist country in Southeast Asia, with 93% of its population Buddhist. Therefore it can be said that all people are priests in this country.

5. Laos

In Laos, a mountainous country, the successive kings eagerly supported Buddhism just as in Thailand, so 90% of its people also are Buddhists. A revolution took place in 1975 by the People's Liberation Army, but there seem to be no oppression against Buddhism. They seem to be aiming toward Buddhist socialism.

6. Cambodia

After the taking of Phnom Penh in 1975, the name of the country was changed from Cambodia to Khmer, and we cannot get sufficient information about Buddhism in this country. Formerly Buddhism was flourishing in this country also. In those days 85% of the people were Buddhists. But at the time of

the revolution, about 100,000 priests were reportedly forced to return to secular life. So we can imagine that Buddhism has declined in Cambodia. But it is reported that they are aiming at Buddhist socialism in Laos.

7. Vietnam

In the 2nd century Mahayana, based on Zen, was introduced to Vietnam from China. It greatly flourished there, especially during the period from the 7th century to the 19th century. But in the Vietnam War a great number of Buddhist temples were destroyed, and oppression against the Buddhists put them in terrible distress. Recent reports, however, indicate that a movement for peace based upon Buddhism has begun to spread gradually.

8. Nepal

Nepal, which has a close relation with Shakyamuni, is now a Hindu country. There are also some Muslims, Jaina and shamanists. Hinduism and Lamaism are the prevailing religions in this country.

9. Bhutan

In Bhutan, located in the remote southwest region of the Himalayas, 75% of the people are Lamaists. Buddhism and politics are coexisting in harmony.

10. Tibet

Having come under the rule of the People's Republic of China by force, Tibet became a socialist country in 1959. Many Buddhists were exiled, and those remaining are forbidden to propagate their faith. A number of Buddhist temples are now being used for other purposes. Though recent information says that people have come to be able to practice their faith individually, I am afraid that religious suppression is still going on.

11. The Peoples' Republic of China

The movement for people's communes in 1958 and the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution in 1966 promoted "the movement to suppress religions." It is said that about 40,000 Buddhist temples were destroyed and about 500,000 priests were killed. In 1978 "freedom of religion" was tentatively affirmed, and there has been a slight revival of Buddhism, has risen slightly, but still there is no freedom to propagate, so there is no hope for any increase in the number of Buddhists. According to the historical materialism of Marxism-Leninism, religion belongs to the superstructure, which stands on the social, economic basis. Therefore, unless China abandons historical materialism, Buddhism will always be under the threat of extinction when the basis is changed. A recent report says that Buddhism in this country is Mahanaya, and that it is forced to serve the socialist government.

12. The Republic of China

Zen and a fusion of Confucianism and Taoism had prevailed up through the end of World War II, and a Buddhist Association of the Republic of China was formed. Thus Buddhism has been flourishing in this country.

13. Mongolia and the Soviet Union

In the 13th century Buddhism was transmitted to Mongolia, and Lamaism prevails there now. At the time of the Revolution in 1921 it was strictly oppressed, but soon after that the "freedom of religion" was recognized. In the Soviet Union, when it was called Russia, the Greek Orthodox Church was the national religion, but was purged through Revolution. Now the main religion there is Lamaism.

14. The Republic of Korea

After World War II Buddhists organized a Buddhist Society of the Republic of Korea, and

Buddhism has been fairly flourishing. There are a wide variety of Buddhist sects, and they are playing an active role there.

15. The People's Republic of Korea

Since the rise of the People's Republic of Korea in 1948, we have had no information about the internal situations of this country in detail. After recognizing the "freedom of religion," a North Korea Board of General Affairs of Buddhism was organized. Here also the people suffered a great shock and damage in the tragic Korean War in 1950. A recent report says that the Buddhist League of the People's Republic of Korea sends representatives to the Supreme Council of the People's Commissars.

16. Hong Kong

Buddhism is fairly flourishing in Hong Kong now because of the many people who immigrated there from the People's Republic of China, where religionists were persecuted. They came seeking freedom of faith.

17. Singapore

Singapore, whose name comes from simha pura in Sanskrit and means the city of the lion, is a multiracial country composed mainly of Chinese, Malaysians and Indians. Therefore, naturally the religions there are diverse. Mahayana Buddhism, which is spreading particularly among the overseas Chinese merchants living in the country, who form 70% of the whole population, is outstanding. The second most popular is Hinduism. Islam, Taoism and Christianity are also flourishing.

18. Malaysia

During the period from the 7th to the 13th centuries, Hinayana Buddhism and Hinduism were introduced to Malaysia. Mahayana Buddhism seems to have spread with the immigration of overseas Chinese

to this country. Today the national religion of Malaysia is Islam.

18. The Philippines

Since the Philippines were under the colonial policy of Spain for a long time, 82% of the people are Catholic, and therefore it is the only Catholic country in Southeast Asia. There are many Muslims around Mindanao Island, and Buddhists, who are mainly overseas Chinese.

19. Bangladesh

This country separated from Pakistan and declared its independence in 1971. The national religion is Islam. In the mountainous area of Chittagong, there live some Buddhists also.

20. Indonesia

There are many remains of Buddhist temples in different parts of this country, that remind us of the flourishing Buddhism which was protected and supported by the successive kings of the old days. But today the original spirit of Buddhism has been lost, and overseas Chinese merchants adhere to the Buddhism of secular merit, which has spread around the big cities.

21. Japan

Since the introduction of Buddhism in the days of the Emperor Kinmei, Buddhism has been closely involved in Japanese politics and culture. Soon after its introduction, Buddhism was warmly protected by successive Emperors and became the religion for the defense of the country, supporting the national aim of a "Peaceful Country." Buddhism assimilated with traditional Japanese ideas of ancestor worship, forming a "Japanese Buddhism" fit for the Japanese heart and natural features. The realistic and practical aspects of Japanese Buddhism have been harmonized with the people's life and have

had a great effect on Japanese thought, literature, economy and industry.

Many different Buddhist Sects have been formed such as Shingon, Tendai, Jodo, Jodo-Shinshu, Soto, Rinzaï and Nichiren. Today, with new Buddhist sects such as Soka-gakkai, Risshokosei-kai, Reiyu-kai, etc., Buddhism is flourishing in Japan. After World War II, Buddhism temporarily declined with the collapse of the nation's economic basis, but it soon revived and has begun to directly lead and teach the people through means of education, publications and so on. Thus Buddhism has been digested and filtered into both the spiritual and material life of the Japanese people, who have unconsciously been living the way of Buddhism. But on the other hand, we cannot deny the fact that, as Dr. Luckman, T. indicates, Buddhism in Japan has now become a "religion in name only" or a "nonsubstantial religion," which has accelerated the decay of the Japanese heart.

As seen above, Buddhism originated in India more than two thousand years ago, and has spread and circulated throughout every Asian country. In some countries Buddhism has assimilated into the people's life and is still flourishing, but in other countries it has been pushed to the brink of extinction through oppression. In still other countries it has fallen to a worldly level, being taken over by newly risen foreign religions.

However, it can be said that the most widespread or prevailing religion in Asia is Buddhism. Therefore, in this age of decadent confusion, the "old and new" teaching of Buddha will surely guide the Asian people toward harmony between nature and man, and toward the fusion of bipolar ideologies or peoples. It thereby will contribute to Asian peace. I believe this could be done through the new thought of the Unification Principle.

VII. Requisites for Modern Religion

Today culture has come to a deadlock, and the creation of a new culture based upon a new thought is

keenly demanded. Dr. Sang Hun Lee says, "In Unification Principle it is said that man has lost the original human nature as a result of his fall. Existential philosophy also says that man has lost his original nature, and it is generally said that original humanity has been lost in this highly developed scientific civilization."

Now, we must find a sure way to restore the lost original human nature and to solve the many problems of this confused Asia, searching for various counterplans to fulfill this purpose. In conclusion, it should be a philosophy or thought, more specifically, a religion or faith that could provide support in pointing out problems, appeal to Asian reason, and point the way toward the happiness for which Asian people have searched.

Here we must not forget that the religion that could fulfill this purpose should be a sound, moderate and steady one. Koyo Sakaino, a famous religious thinker of the Meiji Era, presented a thesis on the "requisites of sound faith." He pointed out five necessary conditions for a sound and ideal faith. These five conditions are:

1. intelligence
2. emotion

Sound faith is realized on the harmony of emotion and intelligence.

3. earthly practicality

Earthly practicality here does not mean worldly secularism.

4. active approach

Necessarily standing aloof from the world, it nevertheless should have a dynamic and active approach toward actual society and the world.

5. ethical activity

Religious activity should always be ethical.

This is a summary of his thesis issued in Meiji Era, but are these the outdated ideas of an old religious man? No, absolutely not. This is a splendid and wonderful idea for religion, that will point out a new direction in the chaotic Asian sky. Starting from the real state of this confused Asian society, we must make efforts to find a stable way for eternal peace, which has been the earnest wish of all mankind, through a

sound faith possessing the necessary conditions. A religion based upon scientific intelligence would never deny or neglect the worth of material civilization nor despise human emotion and desire, as traditional religions have done from the sense of sin, but admit their true value. Religion must not be closed in an old bag forcing people to worship or believe without reason, but be open to all people to be closely contacted, understood or even freely discussed toward deeper content and firmer faith. Religion must exist not to teach people how to die but how to live.

Here, we must abandon the rigid attitude to adhere the idea that "mine is the only right and orthodox religion and all others are wrong and heretical." Just as the blood is renewed when cholesterol is eliminated, I keenly hope that through the stimulation of religious reformation a new Asia will be born.

VIII. Buddhism and Christianity

I would like to point out some similarities and differences between Buddhism and Christianity, both of which have spread all over the world. I think the similarity between the two would be a good reminder of the concept behind an Asian Community. Though I am afraid that it is impossible for me to fully understand and explain the profound doctrines of these two religions, I would like to try within the bounds of my knowledge.

Similar points		
A. Both are worldwide in scale and the founder of each is the embodiment of the original truth.		
B. The purpose of each is the salvation of all mankind through missionaries.		
Different points		
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Concerning; God	Buddhism <u>atheism</u> A transcendental being is a man who perceives	Christianity <u>theism</u> God created the universe and

	the truth. The Buddha nature exists in all things of the universe, which are controlled by the law of causality. Therefore every person has the Buddha nature.	all things belong to Him. God is almighty, with authority and power to control all things in the universe. Man can never become God.
Spiritual awakening	Everyone has the possibility of enlightenment.	Only those who believe in Jesus as the Christ, through the Bible, can restore their original relationship to God.
Relation between man and other creatures	Nature and man are on an equal status and are connected in the relation of mutual reliance, because they both have the Buddha nature.	God created man in His perfect image, gave him a soul, and has given him the right to rule animals and all other things in the universe. Therefore animals were made to serve man.
Sin	Man commits sin because he rebels against the law of "All things are in one body" and falls into egoism.	Man commits sin when he rebels against the Will of God. (original sin)
Salvation	Man achieves salvation through perceiving himself as closely connected to his	Man achieves salvation through Christ by repenting of his sins

environment and through realizing his role as a human being.	before God.
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When we see the similar and different points of these two religions described above, we can notice the fact that the differences between the natural features, climate and experiences of each founder brought about differences in doctrine. But still there exists something essentially in common between these religions, so both can search for common ground toward the way to save our fragmented and confused Asia and to realize the Asian Community, I believe.

IX. The Way of Inquiring Buddhists Today

As stated so far, Buddhism and Christianity share religious influence in Asia with one another. But when we investigate the present state of Asian Buddhism, even in India, the cradle of Buddhism, it has declined. In mainland China it has been under the threat of extinction since the revolution, while the Korean Peninsula, from which Buddhism was transmitted to Japan, has sadly been divided into two parts. Observing the present situation, I think that the Buddhists in Japan have a great role to guide and lead Asian Buddhism and contribute to Asian peace. How can a Buddhist in Japan, not an external Buddhist but a real seeker after truth, practice the way of Buddha and play the important role for Asian peace?

In ancient times Buddhism played a great role in many aspects of Japanese people's life, and was the most important source of culture, as seen in the education and medical service performed by Empress Kohmyo. But owing to extensive warfare in the Middle Ages and to the policy of succeeding Tokugawa Shoguns, Buddhists at last became mere propagators. After World War II, because of such changes in the social situation as the prohibition of religious education, land reform and the fall in the monetary value, the economical base and leading power of the priests were destroyed. Therefore priests began to seek profit through funerals and other Buddhist ceremonies.

But today, the Japanese people's great efforts have brought about astonishing economic growth. People's standard of living has risen, and the average life span has been prolonged. As a result of the changed situation in Japan, the reformation of Buddhism is again being called for by some true inquiring Buddhists. This is a very hopeful trend, but still their thinking is limited to very narrow applications such as in the home and office or in one's inner life. This is the day when we cannot live as only one individual or one company. Furthermore, one people cannot exist in isolation without contact with other peoples and nations, as is made apparent in current trade friction problems.

Therefore, we must now reconsider Shinran's teaching on "mercy, transcending all differences in social standing" and on "universal brotherhood," which teaches us to love not only our parents and brothers, but all creatures and nature as well. Considering all people on earth as our brotherhood we must make efforts, each suited to their own personality or ability, toward the purpose of realizing world peace through expanding the breeding grounds of religious activity to include education, medical service, the arts, etc. Some people say that Buddhists must stand aloof from social change, but I think each Buddhist must adjust to social change and meet the needs of the times, devoting himself to the way of practicing the Buddha's Teaching. This, I believe, is the true responsibility and duty of a Buddhist today.

In conclusion, I would have liked to refer to the topic of "Buddhism and the Unification Principle," but will omit it because I believe you may already understand through what I have explained so far. If you would like to know about Buddhism and Unification Thought in more detail, please read the book "Unification Principle and Buddhism -- the Heart of Mercy and Truth" by Seiji Takeuchi. It is a very good book to clearly understand through a simple description.

The theme of this thesis is "The Concept of an Asian Community and the Unity of Religions," and just as I feared in the beginning, the theme is still too big for me to round off. However, I would like to continue to study and reinforce my understanding. Finally, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the authors of the

books to which I referred.

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