Special Series:

Dialogues on Eastern Wisdom (1)

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As the curtain rises on the 21st century, how will humankind create a "century of life"? How can the East and the West work together toward world peace and the glory of human civilization? The idea of a dialogue between three eminent scholars, each of whom has helped to open up the "wisdom of the East" to the world, was conceived at a meeting in 1980 between Prof. Ji Xianlin and Daisaku Ikeda, president of Soka Gakkai International (SGI). Joined by Prof. Jiang Zhongxin, their three-way dialogue continues today via correspondence. The dialogue focuses on Oriental thought and the Lotus Sutra, in the process offering insight into the true nature of Eastern and Western civilizations. The discussion begins with the topics of "Human Nature and Society" and "Eastern Culture and Western Culture," proceeds to the concept that "Heaven and Humankind Are Merged in One"—the essence of Chinese philosophy—and from there to "A Criticism on Opinions That Mahayana Buddhism Was Not Preached by Buddha" and "A Discussion on the Lotus Sutra." With the kind permission of the three scholars, the Institute has decided to reproduce a series of extracts from their dialogue.

Human Nature and Society

Ji: It is both an unparalleled honor and a pleasure for me to have this opportunity to engage in these discussions with you, Mr. Ikeda. Looking over your various published works, particularly your dialogues with Arnold Toynbee that appeared in English under the title Choose Life, I feel that in many respects our opinions with regard to various questions must be the same, or very close in nature. For that reason, I believe that this chance that we have to exchange views will surely be profitable for us both.

Ikeda: Thank you for those kind words. It is indeed a delight for me to have this unexpected opportunity to talk with a person such as yourself, one of the most distinguished scholars of China and someone who is my senior both in years and experience in life.

I am also delighted that Professor Jiang Zhongxin of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, who was one of your former students, Professor Ji, is able to participate in our discussions. I will join him in the "student" category and will thus feel at greater ease in making my contributions to the discussion.

When I engaged in the dialogues with Dr. Toynbee that you have just mentioned, I was forty-four years old. At that time Dr. Toynbee said to me, "Dialogue is the only means by which to open a viable way for humanity. You are still young. I hope you will continue to engage in dialogues with the intellectual leaders of the world." And at that time, Dr. Toynbee voiced the opinion that China would play a key role in the future in bringing about world unity.

Now, in this last year of the twentieth century, as we face the third millennium of our era, I feel it is highly significant that I should join in these discussions with two of the intellectual leaders of China.

Jiang: I am rather embarrassed that Mr. Ikeda should include me among the intellectual leaders of China—surely he exaggerates. Professor Ji in my highly respected teacher from former times, and Mr. Ikeda is my most highly respected seniors. That I, a mere student, should be afforded this opportunity to participate in such meaningful discussions for me a truly great stroke of fortune. I will do my best to be worthy of the honor and to learn all I can from these two distinguished participants.

Ji: Since we have mentioned the Toynbee dialogues, I would like to begin the discussion with the question raised in them, one of the most basic questions pertaining to human beings, namely, the question of human nature.

It seems to me that there are two main aspects to this question. First, just what is human nature and how is it to be defined? And second, what is the nature of good, and what is the nature of evil? This question of good and evil has always been a very important one in the history of Chinese philosophy, and one taken up often in the philosophy of other countries of the world.

Ikeda: Just as you say, the question of just what constitutes the nature of human beings and of what constitutes good are basic to all concerns of human life. These are questions that have long occupied the religions and philosophical systems of past and present, east and west alike.

For example, in ancient Greece, Plato criticized the belief held by the

Sophists that "the good is that which is pleasurable." In contrast to this view he expounded his Idea of the Good, a concept that concerns the true nature of all living beings.

Christianity, inheriting the Judaic concept of a single god, viewed philosophy as "the handmaid of theology." As this phrase suggests, its concern was less with the inner makeup of human beings than it was with the relationship between human beings and God. With regard to the nature of good, therefore, it proceeded on the premise that goodness is that which pertains to God.

In contrast to these beliefs, if we survey the overall development of Chinese philosophy, we see that it is marked by one outstanding characteristic.

In the past I have had the honor of delivery lectures at Peking University on three occasions—in 1980, 1984, and 1990. On each of these occasions, I was warmly welcomed by Professor Ji, and I take this opportunity to once more extend my thanks. In 1992 I also had a chance to deliver a lecture at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. In all of these addresses, I stressed that Chinese philosophy has consistently used the human being as its standard or fixed point of reference.

In Chinese thought, the concept of *tian* or Heaven is in some ways comparable to the concept of God in the monotheistic thought of Western culture. But while God and the human being are viewed as separate entities in monotheistic thought, in Chinese thought there is no such separation between Heaven and human beings. As the tradition phrase has it, "Heaven and humankind are merged in one."

In other words, Heaven exists within the individual. Thus the mainstream of Chinese thought speaks of the "heavenly nature" that is inherent in humankind. I would like to speak more a little later about this concept of the unity of Heaven and the human being.

Chinese philosophy thus focuses its attention upon the human being, never ceasing to consider the relationships that exist between the human being and society or between the human being and the natural world. During the troubled years of the Spring and Autumn and Warring States periods, the leaders of the so-called Hundred Schools of Chinese thought appeared, like so many stars in a galaxy, to propound their views, each striving to act as a teacher and advisor to the ruler in guiding human society along the path of proper development.

Mencius: Human Nature Is Good

Jiang: I recall in the fall of 1992, you, Mr. Ikeda, were given the title of Honorary Research Professor of the Chinese Academy of Social Sci-

ences, and you delivered your lecture at the time you received the title. In your lecture, which was entitled "An Ethos of Symbiosis," you discussed the concept of symbiosis in East Asian culture and presented penetrating analysis of Confucian thought and the historical role it has played in that culture.

I was fortunate in being able to attend the lecture and learned much from it. I was particularly impressed by the fact that you cited the late Premier Zhou Enlai as an example of the ideal human embodiment of the "Ethos of Symbiosis."

Ji: In China the debate on the question of human nature dates back to the Confucian school of the pre-Qin period. Book 7, part A of the Confucian text known as the *Mencius* states: "Mencius said,.... That which a gentleman follows as his nature is not added to when he holds sway over the Empire, nor is it detracted from when he is reduced to straightened circumstances. This is because he knows his allotted station. That which a gentleman follows as his nature, that is to say, benevolence, rightness, the rites and wisdom, is rooted in his heart and manifests itself in his face, giving it a sleek appearance. It also shows in his back and extends to his limbs, rendering their message intelligible without words."

The Confucian philosopher Mengzi or Mencius here is saying that the qualities of benevolence, rightness, rites and wisdom, which make up his Heaven-given nature, are inherent in him from the time of his birth.

This assertion of Mencius that the nature of the human being is inherently good has for over two thousand years exercised a profound influence over Chinese philosophy. In the *Three Character Classic*, a text that in traditional Chinese society was used as a primer for children learning to read, we see this influence reflected in the very opening words, which read: "Human beings at birth / Are naturally good. / Their natures are much the same / But nurture causes them to draw apart."

Ikeda: One reason that Mencius' theory of the innate goodness of human nature has for so long been recognized as the orthodox doctrine of Confucian teaching is no doubt the fact that it is based on Confucius doctrine of the Mandate of Heaven and fits well with his concept of Heaven. It holds, that is, that the nature with which we are endowed at birth is "heaven-bestowed" or heavenly in its characteristics. Thus it must be marked by goodness, just as Heaven itself is.

Jiang: This is the idea stated in the opening words of another important

Confucian text, the *Zhongyong or Mean*, which read: "What Heaven has endowed is called the nature. Following that nature is called the Way."

Ji: Mencius develops his theory of the goodness of human nature through his debate with the philosopher Gaozi, who held that human nature is neither good nor not-good. Gaozi refused to assent to Mencius' view of the goodness of human nature. On the contrary, he stated: "The nature is like swirling water. Open a passage for it in the east, and it will flow east; open a passage for it in the west, and it will flow west. Human nature does not distinguish between good and not-good any more than water distinguishes between east and west." (*Mencius*, Bk. 6A)

Ikeda: Mencius replies to Gaozi's argument in the following way: "It is true that water does not distinguish between east and west, but does it fail to distinguish between up and down? The goodness of human nature is like the downward course of water. There is no human being lacking in the tendency to do good, just as there is no water lacking in the tendency to flow downward." This is how Mencius develops his argument.

Jiang: Mencius' theory of the goodness of human nature is closely allied with the idea of good expressed by Confucius, particularly as embodied in the moral ideal of *ren*, which is usually translated as benevolence or humaneness. Confucius' ideal of *ren* may be taken to mean loving others—that is, the humane or benevolent person is one who loves others.

This concept of humaneness or love for others finds expression in two different aspects of human behavior. One aspect is embodied in the saying, "If you would progress, you must first help others to progress; if you would attain something, you must first help others to attain it." The other is expressed in the word, "What you do not want others to do to you, do not do to others."

Mencius said that a heart that cannot bear to look on the misfortune of others without being moved is a heart of humaneness. And he believed that all persons are endowed with a heart that will not permit them to do injury to others. The reason that people possess this inward virtue of humaneness, that they cannot look on the misfortune of others without being moved in heart, that impels them to love others, is the

fact that human nature is inherently good. Thus Mencius' theory of the goodness of human nature and the ideal of humaneness or love of others expounded by Confucius belong to the same line of thought, the same philosophical tradition.

Xunzi: Human Nature Is Evil

Ji: As you know, however, there was a quite different theory of human nature propounded by Xunzi or Xun Kuang, who was born around 310 B.C.E., shortly before the founding of the Qin dynasty. He was a representative of one branch of the Confucian school, but opposed the Mencian theory of the goodness of human nature, instead asserting that it is in fact evil in nature.

In an essay entitled "Human Nature Is Evil," he writes: "Human nature is evil; its goodness derives from conscious activity." The word that Xunzi uses to designate this "conscious activity," *wei*, in modern Chinese has the meaning of "false," as in the term "true or false." But Xunzi is using it in a somewhat different sense. What he means is that the physiological components of a human being are possessed from the time of birth, but that the aspects of the individual's character that pertain to matters of etiquette and morality are the result of conscious human activity—they are human creations.

The innate nature of the human being is simply the basis to which human activity or effort is then applied. But if there were no such innate nature, then there would be nothing to which human activity could be applied. On the other hand, only after such conscious human activity has been applied to the innate nature does it manifest the quality of beauty.

Xunzi says: "Mencius said, the fact that human beings learn shows that their nature is good. I say this is not so; this comes of his having neither understood human nature nor perceived the distinction between the nature and conscious activity. The nature is what is given by Heaven; one cannot learn it; one cannot acquire it by effort."

Xunzi is saying that the human nature of the individual is what is inherent in him or her from the time of birth. It is not something learned, but naturally endowed at the time of birth. But standards of etiquette and moral values are created by the sages and hence such values are not innately present in the individual.

What Xunzi means by the term "evil" is the physiological makeup of the individual, the natural wants and desires of the living being—something like what we in present day terms would call human instinct.

Ikeda: Xunzi's political thought, particularly in comparison to that of Confucius and Mencius, lays less stress upon the concept of virtue and more on that of ritual—he advocates a kind of governance by means of ritual principles. At the same time, I think we can say that he regards as important not so much the Heaven-endowed nature that the individual is born with, but rather the cultivation and refinement that can be brought to this nature through the influence of learning.

As you have just pointed out, Professor Ji, Xunzi's concept of evil is not the same as that of "original sin" found in Christian teaching, but closer to what we would call human instinct.

Ji: Xunzi is of course clearly wrong when he refers to instinct as evil. Human beings may, as the traditional phrase has it, represent "the lord of all creation," but they are still no more than a species of animal. And as both the researches of the scientists and the observations of ordinary individuals tell us, all living beings, animal and plant alike, are endowed with instincts.

To go into the nature of instinct would lead us into a very complicated discussion, but we may here simply say that animals display three types of instinct. These are, namely, the instinct for survival, the instinct for adequate food and warmth, and the instinct for development. By the instinct for development I mean both the instinct for the growth and development of the individual being, and for some sort of development or perpetuation after its death, or what we would call the desire for the survival and continuation of its genetic line.

The philosopher Gaozi, whom we referred to earlier in our discussion of Mencius, declared that "The appetite for food and sex is the nature." The desire for food may apply to all three of the types of instinct I have just mentioned, while that for sex applies to the instinct for the continuation of the descendents of the individual.

Instinct is a concept that applies to physiological factors, while the terms good and evil are ethical in nature. One must not confuse these two categories. If one takes instinct to be the innate nature of the human being, then one cannot say that it is either good or bad. Neither the theory of the goodness of nature nor the theory of its evilness can be proved in this manner.

If I were to state my own view of human nature, I would say that it is basically much like that put forward by Gaozi, though there are many aspects in which my view would differ from his. In any event, such a question is quite different in nature from that relating to the definition of good and evil. What I think we should consider here is the question

of where this thing called human instinct comes from—what I have referred to earlier as the instinct for survival, for food, and for growth or development.

Different religions give different answers to this question. Some say that instinct is "the gift of the gods" or endowed in one by King Mahābrahman. Those brought up in the Chinese cultural sphere say that it comes from the Creator or Old Man Heaven.

Proponents of Buddhism speak of the egolessness of the living being, of the five components that make up such a being, or of the union of causes and conditions that brings such a being into existence. Buddhism thus offers an explanation that is quite different from the other explanations I have referred to, one that operates on a higher and more sophisticated plane.

The Buddhist Concept of Dependent Origination

Ikeda: The technical terms you have just cited, Professor Ji, are all related to the Buddhist concept of dependent origination. According to this view, when one particular cause or set of causes exists, then a certain result comes about; when one entity comes into being, so does another entity. In other words, the manifold phenomena of creation do not exist as separate entities or come into being as such—all are linked to one another and come into being through mutual interaction.

Both human beings and other living beings represent a temporary combination or joining together of the so-called five components, namely, form, perception, conception, volition, and consciousness. The individual being is nothing more than a temporary coming together of these five elements.

The term "form" refers to the material aspect of the being, the physical body of an animal or a human being, its physiological functions. With this material aspect as their basis, the other four components, which represent the mental functions of the being, make their appearance.

The form or material component of the being regulated and maintained through the physiological functions, and it is from this aspect of the individual being that instinct arises. Through the combination of the physical form of the individual and the mental components—perception, conception, volition, and consciousness—the high level mental and spiritual activities of the human being are made possible, and it is on this level of development that we may begin to speak of ethical concepts.

The states characterized by the concepts of good and evil are depen-

dent upon the type of consciousness that is developed in the human being. If the consciousness of the individual is dominated by *bonnō*—earthly desires or deluded passions—then the individual is characterized by an "evil mind." But when bodhi or enlightenment becomes the dominant factor in the consciousness of the individual, then the evil mind is transformed into a mind of goodness. The view of the individual as a temporary combination of the five components thus agrees with the distinction that Professor Ji has just made between the instinct of the individual, which represents a physiological concept, and the qualities of good or evil, which represent an ethical concept.

Ji: My own view is that the instincts of living organisms have nothing to do with good or evil. If you wish to speak in terms of good or evil, then I would say that, as far as living beings are concerned, the instincts for survival, for food and warmth, and for development are all good.

However, the Creator did not make just one kind of living being—he made a huge number of different beings. If he had made only one kind of living being, then the problem would be very simple. That one kind of living would be free to follow its instincts, to develop without any hindrance or outward restraints, until in time it had spread all over the globe, until the whole world was filled with just that one kind of being.

But that is not what the Creator did. He created many different kinds of living beings, and as a result, clashes and contradictions arose among them. Every living being learned to fight for the space needed to insure its own survival, and human beings were the first to take up the fight. It would almost seem as though the Creator were playing a joke on living beings.

The Chinese philosopher Laozi no doubt had this situation in mind when he declared that "Heaven and Earth are not humane, / Regarding all things as straw dogs." In ancient China, straw images of dogs were fashioned for use in religious ceremonies, but after they had served their purpose, they were discarded as useless. Laozi is suggesting that Heaven and Earth treat living beings in the same callous fashion.

The Creator on the one hand urges living beings to develop in accordance with their innate instincts, but on the other hand curbs that process of development so that all living beings will have a chance to develop. At the same time that the Creator creates a particular type of being, he also creates another being or beings that will oppose it and act as its natural enemy. In this way a balance is preserved, and no one particular type of being is permitted to monopolize the living space available in the world.

Ikeda: These terms that Professor Ji has been using such as Creator or Heaven refer, I would guess, to the concept known in Buddhism as the universal life force. This universal life force is also designated by the words Buddha or Thus Come One, and in the Lotus Sutra by the term "Original Buddha from time without beginning."

As Professor Ji has just indicated, this universal life force acts to maintain a state of harmony among the manifold beings of creation, working to nourish and sustain all forms of vital life. In Buddhism this dynamic force for harmony is known as compassion.

Ji: But human beings, because of their special abilities, stand out above all the other beings of the animal kingdom, and of course above those of the plant kingdom. And this is where the problem of good and evil comes in.

Living beings other than humans care only about their own survival and development and take no thought for other types of beings. As we have seen, the Creator or the forces of Nature impose this restriction upon them. But human beings are not like this. Human beings are not only impelled by instinct, but are capable of controlling and directing their instincts so that, in addition to working for their own development, they are capable of aiding the development of other human beings or other types of beings.

Ikeda: Yes. This concern for both "self and others" that arises out of the life force of human beings and works for the advancement of both self and others is what is known as compassion. The thirteenth century Japanese Buddhist leader Nichiren in his lectures on the Lotus Sutra describes this state as "rejoicing in both self and others."

Characteristics of the Human Life Force

Ji: When human beings reach this level of development, only then, I believe, can we begin talk about the concept of goodness. Goodness, I would say, is in direct proportion to the amount of control that is exercised over instinct. In this sense, the qualities of good and evil are imposed at a later stage than is instinct, which is inborn. In this respect I am in general in agreement with the view of Mencius.

Ikeda: Speaking from the point of view of a Buddhist believer, I would agree with what Professor Ji has just said. To exert oneself for the sake of others, to act compassionately, is one of the characteristic marks of the human life force. We have spoken earlier of the concept of egolessness—this is the ego or self that benefits others. For this reason, in Bud-

dhism this human life force is often referred to as the vessel or instrument of the Dharma or the "correct instrument of the Sacred Way."

These terms indicate that human beings have within them the ability to become enlightened to and to embody the compassion and wisdom that are present within the universal life force, and to give living expression to these qualities through the human revolution.

Ji: I would say that at present it is very simple to set up a standard by which one may judge whether an individual is a good person or a bad person. If the individual spends sixty percent or more of his or her time and effort thinking about how to benefit others, and the remaining forty percent thinking of his or her own benefit, then that individual is a good person. The higher the proportion of time and effort spent thinking about others, the higher the proportion of goodness in the individual. But if the proportion spent thinking of one's own benefit is more than forty percent, such an individual cannot be called a good person.

Strictly speaking, however, there is no human being who can so completely master and overcome his instincts that he gives no thought at all for his own benefit but thinks solely of the benefits of others.

Ikeda: That's a very clear answer to the question of how to define good and evil. The definition of goodness you have just given, Professor Ji, corresponds well with the ideal of the Bodhisattva Way as set forth in Mahayana Buddhism.

Listening to Professor Ji's remarks just now, I am reminded of the Ten Worlds or ten realms of existence expounded in the philosophy of the Chinese Tiantai or T'ien-t'ai school of Buddhism. T'ien-t'ai thought holds that the original nature of the human being is endowed with both good and evil elements, the so-called "nature good" and "nature evil." In contrast to these, the good or evil that are actually manifested in the life condition of the living being are termed "practiced good" or "practiced evil." The theory of the Ten Worlds explains how one can advance step by step through a series of stages as a result of the "practiced good" that one carries out in one's actual life, that is, the degree to which one excels in benefiting others.

In the theory of the Ten Worlds, the lowest levels, those of hell dwellers, hungry spirits, beasts, and asura demons—the so-called "three evil realms of existence" or "four evil realms of existence"—represent realms manifested by a life condition that is concerned wholly with self-profit. These correspond, I assume, to what Professor Ji has termed

the evil person. According to Buddhist thought, such realms or life conditions are marked by suffering.

The good person in Professor Ji's definition corresponds to the realm of the bodhisattva or of the Buddha, the realm of one whose life condition is marked by control of the instincts. The term Buddha designates a life characterized by ultimate goodness. But followers of Buddhism such as myself aim rather to carry out the way or ideal of the bodhisattva, one who in actual society strives constantly to increase the proportion of activity that is devoted to benefiting or aiding others.

Jiang: Let me see if I can summarize what you two gentlemen have been saying.

The human being, or human instincts, are something inborn or part of the being from the time of birth. We are dealing here with a physiological concept. But when we speak of human goodness or evil, we are referring to behavior that is learned or acquired some time after birth. To say that someone does good or does evil is to apply an ethical concept.

These two types of concepts must not be confused. If they are confused, then one becomes involved in self-contradiction. Both the theory that human nature is innately good and the theory that it is innately evil are guilty of such contradiction.

The theory that human nature is innately good fails to answer the question why, if people are innately good, evil behavior should arise in society. And the theory that human nature is evil fails to explain why, if people are innately evil, good behavior should arise in society.

As Professor Ji has pointed out, there is one very important difference between human beings and animals, namely, the fact that human beings are capable of controlling their instincts. The degree to which a given individual may be said to be good or evil thus depends upon the degree to which the individual controls his or her instincts.

Strictly speaking, such control of the instincts comes about as a result of education and practice over an extended period of time. It is by no means easy to attain. Ethical or moral advancement is much more difficult to accomplish than intellectual advancement or technological advancement.

The goodness or evil of the individual is something that takes shape gradually, as the individual, acting as a member of society, becomes involved in various social relationships and is subject to various environmental influences. As the traditional saying has it, "Stay around red

ink and you get red, stay around black ink and you get black."

Confucian "Humaneness" and Buddhist "Compassion"

Ikeda: One of Nichiren's most important writings is entitled "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land." It is in the form of a dialogue between a host and a guest, and as the guest listens to the arguments of the host, he gradually becomes convinced of the rightness of the host's opinions.

The host then exclaims, "How gratifying! By associating with a friend who inhabits orchid-scented rooms, you have taken on the same scent; and like the mugwort growing in the hemp field, you have learned to stand up straight!" The latter part of the sentence is based on the belief that if mugwort plans grow up in a hemp field, they will learn to stand up straight as the hemp plants do.

This is an example of the kind of "environmental influence" you have just been speaking of.

Jiang: Yes. And there is the famous tale of how the mother of the philosopher Mencius moved three times in order that her young son would be in an environment conducive to his proper education and moral training. This is an illustration of the same principle.

Since goodness, which we have defined as the control of the instincts, is something that is learned later and is not innate at the time of birth, it is most important for the continuance and advancement of human culture that persons of learning should fulfill their historical responsibilities by taking a leading role in educational endeavors for the betterment of society as a whole.

Confucius described himself as one who "learns without flagging" and who "teaches without growing weary." And in this he typifies the degree to which the Confucius school has traditionally emphasized the importance of education and learning.

Confucianism stresses the importance of "practicing the way and nourishing virtue," while Mahayana Buddhism regards it as most important to "practice the bodhisattva way." Both represent positive social doctrines that see education as a means of directing human beings toward the attainment of goodness. The ideal of benevolence or humaneness espoused by Confucianism and that of compassion advocated by Mahayana Buddhism are both ethical ideals or concepts that are one in nature. Confucius expressed the idea by saying, "If you would progress, you must help others to progress," while the "bodhisattva way" expounded in Mahayana Buddhism teaches that if you would

seek salvation yourself, you must work for the salvation of others.

Among Chinese people, a kind or a good person is often referred to as a "bodhisattva," and doing good to others is lauded as an expression of a "bodhisattva heart."

Human Beings and Their Relationship with Society

Ji: Next I would like to consider the relationships between human beings and society.

I believe that in the course of a lifetime, human beings have many aims and obligations that they must carry out, and the question of just how they should do so is a highly complex one. But we may perhaps say that these obligations can be reduced to two fundamental categories.

First, people must deal in a proper manner with their fellow human beings. The education and training of the individual plays an important part in this question, since it forms the basis for a correct handling of one's relations with other human beings.

Second, people must deal correctly with the relationship between "heaven and man," that is, between human beings and the natural world. These two concerns represent the basic questions confronted in human life, and everyone, whether consciously or unconsciously, must face up to them.

Human beings cannot divorce themselves from society. Ancient India had its hermits and ancient China its gentlemen who lived a life of reclusion. But although such persons claimed that they were severing all their connections with society, in fact such a total withdrawal is impossible. No person can avoid having relationships with other human beings, and then problems or irritations arise through such relationships, some way must be found to solve or harmonize them.

This question of human relations is one of enormous importance, and all the world's major religions, which exercise a great influence in such matters, have each indicated how they think the problem should be dealt with. The Confucian teachings of China lay great stress upon the problem, and discuss it at length and in a very practical manner.

Ikeda: Just as you have stated, the Chinese Confucian writings provide us with a veritable treasure-house of wisdom on the ethical ideals that should be observed in the relations between one person and another. It is only natural that today, as we stand on the threshold of the twenty-first century, there should be renewed interest in these essential ideals expounded in the Confucian ethical writings.

Mahayana Buddhism too makes clear that religion should at all times

concern itself with questions of human relations and society, and is critical of any attitude or style of life that attempts to withdraw from society or transcend social values.

Chapter 19 of the Lotus Sutra, entitled "Benefits of the Teacher of the Law," describing those who expound the Law or teachings of the Buddha, says, "the words they speak will in all cases represent the Law of the Buddha, never departing from the truth." And the Chinese Buddhist leader, Tiantai, commenting on this passage in his *Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra*, states, "The regulating and productive activities of life [i.e., political and economic activities]—none of these depart from the truth."

And Nichiren, following the same train of thought, in a short piece entitled "The Kalpa of Decrease," writes: "A person of wisdom is not one who practices Buddhism apart from worldly affairs but, rather, one who thoroughly understands the principles by which the world is governed."

The bodhisattva ideal expressed in Mahayana Buddhism draws its vitality from the concept of compassion, a concept that is basically one in nature with that of benevolence or humaneness as expounded by Confucius. Now is surely the time for all humankind to reappraise and put into practice these ethical values of humaneness and compassion that have been nourished over the centuries by the people of eastern Asia.

Jiang: I am in complete agreement with Mr. Ikeda when he states that we must learn to reappraise and carry out these ethical values of benevolence and compassion that have been developed by the east Asian peoples. I believe that this is the correct approach and one that is highly realistic in nature.

Today, when humankind is about to embark on the twenty-first century, everyone must recognize that the various types of advanced technology that have developed so far—information technology, biotechnology, nanotechnology, etc.—will continue to develop at the same rapid rate as in the past. But technology itself, we must realize, is a double-edged sword, capable of bringing great benefit to humanity, but also of unleashing injury and devastating misfortune upon the human race as well.

This has already been fully demonstrated by the two types of potentialities—those for beneficial use and those for destruction—that are associated with nuclear technology. And scientists inform us that the three new types of technology I have just mentioned, which are now

developing so rapidly, pose threats that are far greater than those posed by nuclear technology.

It is not too much to say, therefore, that all of humanity at present stands at the crossroads of life and death, survival and destruction. Faced with such circumstances, there is only one path by which human beings can hope to remain alive. They must insure that these technologies that have been newly acquired are used for the benefit and happiness of humanity and do not become a threat to it. In particular, we must find some method of assuring that these new technologies are not employed to create weapons that are more threatening to humanity than nuclear arms. And the only way to accomplish this is by devoting all our energy to the practice of these ethical ideals of humaneness and compassion that have been developed by the peoples of eastern Asia.

If all persons, particularly those who command power and wealth, can learn to carry out the Confucian saying quoted earlier, "What you do not want others to do to you, do not do to others," that would constitute the most fundamental guarantee we could hope for the maintenance of world peace and the happiness of humanity.

I believe that, while human beings should regard technological advancement as of great importance, they should attach even greater importance to the concepts of good and evil as these are embodied in the human beings who control technology. Ethical concerns, those that teach how people can best proceed in their relations with one another, should be accorded the position of highest importance.

Human Beings and Their Relationship with Nature

Ji: I have spoken earlier of the need to deal correctly with the relationship between "heaven and man," and I would like now to address this question.

What do we mean by the word "heaven"? The various religions of the world have each given its own interpretation of the entity or entities that are referred to by this term. Some describe "heaven" as a kind of person—a divine person, if you will—who possesses a form and will. Others see it not as a personality but rather as a kind of governing principle, a directing force that insures that the countless phenomena of the universe carry out their movements in an orderly fashion.

My own understanding of the term "heaven" is that it refers to what we normally call Nature. It designates all the living beings on the earth such as animals and plants that surround human beings and make up their living environment. The term is thus relative to that designating human beings, and in some sense stands in contrast to it.

Before human beings had become what they are now, they were simple another type of animal. As such, they constituted a part of Nature. Heaven and man blended together harmoniously into a single entity and there was no kind of opposition between them.

But as human beings acquired the powers of intellect and came to surpass other animals in this respect, becoming in effect true human beings, then they began in some aspects to stand in opposition to the natural world, and they became, as the phrase has it, the lords of creation.

Nevertheless, in the larger sense, human beings continue as before to constitute a part of what we call Nature.

Ikeda: I agree with this opinion, namely, that human beings basically are part of the natural order.

Buddhism, which has been called a philosophy of causal relations, describes this close causal relationship that exists and must be maintained between human beings and the realm of nature.

Miaole, a scholar of the Chinese Tiantai school of Buddhism, in his *Annotations on the Profound Meaning of the Lotus Sutra*, discusses this relationship that exists between human beings and nature or their environment, employing the term "the oneness of life and its environment."

The word "life" here designates the living self of the being or the subjective world, while the word "environment" refers to the insentient environment or the objective world. If we take the term "life" to refer to human beings, then the term "environment" will refer to the global surroundings in which the human being lives, including its living organisms.

The relationship between the life force of human beings and the ecological conditions that surround them in Nature is described by the somewhat paradoxical term "two but not two."

Nichiren, referring to this doctrine of the "oneness of life and its environment", in a piece entitled "On Omens" speaks of the term "life" in the following manner: "The ten directions are the 'environment' and living beings are 'life.' To illustrate, environment is like the shadow, and life the body. Without the body, no shadow can exist, and without life, no environment. In the same way, life is shaped by its environment."

If we take the life force of the human being to be equivalent to what Nichiren here calls the "body," then the environment is like the "shadow." Just as the shadow cannot exist apart from the body, so human beings at all times form a single entity with their environment.

And if we wish to describe the mutual relations that exist between human beings and the environment in these terms, we would say that the living self depends upon the environment for its existence. That is, human beings depend upon the workings of the environment or natural ecological conditions for their growth and development. And conversely, as indicated by the statement above that "without life [there is] no environment," the environment must wait for the activities of human beings in order to take on a particular shape or undergo changes. Human beings thus play a key role in the creation of a particular environment, and must bear the responsibility for such creation.

Eastern and Western Views of Nature

Ji: Since human beings from the beginning lived within the natural world, they could not carry out the activities needed to acquire food, clothing, shelter and other necessities without doing so in relation to nature. They could not remain indifferent to nature, since all the things they needed for their livelihood were obtained from the natural world.

The question then is, how do they go about obtaining these things from nature? It seems to me there are two ways of doing so. If I may borrow the terminology of the "Gang of Four" era, one method may be called "armed struggle," and the other "peaceful struggle without resort to arms."

What I have termed "peaceful struggle" designates a relatively civilized method, one that does not rely upon weaponry or armed might, but takes from nature only what is necessary to meet one's own needs.

The other method, as the term indicates, relies upon weapons and military might, and looks upon the natural world as an enemy. This might not be the most apt analogy, but it is like the methods used by the bandits in the Chinese novel *Shuihu zhuan* or *Water margin*, who, if goods or loot are not immediately handed over, resort to any sort of violence until they get what they want.

These, it seems to me, represent the two basic approaches used by human beings in their relations with the natural world. And if we take a broad view of the world and divide it into the Eastern and Western spheres, we might say that the Eastern world has in general favored the more peaceful approach, while the West has tended to resort to force in order to conquer or subdue nature. Looking up the word "conquer" in the Chinese-English dictionary, I see that the phrase "to conquer nature" is given as one example of the usage of the word.

Ikeda: As you have just said, Professor Ji, traditional Chinese thought,

including that of both the Confucian and Taoist schools, takes a peaceful approach to the struggle with nature, one advocating harmonious relations with the natural world. And this same emphasis upon harmonious relations with nature is also characteristic of Buddhism, as exemplified in the concept of the "oneness of life and the environment" that I mentioned earlier. The Eastern view of nature is characterized by respect for the workings of nature and the maintenance of harmonious relations with its ecosystems, a view founded on the principle of harmony and nonviolent coexistence.

In contrast to this, the West in recent centuries has adopted a militant approach, one in which human beings stand in opposition to nature, endeavoring to control and manipulate the ecosystems of the natural world in order to fulfill their own wants and desires. And as a result, desire in time is transformed into greed, and control gives way to a kind of violent exploitation.

Many of the intellectual leaders with whom I have held dialogues have expressed concern over these differences in their views of nature that characterize the Eastern and Western worlds. Thus, for example, in my discussions with Arnold Toynbee, when I had explained to him the Buddhist concept of *Eshō Funi* or the "oneness of life and its environment," he responded by stating, "I should like to see *Eshō Funi* adopted all over the world as a religious belief involving a moral obligation." (*Choose Life*, p.42)

These differences in the Eastern and Western views of nature are rooted in profound differences in the modes of thought of the two cultures. I would like, therefore, in the next section of our talks, to take up this topic of a comparison of the ways of thought in Eastern and Western culture.

EASTERN CULTURE AND WESTERN CULTURE

Toward a Definition of Culture

Ikeda: In our last meeting we discussed the differences in their view of nature that characterize the Eastern and Western worlds. This time, I would like to turn the discussion to a comparison of the cultures of these two areas.

Animals, we have agreed, carry out a type of activity that is determined by instinct. Human beings, on the other hand, decide what kind of activity or activities they wish to engage in, and their decision is based upon the subjective judgment of the individual. This freedom and

subjectivity of action, we may say, is a special characteristic of human beings.

When human beings come to make their individual decisions regarding action, they do so not on the basis of instinct. Rather, their actions follow a system of modes of activity that they possess, which may be termed "culture."

Of course, human beings continue to possess certain aspects that mark them as a species of animal. But through a long process of evolution, human beings have succeeded in vaulting to a higher plane of development, one that differs from that of other animals, and once this has been accomplished, we may say that the true human being is born.

Delight and anger, joy and sorrow—emotions such as these are possessed by animals and humans alike. But even the cleverest animal is not capable of the type of activity that would allow it to reflect on its own inner being and to endeavor to transcend its present self and create a new self that is in some sense better. With such activity we enter the realm of ethics, a term that we have discussed earlier.

Thus, I believe we may say that human beings clearly differ from animals, and that difference lies in the fact that the former possess "culture," the factor that proves that they are indeed human beings.

But how do we define the word "culture"? Since the time of the British cultural anthropologist Sir Edward Tylor, many different definitions have been offered. Tylor himself states that "Culture or civilization represents a composite system embracing various abilities and customs that human beings as members of society have succeeded in acquiring, including such elements as knowledge, religious belief, art, morality, laws, customs, etc."

As you will see by the way he refers to "culture or civilization," Tylor makes no basic distinction between these two concepts. But what is your view regarding the term "culture," Professor Ji?

Ji: They say that the various scholars of the world have advanced over five hundred definitions of the word "culture." If so, then it would seem that it in fact has no definition. (Laughter)

My own understanding, shallow as it may be, is that culture is a kind of excellence created by both the mental and the material aspects of human beings.

Ikeda: That is a very apt way of putting it, one that penetrates to the very essence of the term "culture." Culture is indeed a composite entity formed through the advancements created by human beings, one that

includes within it such elements as customs, laws, art, morality, science and religion.

Jiang: Professor Ji's definition of culture without doubt conveys in a general way the essential nature of the concept. And I find myself on the whole agreeing with the definition offered by Mr. Ikeda.

According to these definitions, I think we can say that culture represents the sum total of the mental and material assets produced by human society. These assets have been created and stored up through the unremitting labor and intellectual activity of the human race.

The Theory of Two Cradles of Culture

Ji: With regard to the question of the cradle of human, there are two points of view. One holds that there was only one such cradle or place of origination, the other that there were a number of such places.

The former view maintains that only one people among the various peoples of the world served as the originator of culture, namely the Nordic race or the people of northern Europe. None of the remaining peoples of the world possessed any true culture, and in fact were the destroyers of culture. This is the theory put forward by those who subscribe to fascism, and, needless to say, is not one that we ourselves subscribe to.

I support the view that there were a number of cradles of culture. Whether large or small, every ethnic group in the world has created some form of culture, and in this sense all are contributors to human culture as a whole. Nevertheless, it is a historical fact that these various cultures differ greatly both in nature and in geographical extent, some of them having developed in almost complete isolation. Unless we recognize this fact, we can hardly pursue the question in a properly scientific manner, one that seeks to learn the truth through examination of the actual circumstances involved.

Ikeda: I too subscribe to the view that there are many cradles of culture. But it should be pointed out that, although few people would go so far as to embrace the fascist view that there is only one such cradle of culture, this whole question of the historical development of human culture or civilization is still very much influenced by Eurocentric modes of thought. That is, the kind of historical outlook that focuses mainly upon Europe, such as we see typically expressed in the writings of such nineteenth century thinkers as Hegel, Ranke or Marx, has continued to the present day to exercise a very strong influence.

This view of history derives from the fact that in the nineteenth century Europe did in truth dominate the world as a whole, and this image of oneself as "the center of the world" was then projected backward over the history of the preceding two or three thousand years.

At the same time, there were also historians who were keen enough to perceive the ways in which European culture had arrived at an impasse, and to present ideas that challenged this Eurocentric view of history. Among the most outstanding of these was Oswald Spengler, who in the midst of World War One published the first volume of his work *Decline of the West*, and Dr. Arnold Toynbee, author of the voluminous and highly influential *A Study of History*. Both of these works opposed the view of culture as springing solely from Europe and instead surveyed the development of humankind as a whole, describing in a dynamic and multiviewed manner the process by which various civilizations are born, reach a peak of development, and in time pass away.

We may note in this connection that Spengler identified eight different cultures that he believed had reached a high level of development, while Toynbee recognized twenty-one or twenty-three such centers of cultural development. More recently, Samuel P. Huntington, a professor of Harvard, has defined seven or eight important civilizations, and in his book entitled *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* describes the way in which the world order is evolving in the post-Cold War era.

Jiang: The author of *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* takes note of the fact that the civilizations of the East have been undergoing a process of rapid development and sees in this the possibility of dangerous confrontation with Western civilization. His work in this sense is intended as a warning to Western society of the potential dangers involved. Such fears, it seems to me, can be understood as a kind of denial of the older Eurocentric view of history we have been discussing.

The Growth of Society and Cultural Exchange

Ji: Ever since human beings first appeared, there has been some kind of cultural exchange, we may suppose. One group of people discover a new way of obtaining food, and other people learn it from them—this is the process of cultural exchange. The example I have just given, of course, represents the process at its simplest and most primitive level. But as historical development advanced, human beings formed them-

selves in clan-based units or community groups, and cultural exchange then took place among these various groups. And later on, we have the formation of ethnic and national groups. Cultural exchange takes place among these ethnic groups or nationalities, and in this way the process of cultural exchange becomes ever larger in scale and richer in content.

Today we enjoy a type of cultural exchange that involves all the different nations of the world, each contributing to make up the gloriously varied phenomena we call human culture. Through the process of cultural exchange, the scope of human activities has become increasingly enriched, and the life span of the individual has been lengthened. Cultural exchange may indeed be the most important factor contributing to the advancement of human society.

Ikeda: I agree fully with what you have just said about cultural exchange. Since the beginning of human history, people have evolved different kinds of cultures and these have exercised an influence on one another. It would not be too much to say that no culture has ever evolved without undergoing such outside influence in the fields of language, music, art, architecture, and so forth.

When we come to consider the subject of cultural exchange between the East and the West, the example that comes immediately to my mind is that of the so-called Silk Road, a subject that you two gentlemen are both specialists in. The Silk Road, which stretched across the Asian continent, a vast network of main routes and feeder routs linking desert oases and outposts in the steppe region, served not only for the transportation and exchange of material goods, but for a rich process of cultural exchange between East and West.

It was though the Silk Road that the Iranian and Scythian cultures were disseminated and in time contributed greatly to world culture as a whole. Buddhism, which originated in India, also spread throughout the regions of Asia via the Silk Road, and other religions such as Christianity and Islam which flourished in the vicinity of the Silk Road exercised a vast influence upon the art, architecture and other facets of the different cultures of the world.

The culture of Japan, a country that represents the eastern terminus of the Silk Road, represents in a sense a fusion of the various cultures introduced via that road from northern and southern Korea, China, and the regions of southeast Asia.

Once so influential, the Silk Road later began to decline in importance around the eighth century. One reason for this decline was the fact that the Saracen Empire had cut off the routes that had earlier connected

East and West. And at a somewhat later date, Mongol invasions of the same area destroyed the oasis towns that had been important stopping places on the Silk Road.

Some ten years ago, the Min-On Concert Association, which I founded, sponsored a presentation entitled "A Silk Road Musical Journey" in which musicians, singers and dancers from four countries, China, the Soviet Union, Turkey and Japan, performed jointly, the group making appearances all over Japan. At that time relations between China and the Soviet Union were strained, and it was hardly conceivable that participants from these four countries should appear together on the same stage. And yet the performances took place, constituting a resounding cheer for friendship and cultural interchange.

Today more than ever before, we need this kind of bringing together of plain people, those who underlie the whole general area of culture, a coming together that transcends boundaries of race, political systems or ideology.

The Silk Road joined together the East and the West of the era in which it flourished. And at that time the Buddhism that was centered in the Gandhara region of India was absorbing influences from Greek culture of the West and was in the process of forming what we now know as Mahayana Buddhism. The Silk Road in this sense might also be called the Buddha Road.

The concepts of East and West in time underwent various historical changes, but we may say in general that it was the Silk Road that made possible cultural exchange between these two major areas, and in doing so contributed greatly to the creation of human culture as a whole.

Jiang: Professor Ji made a very apt and important point when he observed that cultural exchange has contributed greatly to the advancement of human society. Professor Ji himself has in the past conducted scientific research in a number of different fields of learning and in this respect has become directly involved in questions of cultural interchange. And he has made important contributions to effects for greater cultural exchange in matters pertaining to social practice. His conclusions are thus based both theory and practice.

Mr. Ikeda too has a profound understanding of the meaning and importance of cultural exchange. Up to the present he was consistently taken part in activities designed to produce such exchange and, working for the realization of world peace, has made outstanding contributions that have won universal acclaim. And to the best of my knowledge, the various organizations which he has founded, such as the Institute of

Oriental Philosophy, Soka University, the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum, and the Min-ON Concert Association have also done admirable work in helping in various ways to promote cultural exchange.

Basing ourselves on the penetrating assessments made by these two gentlemen regarding the importance of cultural exchange, we may with confidence state the following: the history of human advancement is in effect the history of cultural exchange. To encourage cultural exchange is thus to encourage the progress of human society. Conversely, any factor that hinders or opposes cultural exchange is one that hinders and opposes the advancement of human society. And among such possible factors, war is particularly baneful, since war not only impedes cultural exchange but destroys culture itself. Hence to oppose war, working to prevent war and maintain peace; and to encourage cultural exchange—these two activities further one another and work toward a common end.

The Formation of Cultural Systems

Ji: Cultures are created in different geographic areas by different ethnic groups, but eventually these various cultures form themselves or are brought together into relatively large scale cultural systems. Surveying the scene from the beginnings of history down to the present, I would say that human beings have formed themselves into four major cultural systems. These are as follows: (1) the Chinese cultural system (including Japanese culture, though this displays certain modifications of the former). (2) The Indian cultural system. (3) The cultural systems of the Semitic peoples of ancient Hebraic culture, Egypt, Babylon, Assyria, and the Arab and Islamic cultures. (4) The cultural system of ancient Greece and Rome and the culture of Europe and America as this has evolved down to the present.

Jiang: Professor Ji in his lecture entitled "The Inevitability and Complexity of Cultural Exchange" has defined three basic conditions that must be met if we are to speak of a cultural system, namely, the culture must display distinct characteristics, it must be capable of independent existence, and it must exercise a major influence. Of the various cultures of the world, only the four that have just been mentioned are capable of meeting these three conditions.

Ikeda: There are various ways of determining what constitutes a cultural system or the creation of a distinct culture. But if we become too engrossed in the details of these various arguments, I am afraid we may

lose sight of the basic question that we are addressing. In this sense, I believe that the criteria that Professor Ji has suggested for defining a cultural system cover the essentials of the problem. I would like to go along with his view.

Ji: If we examine these four cultural systems that I have mentioned in further detail, we see that they may be further classified into two large categories, the first three falling under the general heading of Eastern cultural systems, and the fourth labeled as the Western cultural system.

Synthetic Thought and Analytic Thought

Ikeda: I would like now to turn the discussion to a comparison of these two types of cultural systems that Professor Ji has just mentioned, the Eastern type and the Western type.

Ji: We might begin by pointing out the characteristics that these two types have in common. Both of them aim to bring happiness to human beings, to improve the quality of the human race, to provide people with a better type of life, a higher level of existence, and to further the development of human society.

Ikeda: There is no doubt that in Asia the east Asian cultural sphere centering about China and the southeast Asian cultural sphere centering on India have contributed greatly to the material and spiritual advancement of the various peoples of Asia. At the same time, the civilization of modern day science that has developed in Europe from the seventeenth century on has gradually extended its influence until it has now spread throughout the entire world. There is no question but that this civilization has contributed to the scientific advancement of the human race.

Ji: On the other hand, there are obviously many aspects in which these two types of cultural systems differ. Most fundamental of all such differences, it seems to me, is the type of thought process characteristic of each. This, I believe, is the source and foundation of all the other differences that might be pointed out.

To state the matter in the simplest form, the Eastern cultural systems are characterized by thought processes that may be termed synthetic or integrating, while those characteristic of the western cultural system are analytic. These two major types of cultural systems, that of the East and that of the West, manifest only these two modes of thought; there is no other mode in evidence. These two types of thinking underlie all human

thinking with regard to nature and human affairs alike.

In China the *Yijing* or *Classic of Changes* posits the two principles of *qian* and *kun* or heaven and earth, which correspond to the forces of *yang* and *yin*. In the natural world, there are the sun and moon, day and night, while in the realm of religion, philosophy and ethics there are light and darkness, good and evil.

Ikeda: You are quite right in characterizing the method of thinking typical of Eastern cultures as in general synthesizing in nature, while that typical of Western culture is analytical in nature. However, there are elements of analytical thinking to be found in the East, and of synthesizing thought in the West. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, synthetic type thought has become particularly prominent in the West.

However, if we consider the mainstream of development in the two cultural spheres as it has progressed up to the present, I think Professor Ji's description is sound. These two types of thinking that are characteristic of East and West manifest themselves in the various ways in which these cultures view the natural world and human life and in their value systems.

Jiang: It is easy enough to see that there are clear differences between the cultural system of the east and that of the West. There are two basic ways in which one may account for these differences.

One, the usual ways, is to make no attempt to deal with the crux of the matter or the essential nature of these two cultural systems of East and West, but merely to point out the ways in which they differ in their politics, laws, systems of philosophy, ethics, educational methods, science, arts, psychology, manners and customs.

A second way, that which endeavors to get at the heart of the question, is to try to define the more fundamental difference or differences that mark these two cultural systems. This is surely the better of the two methods, but one that presents great difficulties and has seldom been tried in the past. Professor Ji, however, using this very method, through his careful research and deliberations, has come up with a new approach to the question, and one that seems to me to lead to a correct conclusion.

Using Professor Ji's reasoning as my guide, I would therefore state the matter in the following manner. Culture is created by human beings. Why do they create culture? Because they possess a cerebrum, and the function of a cerebrum is to think. And the function of thinking is to exercise a control mechanism (that is, control of both mental and physi-

cal activities). The mode or model of the thinking process thus determines the mode of behavior. And the function of behavioral activity is to create culture (both mental and material culture). Therefore the mode of behavior will determine the characteristics of the particular culture that is thereby created.

For this reason, the fundamental differences that exist between one culture and another, and in particular, between these two cultural systems of East and West, are of necessity reflections of differences in their modes of thought. Thus, if we can understand the differences in modes of thought that underlie them, we can then understand these basic differences that exist in the two cultural system of East and West.

Characteristics of Analytical Thinking

Ji: The distinct characteristic of analytical thinking is that it approaches a given substance and proceeds to break it down into smaller and smaller components until it reaches the smallest possible component, the so-called elementary particle. But is it possible to continue this process any further and arrive at some even smaller division? Here the opinions in both the scientific world and the world of philosophy are divided. Some favor of the view that matter can be divided to an unlimited degree, others that there is a limit to such possibilities.

This mode of thinking, the analytical mode, is what is known in popular terminology as being "unable to see the forest for the trees." In the field of medicine, it means that if the patient has a pain in his head, you simply treat the pain in his head, and if he has a pain in his foot, you simply treat the pain in his foot.

Jiang: Whether or not matter can be infinitely divided—this is a major question in both the world of science and in that of philosophy.

I remember in the early 60's reading in the paper that Chairman Mao Zedong and a Japanese physicist were debating this question. The conclusion they reached was that there is no limit to the degree to which matter may be divided. One of the arguments they used to support their conclusion was statement found in the last chapter of the *Zhuangzi* that reads: "Take a pole one foot long, cut away half of it every day, and at the end of ten thousand generations there will still be some left."

Several years ago, Professor Ji pointed out the correct view of the matter when he commented in the following fashion: "This statement of Zhuangzi is correct. Why? Because he is speaking in terms of a mathematical concept. But the question of whether matter can be infinitely divided is one that concerns physics. One must not confuse the two con-

cepts. Therefore, it is not correct to cite the statement by Zhuangzi in order to prove that matter can be infinitely divided."

Also, as I recall, the Chinese Buddhist pilgrim Xuanzang, in chapter two of his *Records of the Western Regions*, mentions the smallest unit in the Indian system of measurements, the "finest dust particle," and says, " This unit cannot be further divided, for if it were, it would lead to nothingness. Hence it is called a *jiwei* or atom."

From this passage we can see that in the ancient Indian system of measurements, this question was in fact considered from the standpoint of physics, and the people of India at that time held that matter could not be infinitely divided.

Buddhist Criticism of the Atomist Theory

Ikeda: In India the various schools of thought were divided on this question. You have just mentioned the term *jiwei* or atom. The Sanscrit word for atom is *paramānu*. One school of Indian thought, the Vaiseśika school, held that all existence is made up of such *paramānu* or atoms.

Buddhism, however, criticized this theory. Thus the famous *Twenty Verses on Consciousness Only* of Vasubandhu argues that the individual atom touches the other atoms around and above and below it in six places. If, as the atomists argue, the atom cannot be broken down into any smaller unit, then it cannot have any part or section that touches the nearby atoms. But the fact that it does in fact touch the other atoms is proof that it has a surface or section that does so, that is, that it can be broken down into parts smaller than the whole. This is the argument used by the Buddhists in refuting the atomist school of thinking.

In modern physics, as you know, matter is broken down into atoms, and atoms are further broken down into atomic nuclei and electrons, and the nuclei are further broken down into protons and neutrons. And since the 1970's, these elementary particles, the proton and the neutron, have been shown to be made up of even smaller basic particles known as quarks.

Are the quarks in fact the smallest particle or unit of matter that can be identified, or is there some even smaller particle? This study of the elementary particles is directly related to the so-called big bang theory, that is, the question of how the present universe came into being and how it has evolved.

I had an opportunity to discuss these themes with Dr. Anatoli A. Logunov, the president of Moscow University, who is a world-

renowned physicist. At that time he expressed great interest in the wisdom of the Buddhist teachings as expressed in the doctrines of dependent origination and the three truths. The study of physics and the nature of matter must go hand in hand with the study of human powers of thought itself.

Jiang: Discussions of these questions will no doubt continue for a long time. After all, there are limits to what can be determined by the methods of scientific experiment, and limits to how far scientific experiment can go in contributing to the solution of these questions.

Though I am no expert in such affairs, it seems to me that when we use a term such as "basic particle," we are already in a way recognizing the fact that it cannot be divided into any smaller entity. An elementary particle of matter that is capable of further division cannot be called a "basic particle." And any theory that claims that matter is capable of infinite division must therefore in fact deny the existence of any such "basic particle." If we admit that the term "basic Particle" means that it is incapable of further division, then there is no possibility of arguing that matter can be divided infinitely.

Ikeda: The analytical reasoning methods of Western culture have brought about the rapid strides of modern science, particularly in the field of physics. And we have already noted how these are reflected in the way in which Western culture views the natural world. But we have reached a point where human beings have not only come to dominate the natural world, but are in danger of actually destroying it.

And the methods of analytical thinking have been applied to the Western view of life itself, so that Western medicine in modern times has come to regard mind and body as separate entities, and to place greater emphasis upon the latter than on the former. As a result, the human body is regarded as a piece of machinery, and the phenomena associated with human life are explained in terms of their electronic or chemical aspects, life being viewed as no more than the sum of its components. Such methods of modern Western medicine represent a type of progress, to be sure, but at the same time their limitations have become apparent. They tend to focus attention upon a particular organ of the body while failing to consider the condition of the body as a whole. As Processor Ji pointed out earlier, the trouble with such an approach is that it tends to see only the disease, and to forget about the person who is suffering from the disease.

Characteristics of Synthetic Thinking

Ji: Two concepts may be pointed out as representative of synthetic thinking, that of the aggregate or the entity as a whole, and that of universal relationships. In ordinary parlance, it means to look at the trees and in that way see the forest. And when applied to medical science, it may mean that when there is a pain in the head, one treats the foot, or vice versa.

Ikeda: Traditional Chinese medicine has always been distinguished by the fact that it takes into consideration the total life condition of the ailing individual.

Jiang: Just as you say, traditional Chinese medicine has always placed equal emphasis upon both the mind and the body, the physical condition of the patient and the patient's mental or psychological condition. True health must be based on both of these, or, as the saying is, "If you would cure the body, then first cure the mind." This is the characteristic approach of traditional Chinese medicine.

Ji: I have mentioned earlier the concept in ancient China of "Heaven and humankind merged into one." This idea of the oneness of the natural and the human worlds is typical of the mode of thought that characterizes Eastern culture. And we find the same idea expressed in the philosophy and religion of ancient India, as we see in the expression "Tat tram asi" or "You are it."

In Indian Buddhism, we find a great deal of breaking down of certain concepts or entities into the various elements or component parts that make them up, giving a name to each of the elements. This resembles the kind of analytical thinking we have been talking about, but in fact it is completely different from the analytical thinking of Western culture.

Ikeda: The Indologists B. K. Matilal has suggested that we might view Indian philosophy and Indian Buddhism as comparable to our present day structuralist thought or deconstructionist theory. We can see the same kind of thinking, for example, in the writings of Michel Foucault or Jacques Derrida and in those of the ancient Indian Buddhist philosopher Nagarjuna.

Professor Ji has referred to the analysis of the components of an entity, or *myōsō* that is a characteristic of Indian Buddhist thought. The

term *myōsō*, corresponds to the Sanscrit words *nāma* and *samsthana*, or what we would call in present day language the elements of name and form. In the various schools of Buddhist logic such as the Mādhyamika school, the Consciousness-only school, or the Dignaga school, these elements of name and form were very extensively studied and analyzed. But these studies and analyses did not support the view that name and form actually exist. In the end these thinkers concluded that name and form have no real existence.

Why did their inquiries lead them to this conclusion? To understand this, we must realize that they were pitted in debate against a rival school of thought, the Sarvāstivadin or Existence school, which held that all the objects of consciousness actually exist, and therefore what is designated as name and form must likewise exist. The Mādhyamika and other schools of thought I have just mentioned, arguing against this view of the Sarvāstivadins, held that in the final analysis both name and form are in substance empty or void, nothing more than delusions that are conjured up by our empty and illusory faculties of discrimination.

For example, no such thing as a "Japanese person" exists. All that we see here is simply a person and nothing more. But we impose upon that person the arbitrary categories of "Japanese" or "foreigner." These are the products of our empty and illusory discriminations. In other words, the elements of name and form are empty in nature. This is the theory arrived at by the Madhyamika and the other schools as a result of their analyses of phenomena, which are in fact in a constant and unending process of change and transformation. This was their answer to the doctrines of the Sarvastivada school of India, which held that the myriad phenomena had actual and incontrovertible existence or reality.

The Zeyang or twenty-fifth chapter of the *Zhuangzi* states: "The Way cannot be thought of as being, nor can it be thought of as nonbeing. In calling it the Way we are only adopting a temporary expedient. 'Nothing does it,' 'something makes it like this'—these occupy a mere corner of the realm of things. What connection could they have with the Great Way [of Heaven and Earth]?"

Zhuangzi abandons any attempt to adopt a fixed view regarding phenomena, which are in an unending process of change, and, by recognizing this reality of their ever-changing nature, he gives expression to their unchanging essence or innate being. The view of Buddhism, which does not attempt any definitive analysis of name and form, but sees the nature of reality as "empty," and the Chinese view of "Heaven and humankind as one" are basically the same, are they not?

From West to East

Ji: At present the world is dominated by Western culture. This is a fact—no one can deny it. But this is only a temporary phenomenon. Westerners look with contempt on Eastern culture, an attitude that is in fact based on racial prejudice.

But for Eastern peoples, particularly Chinese, to regard Eastern cultural with contempt is the height of foolishness. One can hardly expect to come to a true understanding of the situation unless one surveys it fairly and in its true dimensions.

Jiang: This is a very important point you have raised, Professor Ji. The situation you refer to, in which Western culture has come to dominate the world, only took shape gradually, beginning in the sixteenth century. It has continued now for some five hundred years, but in terms of the overall history of human culture and of the centuries that lie ahead, five hundred years is a very short period of time.

So far as I am aware, until very recently in the West traditional Chinese medicine was not even accorded legal recondition as an acceptable form of medical treatment. But now it is recognized in the West as a perfectly legitimate alternative form of treatment, and in fact has become quite popular. As a result, the number of Western students who come to China in order to study traditional Chinese medicine has shown a marked increase. I believe this is a phenomenon that deserves to be carefully noted and taken into consideration.

Ikeda: Even if we did not have Toynbee's predictions to draw our attention to the situation, the defects and limitations of the analytical thinking of Western culture are now becoming clear to us all—we see evidence of them in many fields, ranging from the understanding of nature and life itself to matters pertaining to politics, economics, and education.

As Professor Ji has pointed out, when seen in terms of the entire history of the development of human culture and in a global perspective, the dominance of modern Western culture at the present time is no more than a temporary phenomenon. But I like to turn our discussion here to a consideration of the future development of humankind, to ask what part will be played in it by the kind of synthetic mode of thought we have noted as characteristic of Eastern culture, and of how that will contribute to the future of the human race.

Before we do so, however, we might examine in somewhat greater

detail the concept of "Heaven and humankind as one," which represents a sort of crystallization of Eastern thought. And after we have considered somewhat further the teachings of the Lotus Sutra and the Buddhist view of truth, we might return to a discussion of how these ideas have affected the historical development of culture in the Eastern and Western spheres, and how they may bring about transitions in the foreseeable future of humankind.

The Essence of Eastern Culture: "Heaven and Humankind as One" and "Oneness of Life and Environment"

China's Role in World Peace

Ikeda: Each year, on January 26th, which marks the founding of Soka Gakkai International (SGI), I stress the occasion by putting forward a proposal that I hope will contribute to the future of humankind. This year, which marks our entry into the twenty-first century, I offered a proposal entitled "Creating and Sustaining A Century of Life."

This year I focused in particular on China, quoting the words of Professor Arnold Toynbee, who in his dialogues with me said, "Perhaps it is China's destiny now to give political unity and peace not just to half but to all the world." (*Choose Life*, p. 251)

Ji: In my opinion, Dr. Toynbee showed keen foresight in expressing such hopes and expectations for China. And you, Mr. Ikeda, have demonstrated a deep understanding of Dr. Toynbee's thinking in this matter. I wholly approve of the ideas expressed.

Jiang: *Choose Life*, the record of the dialogues held between Dr. Toynbee and you, Mr. Ikeda, is a most rewarding book. I feel I have learned a great deal from it. And as you point out in your preface to the Chinese language translation of the book, there are very few scholars in the West who have expressed the kind of expectations for China's role in the furthering of world peace that Dr. Toynbee did.

Sometime later, Professor Ji excerpted the sections of *Choose Life* that deal with East Asia's role in the achievement of world peace and, under the title "Dr. Toynbee's Expectations for China," included them in the first volume of his *Collected Discussions on Eastern and Western Culture*. This is evidence of how important Professor Ji regards the ideas expressed by Mr. Ikeda and Dr. Toynbee on this subject. Today

Choose Life has become one of the most widely read works in China and has attracted considerable attention in academic circles. One comes across frequent quotations from or references to it in Chinese scholarly journals, which is evidence of the wide influence it has had.

Ikeda: Thank you for saying so. It was 1974 when my wishes were fulfilled and I was able to make my first visit to China. It was the year after I had completed my discussions with Dr. Toynbee in London. Thereafter I took the lead in opening up friendly exchanges between China and Japan on the nongovernment level, particularly in the fields of cultural and educational exchange.

Jiang: During the last two or three years, the Chinese television stations have featured two large-scale documentary programs. One was designed to commemorate the hundredth anniversary of the birth of Premier Zhou Enlai. The other was devoted to a review of China's foreign relations over the past fifty years. Mr. Ikeda appeared on both of these programs and was interviewed by the commentators, at which time he gave expression to his deep and lasting feelings of friendship toward the Chinese people.

As a result, there is no one in China who is unaware of what an important role you have exercised as an ambassador of goodwill on the nongovernment level, working to promote friendly relations between the two countries of China and Japan. Your contributions in this field are highly respected and applauded by all.

In December of 1974 why did Premier Zhou Enlai, sick as he was at the time, make arrangements to meet you at the hospital where he was undergoing treatment? It is not difficult to guess the reason. He had for long had an understanding of what kind of person you are. He judged, I have no doubt, that in the years to come, you would be an important and trustworthy Japanese friend, one who would devote himself to realizing the lofty goal of "unfailing friendship between the Chinese and Japanese people for generations to come."

Ikeda: I will always remember the words Premier Zhou spoke at that time and his imposing figure when, in spite of his grave condition, he kindly granted me an interview.

Jiang: As the proverb has it, "When the road is long, you know how much your horse can do; when the days are long you can see a person's true heart." Twenty-five years have gone by since Premier Zhou passed

away. And as these twenty-five years can amply testify, you, Mr. Ikeda, have put forth your utmost effort in order to encourage friendly relations between China and Japan. I am filled, with sincere respect for what you have done.

And I have come to have a deeper understanding of why you exert yourself in this manner to further the cause of Chinese and Japanese friendship. It is because, as you have shown, you have a correct appreciation of Chinese history and of present day conditions in China, and you know how to speak out persuasively on these matters. I have deep respect for these qualities as well.

The Spiritual Heritage of Chinese Civilization

Ikeda: In the cultural contacts I have enjoyed with you two gentlemen and with many other citizens of China, there is one thing that has always strongly impressed me. It is the striking way in which what Dr. Toynbee used to refer to as the numerous merits or ideals of the spiritual heritage of Chinese civilization, surviving the dramatic vicissitudes of historical and societal change, undergoing certain modifications in form, have yet continued to manifest themselves.

One of these is the concept of an ethos, of symbiosis, as symbolized in the phrase *datong* or "great unity."

Ji: I would think that, now that the human race is entering the twenty-first century, it is time that it showed a little common sense but that does not appear to be the case.

The West continues, as in the past, its efforts to "conquer nature." And this in spite of the fact that the "conquest" is leading to all kinds of deleterious results such as the greenhouse effect, the destruction of the ozone layer, global warming, melting of the glaciers, destruction of ecological systems, and the outbreak of new diseases.

If humanity is to continue to survive not only now but in the years to come, those persons who are representative of the West must waken to and take responsibility for the grave errors they have committed in the past and must learn to live in a state of harmony and friendliness with the natural world. They must cease their reckless efforts to "conquer" nature!

Ikeda: The ideal of an ethos of symbiosis, one that represents a dynamic spirit of harmony and peaceful coexistence, is summed up, is it not, in the theme we are discussing today, the essence of Chinese thought as expressed in the phrase "Heaven and humanity as one."

Ji: The Eastern ideal of "Heaven and humanity as one" is reflected in the famous "Western inscription" of the Northern Song Confucian philosopher Zhang Zai when he states that "All people are my brothers and sisters, and all things are my companions. Only by practicing this spirit of humanity can we hope to save the human race from destruction. Otherwise, the natural world will only retaliate in even stronger fashion, until the whole future of the human race is in peril.

Ikeda: The concept of "Heaven and humanity as one" expresses the idea that Heaven's way and the way of human beings are essentially one in nature, and that human beings in their mind and inner nature are endowed with the same essential nature and virtues as those possessed by Heaven. This is the basis upon which the concept of the nature of human beings and of the universe in Chinese thought are founded.

In Buddhism the relationship between the universe or the natural world and human life has been developed and expressed in terms of the phrase *Eshō Funi* or "the oneness of life and its environment." *Ehō*, which represents the environment, and *shōhō*, which represents the human life force, are basically *Funi* or "not two" in nature. From this then arises the interrelatedness that characterizes the phenomenal world, an interrelatedness that in its manifestation is *nini* or "two" in nature. Thus the relationship in its full form is characterized as "not two but two."

That is, the two phenomena, life and environment, are different in expression, but the essential relationship of human beings and the natural world is that of oneness. In essence, the principle is the same as that expressed in the phrase "Heaven and humankind as one."

I would like in our discussions now to focus upon this concept of "Heaven and humanity as one" which typifies Chinese thought, and the Buddhist concept of "the oneness of life and its environment," and in this way attempt to throw light upon the essence of Eastern thought.

Ji: Needless to say, the concept embodied in the phrase "Heaven and humankind merged as one" represents a very important thesis in the history of Chinese philosophy. That said, however, one must note that scholars differ considerably in the way they understand, interpret and explain this phrase "Heaven and humankind as one." They are not necessarily alike in the depth, breadth, or angle from which they view it. Of course, it is quite natural that they should not be in total agreement in the manner in which they interpret such an important thesis in the history of philosophy.

The Spirit behind "Heaven and Humankind As One": A World View Common to Humanity

Ikeda: In that case, let's proceed by examining this phrase "Heaven and humankind merged as one."

Ji: The word *ren* or "humankind" is easy enough to understand. It refers to all of us, ordinary living human beings.

The word *tian* or "Heaven" is somewhat more difficult. Among traditional Chinese philosophers there have in the past been those who interpreted the word *tian* to mean a deity possessing a will. But such thinkers have been very rare. There are others who take "Heaven" to mean a substance that stands in contrast or opposition to "earth" and represents Nature that is possessed of intellect and will. Most Chinese thinkers in the past, however, while employing the word *tian*, have done so in ways that are at times self-contradictory or that create conflicts between one part of their argument and another.

In the remainder of the phrase, the words *heyi* or "merged as one," the word *he* or "merged" indicates that the previously named entities, Heaven and humankind, are in a relationship of mutual understanding, are bound together in friendship, and are not antagonistic toward one another.

Ikeda: Just as you have indicated, the word *tian* has been used by the Chinese to refer to a number of slightly different concepts, and its meaning has undergone certain changes over time. I think we can point out three principle meanings in which the word has been used, namely, "Heaven as a presiding power," "Heaven as Nature," and "Heaven as the principle of justice." The first indicates Heaven seen as the object of devotion; the second, Heaven as a term for the natural environment; and the third, Heaven as a kind of principle or natural law underlying all the myriad phenomena of the world.

Ji: So that readers will be better able to follow our argument, I would like here, as I have indicated earlier, to take the term "Heaven" as referring in general to Nature or the natural world. I am sure this meaning is not that far removed from the concept of truth.

Ikeda: In the concept of *Eshō Funi* or "the oneness of life and its environment," the term *ehō*, which refers to the environment, has the meaning of "the universe" or "the world of nature." Dr. Toynbee, speaking of

this concept of *Eshō Funi*, remarked to me that it would be quite understandable to any Westerner who was acquainted with the Greek and Roman literature of the pre-Christian era. That is because it is similar to the world view that prevailed in ancient Greco-Roman culture. And this view seems to have originally been common to humanity as a whole.

Jiang: I have from past times been influenced and enlightened by Professor Ji's views on this matter. He has long been concerned with this question of the relationship between human beings and nature, reading widely on the subject, considering the various opinions of others, and struggling for a deeper understanding with regard to certain aspects of the problem. And my own opinions have been formed on the basis of his.

As to the concept expressed in the phrase "Heaven and humankind merged as one," Professor Ji believes that the full implications embodied in the word *tian* or "Heaven" can be understood by equating it with the word *daziran* or "the world of nature," a term that anyone can comprehend. The phrase "Heaven and humankind merged as one" thus expresses the idea that human beings and nature constitute a single entity, and that one must not try to separate the two. And he assigns the highest level of importance to this concept.

I believe that this represents the correct interpretation of the phrase, a new interpretation that is of great significance. This is because it not only has a basis in scientific principles and fully accords with such principles, but because in actual practice it offers important new implications as to how to overcome the problems of our times.

Ji: At this point I would like to cite a type of thinking that is analogous to that expressed in the concept of the Han Chinese people that we have been discussing, that of the oneness of "Heaven and humankind." It is drawn from the philosophical beliefs of the Nashi people, one of the racial minorities of the People's Republic of China.

I have little acquaintance with the philosophical ideas of these minority peoples, and I would not attempt to discourse at length on the subject. But I wish to quote a passage from a book sent to me by a friend in Yunnan Province entitled *The Culture of the Eastern Ba Region and Nashi Philosophy.*

"As to the Tiger that is the great earth, the Tiger's head was given to it by Heaven, the Tiger's skin was given to it by the great earth. The Tiger's bones were given to it by the stones, the Tiger's flesh, by the soil, the Tiger's eyes, by the stars, the Tiger's stomach, by the moon...

I do not think the passage needs any explanation—it is permeated with the spirit of the oneness of Heaven and earth and all the ten thousand things. And we may surmise that this same type of thinking regarding the oneness of "Heaven and humankind" can surely be found in the ideas of the other minority peoples as well.

The Formation of the Eshō Funi Concept

Ikeda: Of course, in the period prior to the industrial revolution, though one may speak of the two entities, nature and humankind, the effect that human beings exercised upon the natural world was very limited. Particularly in the several thousand years during which human beings were engaged chiefly in farming or animal herding activities, the forces of nature exercised a life-and-death power over humankind.

It is only very recently in the history of the human race that people have actually begun to change the natural world. The period during which human beings feared and respected nature and looked upon nature and humankind as a single and inseparable entity is by far the longer one. During that long period it was only natural for all ethnic or community groups whatsoever to adopt the view that human beings and nature are one.

But after the appearance of Judaic monotheism, the Western world began to make a clear distinction between humanity and nature, and a type of thinking developed that sought to objectify and dominate the natural world. That type of thinking, of course, formed the basis for the development of modern science and civilization. In China and India, on the other hand, the older conception of nature and humankind as constituting a single entity continued to hold sway and was formulated in rationalized terms.

Jiang: To support what Mr. Ikeda has just been saying, I would like to cite here the opinion of the late Dr. Zhang Guangzhi (1931–2001) a well-known archaeologist and professor of Harvard University. He writes: "If we examine the history of Western culture, we find that it can be traced back to the Sumerian civilization that arose in the area between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers some time before the third or fourth century BCE. We cannot say for certain just what view of the universe or what type of social system characterized this civilization in the period before it developed written records, but it was presumably not very different from the civilization and culture of Eastern Asia that was developing at the same time. In the period of the Sumerian civilization, or perhaps a little bit earlier, however, the history of this area

between the two major rivers underwent a process of revolutionary advance.

"This advance vitally affected the relationship between human society and the natural world. There were two important elements that contributed to the form of this advance. One of these was a revolution in the techniques of production, namely, the introduction of metal tools, which made possible the carrying out of large scale irrigation projects. This meant that without depending upon any measures taken by the government, the rate of productivity could be increased through technological improvements and large amounts of wealth could be acquired.

"The second element involved was the development of large scale activities for the transport and exchange of the raw materials of production, which led to the establishment of a network of relations among the various local cultures of the region. Because of these relations, a particular region was no longer limited to the natural resources native to that region. Thus, for the first time in human history, people were freed from the limitations in resources posed by their particular region.

"In response to these changes, in the Sumerian view of the universe there now appeared various deities who existed outside the realm of human beings and possessed creative powers. And as a result, temples and palaces dedicated to these deities became a part of the social system of the culture." (Zhang Guangzhi, *Kaogu renleixue suibi*, Beijing 1999, pp. 56–57.)

I would like at this point to sum up the main points of Professor Zhang's argument.

(1) From earliest times until around the third or fourth century BCE, the view of the universe held by human beings as a whole regarded human society and the natural world as inseparably related to one another, a relationship of ultimate unity or oneness.

(2) This view of the universe continued to prevail in many areas of the world such as China, India and Japan down to fairly recent times. It finds concrete expression in such phrases as "Heaven and humankind as one," "the oneness of life and its environment," or "the Brahman and the Self are one."

(3) Six or seven thousand years ago, because of a sudden change in the mode of production among the people of Summer, a new view of the universe took form, one that regarded human beings as separate from nature as whole, and this view gave rise to the concept of conquering nature or the universe that is seen in Western civilization. This view has been the basic principle governing the development of Western civilization and continues to be so at the present time.

With regard to the phrase "Heaven and humankind as one," Dr. Zhang, in an article published in 1990 and entitled "The View of the Universe Expressed in 'Heaven and Humankind As One' and the Modernization of China," states as follows: "The traditional Chinese concept expressed in the phrase 'Heaven and humankind as one' is based upon the belief that a harmonious relationship exists between human beings and nature, and is in conformity with the activities of traditional Chinese culture. These activities find expression in the areas of agriculture, architecture, medicine, animal-raising, cooking, disposal of waste, and in various other facets of material life. But this concept differs from that found in the West."

Dr. Zhang also states: "This concept of 'Heaven and humankind as one' has been regarded as a truism of human culture in many areas of the world. And it is therefore only right that it should now be once more elevated to that position." And he says, "If this concept of 'Heaven and humankind as one' can once more be elevated to that position, it will contribute greatly to the welfare of all humanity." (*op. cit.*, pp. 49–51)

In any event, the views of Dr. Zhang, as expressed in these quotations and in other passages that I have not quoted, offers substantial evidence to support the view already stated by Professor Ji and Mr. Ikeda, namely, that the modes of thinking and views of the universe held by the two great cultural areas of East and West are clearly in opposition to one another.

Ji: The origin of this concept of "Heaven and humankind as one" is said by many scholars to be found in the thinking of the so-called Zisi-Mencius branch of the Confucian school of the Warring States period, but I believe this is too narrow an interpretation. The *Zhonghua sixiang dacidian*, a dictionary of Chinese thought, defines the phrase "Heaven and humankind as one" as "The keynote of the philosophy of ancient China, stressing the harmonious relationship between Heaven and human beings." This seems to me to be a relatively broad definition that fits well with the facts.

Ikeda: As a believer in Buddhism, what interests me is what sort of influence the concept that you have described as "the keynote of the philosophy of ancient China" had upon Buddhism when that was introduced to China from India. After Buddhism had been introduced to China, we find that a new view of nature and life has taken shape, one declaring that all living beings possess the Buddha nature, and that mountains, rivers, plants and trees can all become Buddhas.

In India, it had been understood that living beings are capable of attaining emancipation, but that trees and plants belong to a different category. In Chinese Buddhism, however, plants and trees are regarded as possessing the Buddha nature in the same way as human beings and other kinds of living beings, and it thus becomes possible for them to attain Buddhahood. In other words, the possibility of attaining Buddhahood has been extended so that it includes both human beings and the natural environment as well.

Buddhism, we may say, has taken over the older traditional belief of Chinese culture and brought it to completion in this view of nature that recognizes the dignity not only of human beings but of all kinds of living beings and ecosystems. Nature, which includes all such ecosystems, is in this theory designated as *ehō*, and human beings are designated as *shōhō*, and the statement is then made that *Eshō Funi* or "life and its environment are one."

The Concept of "Heaven and Humankind As One" in Confucian Thought

Jiang: The late Jin Yuehlin, one of the most renowned philosophers of modern China, in his work entitled *Chinese Philosophy*, states as follows: "Many persons who are experts in Chinese philosophy cite the concept of 'Heaven and humankind as one' as expressing the most outstanding characteristic of that philosophy. In this phrase, the word *tian* or 'Heaven' is vague in meaning. The harder one endeavors to pin down its meaning, the more it seems to slip through one's fingers. "The word *tian* here is not being used in the meaning that is most commonly intended by the word in ordinary everyday conversation. But if we understand *tian* here to mean 'nature' or 'a nature deity,' at times with emphasis on the former, at times with emphasis on the latter, we will probably come close to grasping the meaning of this word in Chinese.

"This phrase 'Heaven and humankind as one" without doubt represents a concept embracing all things whatsoever. Taken in its loftiest and widest meaning, the phrase 'Heaven and humankind as one' indicates a state in which the subjective is fused with the objective, the objective with the subjective, the two firmly united in a basically uniform nature, one in which all visible distinctions are wiped away and the individual and the universe constitute a nondual entity." (*Dongxi wenhua yilunji*, vol.1, Beijing.)

This interpretation of Jin Yuehlin seems to me to represent a very profound and important insight. According to his view, the philosophy implied in the concepts of "Heaven and humankind as one" and "life

and its environment as one" imply that the relationship between subject and object is basically one of identity. In the language of philosophy, this is referred to as the identity of subject and object.

Ji: I would like here to quote some concrete examples of Confucian thought. In the *Classic of Changes*, under the first hexagram, *qian*, we find this description of the "great man": "The great man is one whose virtue accords with that of Heaven and earth, whose brightness accords with that of the sun and moon, whose ordering accords with that of the four seasons, whose bestowal of good or bad fortune accords with that of the gods and spirits. When he acts in advance of Heaven, Heaven does not gainsay him. And when he acts after receiving Heaven's decrees, he honors the seasons of Heaven."

The expression of the concept of "Heaven and humankind as one" embodied in this passage represents the highest ideal of human life.

The view of *tian* or Heaven expressed by Confucius involves certain contradictions. At times he seems to take *tian* to mean Nature, as when he notes that, although Heaven does not speak, the four seasons proceed in order and all the ten thousand creatures carry out their lives. At other times he appears to regard Heaven as something that determines human life or death and whether a person becomes rich and eminent or not. But he does not conceive of Heaven as a personalized deity who possesses a will.

Ikeda: I presume you are referring to the passage in the *Analects* in which Confucius says: "Does Heaven speak? The four seasons follow their course, and the hundred creatures are born. What speaking does Heaven do?" (17:19)

Heaven does not say anything, and yet spring, summer, fall and winter invariably follow one another, and all the myriad things in the world, including living creatures, have their existence. All these things represent the wonderful workings of Heaven. And yet Heaven itself never speaks so much as a word.

As we can see from this, Confucius' conception of Heaven has already moved from one emphasizing its personalized characteristics to one that sees it in terms of a law of Nature.

The Chinese veneration of Heaven has been seen as deriving from nature worship or worship of the ancestors, or from the supposed pastoral origins of the Chinese people. But there is no doubt that in its original form, it involved some kind of personalized deity such as we find associated with animism. In time, however, these personalized charac-

teristics were gradually shed, and it came to be viewed as a law or principle, one that governs the cycles of the natural world and the origin, continuation, and extinguishing of life. This process of development found its final expression in the philosophy of the Song dynasty Confucian thinker Zhu Xi, who defined Heaven as *li* or principle, and whose thought is consequently known as *lixue* or The Study of Principle.

Ji: The Confucian text known as the *Zhongyong* or *The Mean*, describing a person of perfect sincerity, says: "Being able to give full development to his nature, he is able to give full development to the nature of other human beings and, being able to give full development to the nature of other human beings, he is able to give full development to the nature of other living beings. Being able to give full development to the nature of other living beings, he can assist in the transforming and nourishing power of Heaven and Earth."

The views of Mencius regarding Heaven and humankind basically follow the same line of thinking as that of *The Mean*, which represents the philosophy of Zisi, the grandson of Confucius, who is regarded as the author of *The Mean*.

In the fifth chapter of *Mencius*, we read: "When a thing is done though by no one, then it is the work of Heaven; when a thing comes about though no one brought it about, then it is the decree of Heaven." (5A: 6)

In other words, the decree or mandate of Heaven is something that is beyond the reach of human power, but a power that in the end can lead human beings to success. It is a definitive power that is outside the realm of human power.

Mencius, like Confucius, did not view Heaven as a deity, but believed that, only when human beings develop their mind or heart to the fullest and nourish their inborn nature, can they come to know and understand Heaven. Thus, in chapter seven, he says: "For a person to give full realization to his heart is for him to understand his own nature, and a person who knows his own nature will know Heaven." (7A:1)

Ikeda: Confucius viewed Heaven as the power presiding over the universe as a whole, and at the same time saw it as the source of human morality. This view seems to have been taken over and refined in the thinking of Mencius.

In the view of Mencius since Heaven is something that exists within the individual, he is led to the conclusion that people are innately good in nature. And because he believes in the goodness of human nature, he

sees the laws or principles of the natural world as constituting ethical principles—such is the special characteristic of his thought.

And his conviction that if you understand the true nature of human beings you will understand the heart of Heaven, as stated in the passage you have just quoted, exemplifies the humanistic outlook that is a particular mark of Chinese thought. That is to say, Heaven is the source of morality, and Heaven and human beings are intimately related. Therefore, human beings need not carry out any elaborate worship of Heaven. So long as they pay proper attention to human concerns, their efforts will in the end put them in communication with Heaven. I think it is important to note that this concept of "Heaven and humankind as one" constitutes the background of what we know as Chinese humanism and rationalism.

Buddhism and the Heaven-Human Relationship

Ji: Under Emperor Wu of the Han dynasty, Confucianism was adopted as the official creed of the state. The most influential Confucian thinker of the time was Dong Zhongshu (195?–105? BCE), who in his writings argued clearly and forcefully for the view that Heaven and human beings combine to form a single entity.

In his *Chunqiu fanlu* or *Luxuriant Gems of the Spring and Autumn Annals*, in the section entitled "How human Beings Second the Numbers of Heaven," he states: "Human beings have 360 joints because this exactly matches the number of Heaven's [days]. Their bodies, their bones and flesh, match the thickness of the earth. Their ears and eyes are bright and keen like the qualities of the sun and moon, and in their bodies there are hollows and veins like the configurations of the rivers and valleys."

And in speaking of the forces of the yin and yang, he says: "Heaven too has its moods of joy and anger, and its heart filled with sorrow or delight which second those of human beings. In the ways in which these likenesses match up, we see that Heaven and human beings are one."

These passages are clear examples of the concept of "Heaven and humankind as one" in the thought of Dong Zhongshu. We must take care to note, however, that there are elements of superstition in the way he developed his theory of how Heaven and human beings respond to and influence one another.

Ikeda: Dong Zhongshu believed that there is a close relationship between natural phenomena and the state of human society. That is to say, if the ruler's actions are good, then the natural world will respond

in a harmonious manner. But if the ruler's actions are evil, then various changes and portents will occur in the natural world. Dong Zhongshu stressed that these changes are intended as a warning to the ruler.

This view of the relationship that exists between Heaven and human beings influenced the manner in which the teachings of Buddhism were accepted in China. The Chinese have customarily looked with great respect on those Buddhist sutras and doctrinal writings that stressed a theory of portents resembling that already formulated in earlier Chinese thought. The *Jinguangmingjing* or *Golden Light Sutra*, which teaches that if the ruler of the nation carries out evil actions, the natural world of Heaven and earth will respond with changes and portents, is a prime example, and the various Chinese translations and commentaries on it have played an important role in Chinese Buddhism.

The Japanese Buddhist leader, Nichiren, in his famous treatise addressed in warning to the rulers of Japan entitled "On Establishing the Correct Teaching for the Peace of the Land," quotes the *Golden Light Sutra*.

The Chinese Buddhist scholar Zhanran or the Great Teacher Miaole, in his commentary on Zhiyi's Great Concentration and Insight, introduces this concept of "Heaven and humankind as one" as it is embodied in the Chinese theories of the yin and yang and the Five Elements or Five Agents. Nichiren, in a treatise entitled "The Unanimous Declaration of the Buddhas of the Three Existences," quotes Zhanran's commentary as follows: "You should understand that everything that is contained within this body of ours is modeled after Heaven and earth. Thus we see that the roundness of the head is patterned after the Heavens, the squareness of the feet imitate the form of the earth." Thus the microcosm that is the human body corresponds in form to the macrocosm of the external world.

Nichiren then goes on to say: "If Heaven itself crumbles, then this body of mine likewise will crumble; if the earth breaks asunder, my body too will break asunder; if the elements of earth, water, fire, wind and space perish, my body too will perish." The passage emphasizes that the life of the individual and that of Heaven and earth, which brought forth and nourished it, the waxing and waning of the universe as a whole, constitute a single entity.

Nichiren also declares that the basic law of the universe, that which embodies all its essential elements, is contained within the five characters *myō-hō-ren-ge-kyō*, the Chinese title of the Lotus Sutra, that all forms of life are imminent in this fundamental law of the universe, and that once this law is revealed and made manifest, all persons just as

they are can attain Buddhahood. They will then be capable of freely creating a realm of happiness for themselves and others.

Ji: In the Song dynasty, as we have mentioned earlier, the Study of Principle or Neo-Confucian school appeared in China, and many important Confucian thinkers participated in its development. Their views vary slightly from faction to faction, but on the whole they all embrace the idea expressed in the phrase "Heaven and humankind as one."

Zhang Zai (1020–1077), one of the leaders of the movement, clearly subscribed to such views. Cheng Yi (1033–1107) stated that "Heaven, earth and human beings are no more than a single Way." And Zhang Zai in his "Western Inscription" says: "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 extends throughout 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."

Ikeda: It is said that the Neo-Confucianism of the Song period was influenced by the teachings of the Huayan school of Buddhism and by the later developments within the Tiantai school of Buddhism.

View of Nature of the Daoist, Mohist and Miscellaneous Schools

Ji: Up to now we have talked mainly about the Confucian school in China, but we should note that this concept of "Heaven and humankind as one" is not limited to Confucian thinkers. In its broadest meaning, the concept refers to the relationship between human beings and the natural world, and how that relationship is to be understood. In this sense, it figures in the thought of schools other than Confucianism such as the Daoist, Mohist and Miscellaneous schools.

Ikeda: The Daoist school is particularly noted in Chinese culture for the emphasis it places upon reverence for nature.

Ji: Yes. For example, Laozi, the leading Daoist thinker, declares: "Human beings model themselves on Heaven, Heaven models itself on the Way, and the Way models itself on that which is naturally so." (*Laozi* 25)

Ikeda: Laozi refers to the law of the universe as "the Way." In other words, human beings should model themselves on the Way, which is

the correctness of "what is naturally so" or nature. These days, those who study ecology have come to understand the rhythms that pertain to the world of nature. And they have come to realize the grave fact that if these rhythms of the natural world are disrupted or destroyed, it will mean the destruction of the human race as well.

Jiang: Listening to what Mr. Ikeda has just said, I am reminded of the Chinese saying, *Wu ji bi fan*, which means, "When things are carried to an extreme, they invariably turn in the opposite direction." If this procedure of "conquering Nature" that is typical of Western civilization is allowed to dominate the whole world and is carried to its extreme, then human beings, who have imagined themselves as the conquerors of Nature, will on the contrary end up being conquered by Nature.

Ji: In the second section of the *Zhuangzi*, that entitled "Discussion on Making All Things Equal," we read: "Heaven and earth were born at the same time I was, and the ten thousand things are one in me." From this we can see that among the thinkers of the Daoist school, this emphasis upon "Heaven and humankind as one" is even more pronounced than in the Confucian school.

Ikeda: Zhuangzi perceives a kind of great underlying rhythm and harmony in the vast universe and the world of nature. Therefore he believes that human beings should respond and adjust to nature and make that their way of living

Ji: In the writings of Mozi, another philosopher of the same period, we find certain contradictions in his views regarding the mandate of Heaven and the role of ghosts or spirits. In the chapters entitled "Against Fatalism" and "Honoring Effort," he stresses that whether one becomes rich or poor, honored or disgraced, depends upon the efforts of the individual and not upon any decree handed down by fate or Heaven. But in other chapters such as those entitled "The Will of Heaven" and "Explaining Ghosts," he seems to take a quite different view. He views Heaven as a kind of personalized being who possesses a will and rewards or punishes human beings. His political thought may be surmised from such chapters as those entitled "Universal Love," "Against Offensive Warfare," "Honoring the Worthy," and "Honoring Uniformity."

In the *Lüshi chunqiu* or *Springs and Autumns of Mr. Lü*, a syncretic work written in 241 BCE, in the section entitled, "Responding to Like-

ness," we read: "All things alike are carried to completion in terms of likeness or agreement of categories, where these likenesses merge. Therefore, because Yao practices goodness, all good things come to him, and because Jie practices evil, all evils gather around him. Thus it is stated in the 'Warnings of Shang' 'Heaven sends down disaster or bestows good luck in all cases in response to some definite action'"

And earlier in the section it is stated: "Clouds over water appear to have fish scales, the clouds of drought are like smoke and fire, and rain clouds seem like waves of water. All resemble the categories of the things that produced them, and none fail to show that fact to human beings."

From these passages we see that the *Lüshi chunqiu* believes that human beings and the natural world respond to one another. We have cited examples from various texts of ancient China, and to continue further would take us too far a field. But it should be obvious from the passages cited that the concept of "Heaven and humankind as one" was very widespread in early Chinese thought.

Ikeda: There were of course exceptions—thinkers such as Xunzi or Wang Chong who denied that such a relationship exists between Heaven and human beings. But if we compare the views of the two main divisions of early Chinese thought, as represented in the rival schools of Confucianism and Daoism, I think we can say that, in their view of nature, there is no basic difference between the highest ideal of the Confucian outlook expressed in the term "Heaven," and the highest ideal of Daoism, expressed in the word dao, or the "Way."

The Ancient Indian Concept of "Brahman and Self"

Ji: The same general type of concept, I believe, existed not only in Chinese thought, but in other areas of Eastern culture in ancient times. We might cite as a typical example the thought of India, the cradle of the Buddhist religion. Of course, there were various schools of thought in ancient India.

Ikeda: Buddhist texts record that there were some ninety different schools of one type or another. Most famous were the so-called Saḍdarśana or six types of *darśana* or doctrine. These six are the schools known as Vedānta, Mīmāṃsā, Sāṇkhya, Yoga, Nyāya, and Vaiśeṣika.

Jiang: The Sanskrit word *darśana* is usually translated in early Chinese

texts as "view," though in modern Chinese it is translated as "thought" or "philosophy." The names of the six "views" or schools of philosophy are rendered in classical and modern Chinese as Fei-tan-duo, Mi-man-cha, Shu-lun, Yu-Jia, Zheng-li and Sheng-lun. The first, second and fourth of these names are simply transcriptions of the sound of the Sanskrit name, while the other three, Shu-lun or Number Theory, Zheng-li or Correct Principle, and Sheng-1un or Superior Theory, represent translations of the Sanskrit names.

Ji: These various schools propounded various different theories, but one may say that basically they were all influenced by the view that human beings and nature merge into a single entity. Of course the terms used in China in ancient times do not exactly match those in use in India, but we may say that the Chinese word *tian* or Heaven, which designates the universe of t-he world of nature, is equivalent to the Sanskrit word *Brahman.* And the Chinese word *ren* or person is equivalent to the Sanskrit *Ātman* or "self." Thus, while the Chinese speak of "Heaven and humankind," the Indians speak of "Brahman and self," though basically the meaning is the same in both cases.

Ikeda: According to the eminent Indologist Oldenburg (1854–1920), the word Brahman originally designated the sacred and magical power of the words of prayer of the Vedas. And this explanation has been generally accepted as correct. According to the religion of the Brahmans or priests of ancient India, which centered about the conducting of sacrifices, the words of prayer uttered by the priests carrying out the sacrifice possessed a power that was capable of moving or manipulating the gods, and this power later came to be viewed in a more abstract manner as a law or principle governing the universe.

In other words, without denying the mystical nature of the sacrifices themselves, the existence of the power of human beings to influence nature, the subjective aspect of the sacrificial act was given clear recognition in the term Brahman. Human beings are thus not mere playthings to be tossed about by the gods or the winds of chance. They exist as an integral part of the universe or the natura1 world, one that interacts with and is merged with nature.

Later when the Brahmanist religion declined and its rituals became tainted with superstition, Buddhism, particularly the branch of it known as Mahayana Buddhism, appeared, emphasizing the worth of human beings, stressing their role as members of the universe and their right to independent existence in the context of the universe, singing a great

song of humanity. It taught that the universe is the self, and at the same time, that the self is the universe.

Ji: In the *Rig Veda*, the oldest sacred text of the Brahmanist religion of ancient India, we find the concept of "Heaven and humankind as one" clearly and concretely expressed in the "Hymn of the Primeval Man."

The Creation Hymns of the Rig Veda

Ikeda: Yes. The hymn is found in the tenth book of the *Rig Veda*. It describes a primeval man named Purusha who has a thousand heads that cover all of Heaven and earth and extend beyond them and who has a thousand eyes. It relates the myth of how the gods offer him up as a sacrifice and from the sacrifice all the ten thousand things are born. The moon is born from his mind, the sun from his eye; the gods Indra, the god of thunder, and Agni, the god of fire, are born from his mouth; the wind is born from his breath, the atmosphere from his navel, the Heavens from his head, and the four quarters of the earth from his ear.

Ji: The *Rig Veda* also contains other hymns that pertain to the creation of the world, such as those entitled "Hymn on the Lord of Birth," "Hymn of Creation," and "Hymn on the Lord of Prayer."

Ikeda: For the sake of our readers, I might here add a note of explanation on these titles. The "Hymn on the Lord of Birth" deals with the god Prajāpati, who is the god of creation. It is found in the tenth book of the *Rig Veda*. But it keeps repeating the question, "Who is the creator of all things?" It probably dates from a time when the people of India had begun to question the nature of the gods described in the earlier hymns and to consider them in more rational terms. It is embued with a feeling of spiritual striving as the singer attempts to discover the truth or principle underlying existence.

The "Hymn on the Lord of Prayer, "deals with Brahmanaspati, the Lord of Brahman or Lord of Prayer. In it we see early evidence of how the people of ancient India sought to discover, behind and beyond the words of prayer uttered in the sacrificial rituals, some mystic and universal force that they called Brahman.

In any event, these hymns represent attempts to express the idea of a single unifying principle that brings together Heaven and Earth and human beings.

Ji: The Japanese scholars Takakusu Junichirō and Kimura Taiken, in

their *Indo tetsugaku shūkyō shi* or *History of Indian Thought and Religion*, summarize the situation in the following way: "Strictly speaking, these hymns are not in full agreement with one another, but they have certain points in common. (1) They view the universe as having a single origin. (2) They believe that all the phenomena of the world spring from that single origin. (3) They believe that after all these phenomena have come into being, that origin remains unchanged...With the *Upanishads*, we have the famous statement, *Ekam eva advitīyam* or 'Only one, not two.' And we can see this same line of thought in a further stage of development in the declaration of Mahayana Buddhism that 'There is only the Law of the one vehicle, / there are not two, there are not three.'"

The Buddhist Concept of Eshō Funi

Ikeda: The passage that has just been quoted, "There is only the Law of the one vehicle, / there are not two, there are not three," is a very famous one from chapter two, "Expedient Means," of the Lotus Sutra. The Buddha is explaining how he preaches in various different ways in order to fit the capacities of various different kinds of persons. It would appear, therefore, that when he preaches in a certain way for the voice-hearers, in another way for the pratyekabuddhas, and in still another way for the bodhisattvas, that he is preaching a different doctrine for each. In fact, however, he is preaching only "the Law of the one vehicle."

Needless to say, this "Law of the one vehicle" refers to the great Truth that embraces all things; the word "one" here is not to be taken in a relative meaning. Buddhism teaches and at all times continues to seek a vast principle or basic law that encompasses everything. And, as the chapter goes on to explain, the Buddhas manifest their great compassion by appearing in the world when human beings are experiencing the time of greatest hardship.

Ji: In the thought of the *Upanishads* we often find the expression "Brahman and the self are one." Brahman, as we have noted earlier, refers to the universe of nature, while the word ātman or "self" refers to the individual. The implications of the expression, therefore, are in general comparable to those contained in the Chinese expression "Heaven and humankind as one."

In your dialogues with Dr. Toynbee, Mr. Ikeda, you speak in the following manner: "According to Buddhism, the natural world exists as an independent life system. Only when human beings manage to harmo-

nize with the natural world, which is their environment, can both of them receive and enjoy life. There is no other way in which the individual human being can hope to develop his or her own life in a creative fashion.

"Buddhism teaches that the relationship between human beings and nature is not one of opposition but of mutual dependence. This relationship of underlying principle is described by the term *Eshō Funi*."

There are other passages in the same book that give important insights into the principle of *Eshō Funi*, but I will not quote them here. I am in complete agreement with these opinions of yours, Mr. Ikeda. And Dr. Toynbee in the same book indicates that he too agrees with them.

Professor Oh Hyeong-geun, a Korean scholar of Dongguk University, has written me a letter in which he stresses that the concept of "Heaven and humankind as one" is a distinguishing feature of Eastern thought. In his letter he writes: "I personally feel that the concept of 'Heaven and humankind as one' is probably related to the thought expressed in 'The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana' in the phrase 'matter and mind are one.' As the Chinese Buddhist scholar Sengzhao (374–414) states: 'Heaven and Earth and I are of the same root, the ten thousand things and I are a single body.' I believe that this kind of thought represents the highest point of development in Eastern philosophy."

The Tiantai Concept of "Three Thousand Realms in One Instant of Thought"

Ikeda: The treatise known as "The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana" belongs to a group of Buddhist texts that deal with the concept of the "Matrix of Tathāgata," which teaches that all persons are endowed with the Buddha nature. Sengzhao was a disciple of the Buddhist scholar and translator Kumārajīva, who came to China from Central Asia. Under Kumārajīva's direction he became an outstanding exponent of the concept of *kong* or Emptiness as it is expounded in the Prajnā sutras.

The "Matrix of Tathāgata" concept of "The Awakening of Faith in the Mahayana" is related to the theory of "original enlightenment," which holds that ordinary individuals just as they are are Buddhas. The concept of Emptiness in the Prajnā or Wisdom sutras is designed to enable persons who are pursuing the path of the bodhisattva to free themselves from all feelings of attachment. The phrase from "The Awakening of Faith" that has just been quoted, "matter and mind are one," is allied in thought to the view expounded in original enlighten-

ment thought that, from the point of view of Buddhahood, the physical body, material things, and things of the spirit are all one in nature.

The concept of Emptiness as expounded by Sengzhao holds that, once one has freed oneself from attachments to linguistic or commonsensical categories, then all things are seen to be equal.

Strictly speaking, there are differences between these two concepts of Emptiness and "Matrix of Tathagata." That is why we have said earlier that the idea of "Heaven and humankind as one" appears in a number of different forms. And this variety in its various different forms indicates that, as a basic concept, it has proved capable of giving rise to great richness of thought.

Ji: Professor Oh, in his letter goes on to speak about the thought of the Huayan school of Buddhism. He writes: "The concept of 'the causation of the Dharma-realm' as it is expounded in Huayan thought—how, when good causes come together, they produce a certain result, how all things act to assist one another—this represents one of the finest expressions of Eastern thought."

Ikeda: Huayan thought has as its basis the concept of the world and the universe as that concept is systematically set forth in the *Huayan* or Flower Garland Sutra. This doctrine teaches that the Dharma-realm or the universe as a whole originates through the process of causation or through the action of mind alone. There is no objective world that exists apart from mind. The phenomenal world comes into being through the action of mind.

In the memorial lecture I gave on the occasion of SGI Day of 1998, when I was discussing environmental problems, I described the famous simile of Indra's Net that has traditionally been used to explain the causation of the Dharma-realm. According to this simile, there is a great net that hangs in the palace of Indra, the god of thunder. The net has countless joints or knots where its meshes come together, and each of these joints is adorned with a Jewel. Each of these jewels clearly reflects all the other jewels in the net, so that every part of the net reflects every other part.

This, according to Huayan literature, is the way in which all the countless things of the phenomenal world endlessly interact with one another, thus bringing about the causation or arising of the Dharma-realm.

The concept of causation expressed in the doctrine of Emptiness

expounded in the Wisdom sutras, which exercised such a profound influence upon Kumārajīva and Sengzhao, on the other hand, deals with the activities of consciousness and the use of language. For example, the idea or concept of "parent" presupposes the existence of a concept of "child." The concept of "parent" cannot exist apart from the concept of "child." When people speak, they distinguish between the two categories of parent and child, but these categories have no independent existence. They are no more than products of consciousness or the use of language, relative concepts that depend upon one another for their existence.

The doctrine of Emptiness views causation from an angle that is different from that expressed in Huayan thought. But both systems of thought are alike in warning us that we should not view the things of the world as having a fixed or substantive existence.

The concept of "three thousand realms in one instant of thought," referred to in Japanese as *ichinen sanzen*, which is expounded in the thought of the Tiantai school of Buddhism, may be said to represent an attempt to integrate the two systems of thought just outlined. This doctrine holds that human beings, in the space of *ichinen* or one instant of thought, one moment of the mind, have the ability to bring forth all the three thousand realms that make up the world.

The "three thousand realms" alluded to here correspond to what is known as the three realms of existence, namely, the realm of the five components, the realm of living beings, and the realm of the environment. In terms of the concept of *Eshō Funi* that we have discussed earlier, the realm of the five components and the realm of living beings correspond to *shōhō* or the living self, the subjective world, and the realm of environment corresponds to *ehō*, the insentient environment or objective world.

These two realms, that of living beings and that of the insentient environment, are *Funi* or "not two." All that makes up the universe or the world of nature can thus be grasped or encompassed in one instant of thought. This concept of "three thousand realms in one instant of thought," which is basically at one with the concept in Indian philosophy of "Brahman and self as one" and that in Chinese thought of "Heaven and humankind as one," deserves to be called one of the high points of Eastern thought.

Since you have read excerpts from the letter from Professor Oh, we might here consider how the concept of "Heaven and humankind as one" is reflected in the thought of the culture of the Korean Peninsula.

"Heaven and Humankind As One" in Korean Thought

Ji: Korea possesses a relatively long history of philosophical growth and development. On the one hand Korea has its own distinctive thought, and at the same time it has been influenced by the thought of its immediate neighbor, China. The doctrines of Confucianism were introduced to Korea in the Three Kingdoms period (57–668). The Confucian doctrine of the Mandate of Heaven exerted a strong influence on Korean thought. In the closing years of the Koryo dynasty, which ended in 1392, and the beginning of the succeeding Yi dynasty, the teachings of the Song dynasty Study of Principle or Neo-Confucianism were introduced to Korea.

Ikeda: And the concept of "Heaven and humankind as one," which forms the basis of these new currents of thought, I suppose, was at that time introduced into the thought of the Korean Peninsula.

Ji: That is correct. The concept of "Heaven and humankind as one" was accorded a place of preeminence, as we see in the works of such thinkers as Ri Saek, Jung Mong-joo, and Jung Do-jun. These men speculated deeply on the nature of "the principle that underlies Heaven, earth, and the ten thousand things." And another thinker who appeared at this time, Kwun Keun, designed a "Diagram of the Unity of the Mind Nature of Heaven and Humankind," and wrote: "Human beings, animals, plants, trees—these possess a thousand, ten thousand different forms, but all flow forth from the one Supreme Polarity. Therefore each of the ten thousand things is endowed with its own principle, and these ten thousand principles all come from the same one source."

Ikeda: With regard to the Buddhism of the Korean Peninsula at this time, the late years of the Koryo dynasty, in the countryside there were some Buddhist monks who lived a life of poverty and devoted themselves to the propagation of the teachings. But in the capital, the temples had become mere places of recreation for the members of the court and the aristocracy. As a result, Buddhism became the object of severe criticism from the Confucian scholars of the time, much as was the situation in Japan during the Edo period.

The statesman and thinker Ri Saek, whom you have just mentioned, submitted a memorial to King Kong-min in which he attacked the Buddhist followers for their excessive greed. And Jung Do-jun too was very outspoken in his opposition to Buddhism. Of course, such anti-Buddhist

documents to some extent reflect the struggles that were taking place between various political factions and religious groups, but there is no denying that there was much corruption in the Buddhism of the period.

In this atmosphere of critical thinking, those Korean thinkers who devoted themselves to the thought of the great Chinese Neo-Confucian philosopher Zhu Xi deepened their speculations. For the thought of Zhu Xi and his followers, one may say, went beyond mere factional disputes between Confucians and Buddhists to address more profound concerns, seeking earnestly to grasp and understand the essential nature of human beings. To the degree that the concept of "Heaven and humankind as one" contributed to the development of such thought in the culture of the Korean Peninsula, it was clearly of great significance.

The Monotheistic View of Nature

Ji: I am not very familiar with the situation in the Palestine region in ancient times, but I had always supposed that the ancient Hebraic culture and the culture of ancient Egypt and that of Babylon and Assyria in the Tigris-Euphrates area, as well as the Islamic culture of Arabia, was in general allied with the type of Eastern culture that we have been discussing. But in reading the account of the dialogues between you, Mr. Ikeda, and Dr. Toynbee, I have become aware of my error.

Dr. Toynbee observes that the Buddhist concept of *Eshō Funi* or the oneness of life and its environment, and the world view that prevailed in Greece and Rome in the pre-Christian period, were very much alike. It was the revolutionary concept of Judaic monotheism, according to Dr. Toynbee, that opened the way for the deliberate, wholesale violation of the *Eshō Funi* manner of thinking.

To quote his words, "The effect of this revolutionary doctrine was to disrupt the *Funi* (oneness) between *shōhō* (the living self) and *ehō* (the environment). Man was divorced from his natural environment, which was divested of its former aura of divinity.... The salutary respect and awe with which man had originally regarded his environment was thus dispelled by Judaic monotheism in the versions of its Israelite originators and of Christians and Muslims." (*Choose Life*, p. 40.)

Eastern and Western Models of Thought

Ikeda: As an embodiment of the view of nature typical of Judaic monotheism, people often quote the words of God that are recorded in *Genesis*, the first book of the *Old Testament*: "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle,

and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth."

Modern scholars offer various different interpretations of this passage from *Genesis*. But any consideration of global environmental problems must take into consideration this view put forward by the monotheistic religions. There can be no question that this view of nature typical of Judaic monotheism, in which human beings are seen as exercising dominion over the natural world, has formed the basis of the mechanistic view of nature of modern times, a view exemplified by the Cartesian dualism of matter and mind.

Ji: On the other hand, Dr. Toynbee demonstrates in his discussion that Jesus and the twelfth century Saint Francis of Assisi in their thinking were in accord with the concept of *Eshō Funi*.

Ikeda: Speaking of Jesus, Dr. Toynbee says: "Jesus lived in Palestine at a time when most Palestinian Jews were still peasants, living in harmony with their nonhuman environment in the spirit of *Eshō Funi*. (*Choose Life*, p. 41.)

And of St. Francis he states: "Francis was inspired by Jesus, and, though both were brought up in the Judaic tradition, their attitude to *ehō* (or the environment) was the opposite of the attitude implicit in the Judaic ideology." And he adds, "In Buddhist terms, Francis was an enthusiastic believer and, and lover of, *Eshō Funi*." (*ibid*.)

The late Dr. Nakamura Hajime, who, I know, was a good friend of yours, Professor Ji, speaking of the statement found in Buddhism that "Plants, trees, the earth itself—all are capable of attaining Buddhahood," which he sees as one expression of the concept of *Eshō Funi*, mentions St. Francis. He writes: "Because of his love for God, he saw all of the things God had created, not only the animals but fire, wind, the earth, all the phenomena of the natural world, as objects of love." (*Jiko no tankyū*, Seidosha)

Ji: I see Eastern culture as representing a model of thought that is synthetic and inclusive in nature (dualisms coming together to form a single entity), and Western culture as representing a model of thought that is analytic and exclusionist in nature. This, of course, is only an overview of the situation. I do not mean to imply that either East or West are one-hundred-percent pure examples of such tendencies.

Ikeda: That seems to me a very important way of looking at the situa-

tion. Like you, Professor Ji, I believe that only if the Chinese concept of "Heaven and humankind as one" and the Buddhist concept of *Eshō Funi* or the oneness of life and its environment are embraced by the world at large, can we hope to overcome our environmental problems and insure the happiness of the human race.

The Twenty-first Century and The Future of Humankind

Global Civilization and the East

Ikeda: Dr. Toynbee, setting aside the narrow, one-dimensional Eurocentric view of history, was one of the first to formulate a concept of history that, while recognizing the relative value of many different kinds of civilizations reacting with one another, saw the civilization of the globe as a whole. And motivating his admirable intellectual labors lay an acute consciousness of crisis, a conviction that humankind, if it was not to face annihilation, must somehow in the future learn to live as a single global family. A quarter of a century has elapsed since he passed away, and the trials that beset humanity have if anything become graver than ever.

In our next series of discussions, I hope we can, while remaining fully aware of the roots of this crisis that faces our present civilization, consider some of the ways that Eastern culture can fulfill its mission as a contributor to a global civilization.

Ji: I am in full agreement with the idea put forward by Dr. Toynbee and other scholars, namely, that every culture, every civilization, is destined to go through the successive phases of formation, expansion, and decay, and that no culture or civilization can hope to last forever.

Looking at human history as a whole, we see that in the past the culture of the East over a rather long period of time acted as a leader to other peoples of the world and occupied a monopolistic position. At that time the West, with the exception of Greece and Rome, was still in a stage of confusion and darkness, and had not yet attained a level distinguished enough to merit the designation of culture.

After the Industrial Revolution, however, Western science and technology developed in a striking manner, and under the influence of colonialist doctrines, Western colonies were established in many areas of the world. As a result, Western culture bit by bit came to occupy the monopolistic position in the world that had earlier been that of Eastern culture.

Ikeda: The English word "culture" derives from a French word meaning cultivation or farming. It is said that the human activity of farming originated in southeast Asia. If we see the commencement of farming activities as the true beginning of human culture, we could say that these took place some ten thousand years ago.

It was only with the scientific revolution of the seventeenth century and the Industrial Revolution of the century that followed that European civilization gained the place of global dominance that it holds today. Thus this is a phenomenon that has appeared only in the last two or three hundred years of that ten thousand year period we have just mentioned. Before the conditions became ripe for the occurrence of the scientific revolution, the West had to take over the accomplishments of the civilizations of India, the Byzantine Empire, China and the Islamic countries.

The natural science of ancient Greece did not contribute directly to this development. During the Middle Ages, when Europe was only an outlying corner of the vast Eurasian continent, it was the influence of the Islamic world, at that time by far the most advanced civilization, that the West needed in order to go forward.

And we should also note that Greek civilization itself was born from a fusion of Eastern and Western cultural influences. It was never the creation and possession of Europe alone.

Looked at from this point of view, we can see that the revolution in scientific knowledge and technology that has characterized Europe in modern times is the product of the cooperative efforts of a number of different Eurasian civilizations acting in concert—otherwise it could never have come about.

Francis Bacon, a thinker who exercised a decisive influence over the direction of modern scientific thought, speaks of three great inventions that "changed the world," namely, the invention of printing, of gunpowder, and of the compass. And all of these inventions originated in China. This is eloquent testimony to the high level of science and technology that prevailed in China in premodern times.

Jiang: I agree completely with what Mr. Ikeda has just said. And with regard to the declaration by Francis Bacon (1561–1626) that printing, gunpowder and the compass, three inventions that originated in China and were transmitted to Europe, "changed the world," we might note Bacon's own words. He writes: "We must carefully observe the importance, influence and effect that various inventions have. The clearest example of this is the case of printing, gunpowder, and the compass,

three inventions that were unknown to the people of antiquity.

"All of these inventions have occurred only recently, and people are still largely unaware of them and have nothing to say about them. And yet these three inventions have brought about a complete change in three areas that affect the conditions and affairs of the entire world, namely, the area of the written word (the way in which knowledge is communicated), the area of warfare, and the area of navigation.

"And from these inventions countless applications will unfold. From this we may be sure that, throughout the world, in whatever empire or religious group or planet, there will be nothing that exercises a greater power and effect upon humanity than these three mechanical inventions." (*Ji Xianwang wenji*, vol. 6, Jiangxi jiaoyu chubanshe, Nov. 1996, first printing, p. 300.)

These words of Bacon clearly confirm the view that has just been expressed by Mr. Ikeda. The scientific and technological revolution that has taken place in Europe in modern times has come about as a result of exchanges and interactions taking place among the various civilizations of the Eurasian continent.

But these words of Bacon lead me to ask certain questions. Why, for example, after these three inventions of printing, gunpowder and the compass, had been transmitted to Europe, did they exercise a power and effect that was capable of changing "the conditions and affairs of the entire world"? And why did they not exercise a comparable effect in the land where they originated?

In the process of considering these questions, my attention was drawn to the following words of Professor Zhang Guangzhi, whose opinions I have referred to earlier.

Professor Zhang writes: "The two great civilizations of China and the West have from the beginning been dominated by basically different principles. Chinese civilization has its origin in the three dynasties of antiquity, the Xia, Shang and Zhou. The material wealth in existence at the time these dynasties reigned supplied the basic conditions needed for the rise and development of this civilization. And in order to accumulate and concentrate that wealth, the civilization relied upon the acquisition and exercise of political power.

"Western civilization has its origin in ancient Mesopotamia. And the accumulation of wealth at that time was brought about through the application of new science and technology that was used to improve the transport of various natural resources acquired through trade.

"China and the West have undergone numerous changes and vicissitudes over the long course of their historical development. But viewing

the situation as a whole, we may say that for the past several thousand years, in matters pertaining to the production of wealth and the management of human affairs, China and the West have followed two different models or methods, a political model and an economic model." (*op. cit*., p. 48, *Journal of the Chinese University of Hong Kong* , Fall–Winter, 1990.)

Thus, as Professor Zhang points out, in their origin and development, the civilization of China and that of the West have been dominated by two different principles, a political model of development and an economic one. This, I believe, is a correct assessment of the situation and one that answers the questions I raised earlier, as well as other similar questions. And we may say further that in drawing attention to the political nature of Chinese civilization, which is one of its marked characteristics, it also offers a key to the better understanding of the history of Chinese civilization.

The Many Global Problems Facing Humanity

Ji: The Chinese proverb says "Thirty years of River west, thirty years of River east," meaning that everything flourishes and decays in turn. So in the several thousand years of human history, the relationship between Eastern and Western culture has been like this—"Thirty years of River west, thirty years of River east."

China during the times of the Han and Tang dynasties was in effect the economic and cultural center of the world—this is a fact that no one can deny. But from the time around the end of the Ming dynasty, the science and learning of the West began to spread to the East, and little by little the situation changed. The Opium War of 1840 marks a significant turning point. Japan set about earnestly studying Western culture, and in 1868 the Meiji Restoration took place. Thus Japan has been able to achieve marked success more quickly than has China, and up until the present has occupied a top level position in the world in terms of science and technology.

In the words of Qian Binsi, "One may say that in the last hundred years, Europe has been the father of the culture of the people of the world." In my words, this is a case of "Thirty years of River west, thirty years of River east." This is the way the world is shaped at present—one must recognize the fact. Westerners, relying upon their superiority in science and technology, have become the heroes of the age.

But in my view, there has never in the history of humanity been a culture that lasted ten thousand years. Beginning with the twenty-first century, "River east" will come to take the place of "River west," and

Eastern culture will once again regain its position of world dominance. As we have noted earlier, this is something that Spengler in Germany, Dr. Toynbee in England, and many other knowledgeable persons in the West have astutely sensed.

Jiang: I remember when you, Professor Ji, first made public this statement that, viewing the several thousand years of human history, one could say that the relationship between Eastern and Western culture was a situation of "Thirty years of River west, thirty years of River east." The statement attracted wide attention in academic circles both in China and abroad and aroused much impassioned debate.

Then, two or three years later, in February of 1991, I noticed that the *Chūgai Nippō* in Tokyo had run an article introducing these views of Professor Ji and commenting on them. And later, when I visited the late and highly respected Japanese scholar Nakamura Hajime, who at that time was still in good health, he mentioned Professor Ji's views and expressed high regard for them. I have forgotten the exact words he used, but the earnestness and sincerity of feeling with which he spoke of them made an unforgettable impression on me.

Ikeda: The center of civilization in the nineteenth century was Europe, and with the twentieth century it shifted to America and the Soviet Union, which are derivatives of European civilization. Like you, I foresee that the following twenty-first century will without doubt be the century of Asia and the Pacific.

The area of Eastern Asia in particular, though it is faced with problems of currency crisis and political instability, will no doubt continue to show a sustained aptitude for dynamic development.

But we must realize that Asia's present day political and economic development is very much tied to the science, technology and industry that are the products of modern Western civilization. That civilization, which originated in the West, is now in the process of spreading throughout the entire globe.

In terms of economics, the so-called market economy is becoming a global phenomenon. The spread of advanced methods of science and technology has revolutionized the way in which society gathers and communicates information, and biotechnology is opening up a whole new science of life centered around DNA studies.

At the same time, however, this process of globalization is destroying ecosystems on a worldwide scale, and the market economy, that now affects the entire world, is widening the gap between the rich and the

poor. Refugee populations continue to grow, new virus-spread diseases are proliferating, and we are faced with a whole barrage of global problems. And in our present day populations we see increasing signs of mental and psychological disorders, troubles of the mind are on the uprise, and particularly in the more advanced countries, identity crisis is becoming an ever-growing concern.

These global problems and the anomie besetting humanity as a whole have precipitated a crisis that affects the human population of the entire world, including the area of East Asia. The question that is thrust upon those of us in East Asia today, therefore, is whether or not we can create a vision of a truly global civilization that will benefit all humanity.

Jiang: Human civilization as a whole without doubt stands at a crossroads, a point in time that demands a clear decision. In the twentieth century that is just now ending, the world has seen the unfolding of various highly important events. Among these are two that have exercised an enormous influence upon human culture and civilization, namely, the occurrence of worldwide wars and the rapid advances of science and technology.

Warfare on a worldwide scale has erupted twice, once with the First World War, which took place largely in Europe, and then with the Second World War, which involved the entire globe. The destruction and suffering that war inflicts upon humanity has increased in severity with each outbreak of hostilities. And is it possible that a Third World War could occur? So far as I know, there is no statesman anywhere who can say with conviction that the occurrence of such a war is impossible.

The most important concern of all persons of good will therefore should be to insure that such a global war be avoided and that peace be maintained. For this is a question that involves the very survival of the human race.

And of equal importance with this question of maintaining peace, one that likewise concerns the survival of the human race, is that of the development and growth of society, particularly as it concerns the development of science and technology.

Peace and development—these are the two great questions confronting human society, questions that are today recognized as being of international concern.

The solution to the problem of the maintenance of peace depends mainly upon relations between human beings and other human beings. The solution to the problem of the growth and development of society depends upon the relations between human beings and nature.

Human society seeks not only peace, but growth and advancement as well. For if there is no peace, then advancement will never be possible, and if growth is neglected, there can be no peace. Such a truth is easily enough stated, and easily enough understood, and would seem to present few problems. When we look at it more closely, however, we see that there are problems indeed.

Everyone of course wants peace. But peace comes in two varieties. One is the kind of peace that is like the still waters in a pond, a peace that is without life or vitality, what we might call a merely negative peace. The other is the peace of a vast and steadily flowing river which, when the wind is calm, shows only gentle ripples, a peace that is overflowing with vitality. This we could call a positive peace.

Obviously, what we seek is such a positive peace, because such a peace is beneficial to the furtherance of human activity and creativity.

With regard to the advancement of society, this of course is desirable. But here again there are two types to be distinguished, development that is evil in nature and excessive, and development that is moderate in nature and beneficial.

Development that places inordinate emphasis upon development alone, that sees a need to dominate nature and "conquer" it, is surely evil or unsound development. Such development, as Mr. Ikeda has pointed out, poses a worldwide threat and leads to a whole host of problems. The only way to overcome the crisis that such development precipitates is to abandon once and for all the approach that seeks to conquer nature and to adopt a wholly different approach. And this alternative approach is one that sees the universe as, in the term of the Eastern concept, "Heaven and humankind as one," that plans and creates a social system marked by moderation, and that follows the path of beneficial development.

As Mr. Ikeda has pointed out, there are good reasons for believing that the "twenty-first century will without doubt be the century of Asia and the Pacific." I have great confidence in the accuracy of his prediction.

"The Commiserating Mind" and "The Mind of Compassion"

Ji: My own personal view is that, in the way in which they deal with the relationship between human beings and nature, Eastern culture and Western culture are quite different. To speak somewhat exaggeratedly, one may say that they are fundamentally opposed.

The dominant concept in the West is that nature is to be conquered or overcome, while the concept in the East is based on the idea of synthe-

sis, that urges that all the ten thousand things of the human and natural worlds constitute a single harmonious whole.

The West launches an assault upon nature, violently seeking to gain its ends. And there are times when it appears to be successful in doing so. The people of the West look to the world of nature to fulfill the materialistic needs of their daily lives, and as a result their lives become enriched. And this leads them to grow enraptured with their success, to take inordinate pride in it, to see themselves as the favored ones of Heaven, as the rulers of the globe.

Ikeda: The first thinker to put forward the modern Western idea of man as the conqueror of nature was Francis Bacon. Before that the earlier Christian view of the world prevailed, a hierarchical one in which God was seen as the creator, human beings as on a level below, and below them in turn were the things of nature, which God had given into the care of human beings.

Bacon took this traditional view a step further, clearly enunciating the idea of human beings as mastering, attacking and dominating nature, as becoming the rulers of the natural world. This is a view that does not permit any idea of peaceful coexistence with nature.

This view then combined with them, mechanistic views of Descartes and Galileo's methods of experimental science to bring about a revolution in science and technology. And then, as though to demonstrate Bacon's assertion that knowledge is power, the following three hundred years saw the emergence of the West as the dominator of the world and the domination of the world of nature by human beings.

Ji: The Eastern attitude toward nature is one that believes that we should be friends with nature, should understand nature and come to know it, and only then should seek something from it. And this approach, this attitude, has become crystallized in philosophical terms in the phrase "Heaven and humankind as one."

The basis of Eastern culture, the synthetic mode of thinking, recognizes the concept of synthesis and universal relationship and takes shape in the view of the relationship between human beings and nature that sees the two as constituting a single entity. Human beings and all other animals are included within this entity.

Human beings must not view other animals as their enemies or try to dominate them. The fact that human beings eat the flesh of animals is unavoidable, though from ancient times in the East there have been religions such as Buddhism that have inveighed against the taking of life

and the eating of animal flesh.

The thought native to China expresses a feeling of sympathy toward birds and animals. Perhaps the most famous example of this is found in the words of the poem that read: "I beg you, don't shoot the springtime birds, / their chicks are in the nest, waiting for their mother's return."

This kind of pity and sympathy for birds and animals is very moving, but it is seldom to be found in Western poetry. The Confucian philosopher Mencius expresses the same kind of emotional approach when he states that all people are endowed with a "commiserating mind." (*Mencius*, IIA)

Ikeda: In the *Sutta Nipāta* we find the following words of the Buddha Shakyamuni: "As a mother will risk her life to protect her only child, so should you arouse a feeling of boundless compassion toward all living beings." The statement of Mencius regarding "a commiserating mind" which Professor Ji has cited and Shakyamuni's "mind of compassion" both refer to a deep feeling of sympathy not only for other human beings but for all the ten thousand things of the world.

The people of the East have taken care to nourish to the fullest this kind of symbiotic relationship with the natural world. Unless human beings can cultivate this awareness of a symbiotic relationship that links them with all other expressions of the great life force, then there is no way to halt the human race in its march to annihilation.

Jiang: Buddhism speaks of the "three poisons" of greed, anger and stupidity. Greed, we should note, stands in first place, and this, I believe, is as it should be.

Dr. Toynbee has the following to say on this subject: "Our present greed threatens to rob future generations by using up irreplaceable resources.

"Moreover, greed is an evil in itself. It is a feature of the animality of human nature, but man, besides being an animal, is something more. In indulging our greed, we lose human dignity. Therefore, so far from stimulating our greed, we ought to restrain it—and this on principle, even if greed were not producing the disastrous material effects of pollution for the present generation and of destruction for posterity—if mankind is to survive pollution.

"Since the Industrial Revolution, manufacturers have been trying, by advertising, to condition the public into giving priority over all other objectives to the maximum satisfaction of greed. We need to reverse the order of our priorities and to make the restraint of greed and the practice

of frugality our first objectives. There are at least three grounds for this: the maintenance of human dignity, the protection of our own generation against the danger of pollution, and the conservation for future generations of the limited natural resources of our planet. We need to replace the ideal insinuated by the advertising industry with the ideal exemplified in Buddhist and Christian monasticism." (*Choose Life*, pp. 61–62)

Dr. Toynbee, I believe, was without doubt a man of keen foresight, who was deeply concerned about the future of the human race. The rules that he advocates for the restriction of greed and the model he offers for the ideal human life represent a guiding principle for the entire human race.

Civilization and Environmental Conflict

Ji: The differences between East and West, as we have noted, are very great. In the last several hundred years, when Western culture has swept over the entire globe, Westerners, obeying their mode of keen analytical thinking, have pursued their objective of conquering nature. And what are the results? As anyone can plainly see, they are disastrous indeed!

Human wants can never be fully satisfied. But there are limits to what nature can endure. To a certain extent, to be sure, nature can satisfy the needs and wants of human beings. But when those bounds are overstepped, then punishment descends on humankind, sometimes very terrible punishment.

Even in China we have at times become carried away and have cut down vast acres of forest in order to create farmlands. And everyone knows what the result has been. The Yangtze River has become, as the Yellow River has been in the past, the scene of raging floods.

Human destruction of the environment proceeds apace in both East and West, but since the Industrial Revolution in the West, it has reached its most severe level yet. Looking at the world as a whole, we see that, through the dominance of Western culture, ecological balances have been upset, acid rain has become widespread, fresh water resources are depleted, the atmosphere is polluted, the ozone layer threatened, and rivers and oceans have become filled with pollution.

Various species of life have been wiped out, new diseases have appeared—it is enough to threaten the future growth and development of the human race, and in fact to threaten its very existence. If these ills are not somehow overcome, human beings will not survive the next hundred years.

These evils and abuses are apparent before our very eyes. No one can say that such predictions are merely the words of an alarmist.

Jiang: This is not mere alarmist talk by any means. I am sure, Professor Ji, that after careful consideration of the situation, you simply wish to sound a warning bell for the rest of the world.

You have mentioned the sudden eruption of new diseases in your list of ills. As an example we might cite the appearance of the mad cow sickness in Europe in the past several years. Since Europeans are so fond of eating beef, it has caused them much apprehension. Many people turn pale just on hearing the word "cow," and have accordingly switched to the eating of pork instead.

And then, when no one expected it, foot-and-mouth disease broke out among the pork producers of Europe, so that now the eating of pork has come to be regarded as dangerous as well. It is reported that former pork eaters have now begun eating horse meat, since horses are not affected by foot-and-mouth disease.

With problems such as these threatening the lives of human beings, one cannot sound too many alarms to wake them to the dangers ahead.

And in the past Professor Ji has pointed out a very significant fact, namely, that with all these worrisome problems threatening the world, those who are in important positions of power and could do something about them if they would, are simply pretending that they do not see the problems and are failing to take action. As though living in a dream world, they go on as in the past, content to engage day and night in their usual struggles for power and endless pursuit of profit.

Ikeda: Thirty years ago the founder of the Club of Rome, Aurerlio Peccei, with whom I have held dialogues, issued a report on the "Limits of Growth," warning that, if growth continues at the present rate, in a hundred years the world will have reached the limit in terms of population industrialization, pollution, and the consumption of food and natural resources.

Of course, even before the modern era there have occurred clashes between human civilizations and the environment, and such civilizations have paid for their excessive demands upon nature by in many cases being wiped out. But in the growth that has taken place in the twentieth century, exploitation of nature has been carried out on a global scale, and these last thirty years have seen an acceleration in the rate of growth. The destruction of ecosystems that Professor Ji has mentioned, and the disruptions in the cyclical flow of energy and matter—each day we can almost sense with our bodies the changes that have taken place.

Human society and its economic activities have clearly reached the

"limits of growth" that this one life zone that is our earth will allow. In order to check the kind of growth we have been talking about and head it in the direction of greater regulation and restraint, we must somehow bring about a change of direction in our civilization itself.

Jiang: In an earlier meeting I have quoted from a work by the eminent Chinese philosopher Jin Yuelin. I would like now to quote again from the same work, *Chinese Philosophy*. He writes: "The West's preoccupation with the conquering of nature causes human nature to be even more arbitrary in its actions and invites even greater danger.

"Efforts to inject a more human element into science and industry are simply an attempt to bring them into greater harmony with human nature and to prevent the successes of science and industry from being used for killing, destruction, or other savage ends. Some thinkers have felt that, in order to protect civilization, the individual and society must be controlled, and people must be awakened to the need for such control.

"We must think deeply and take great care not to use the word 'conquer' lightly. In a sense, and in a very important sense, neither the humane element in man's makeup nor the inhuman element has ever once been conquered.

"The laws of nature have never once, for the benefit of human beings or at human command, ceased to be effective or been brought to a halt. What we humans do in order to bring about a temporary fulfillment of human wishes is simply, by creating a certain situation, to use one law of nature to act as a defense against another law of nature. If we should seriously attempt to conquer nature by somehow imprisoning it, it would surely retaliate in any number of ways. Before long, cracks would appear, water would gush forth, mountains would crumble and the earth break open.

"And the true character of human beings is the same. For example, because of original sin, decadent states of mind arise, people are shorn of their dignity or led into outbursts of anger, and these become elements that destroy others or are antisocial in character." (*op. cit*, pp. 251–52.)

This work of Professor Jin Yuelin was published in 1943, but I believe that what it has to say is highly important and founded upon profound discernment. It offers guidance with regard to the development of human society that is of long-term significance and relevant even today. In the excerpt I have just quoted, I believe that many intellectual leaders throughout the world, despite the differences in their cul-

tural background, their experiences in life and their professional concerns, will find much to agree with.

Dr. Toynbee, Dr. Jin Yuelin, Professor Ji, Mr. Ikeda, and the various scholars of East and West who have engaged in dialogues with Mr. Ikeda, are all in agreement in the proposals and persuasive views they have put forth regarding the future direction of human civilization. That is, they all agree that it must without fail advance in a manner that has humanity as its focus and center. A friend of mine attended the Global Forum held at Davo in Switzerland in 1999 and reported that the theme of the forum was expressed in English by the slogan "human-faced globalization." Recently he informed me that this slogan has now been changed to read "human-centered, globalization." From this we can see that the concept of human-centeredness, though it may be interpreted somewhat differently by various interest groups, has become the focus of wide attention on an international scale.

Stability and Peace before Progress

Ji: In the dialogues between you, Mr. Ikeda, and Dr. Toynbee, it is stated that the greatest problem confronting humanity now is not so much progress as it is peace and stability. This strikes me as a very wise observation. At present, all worthy people throughout the world must be keenly aware of the gravity of this problem.

But although many of them are aware of the problem, they are not necessarily aware of its connection with Western culture. In my opinion, however, one can not consider these matters without considering the relationship they bear to Western culture.

As we have noted earlier, from around the 1920's and up until the present, there have been intellectuals in the West who already sensed that Western culture was in a period of decay. Professor Qian Binsi states, "For the past fifty years, European culture has followed a path of decline." And persons of foresight in the West have held the very same view. This view corresponds largely with my own, and I therefore second it.

Westerners, with their science and technology based on their mode of analytical thinking, believe that they are in possession of the absolute truth, but they are unable to solve many of the problems related to the world of nature and human society. They believe that through their advances in the natural sciences they have been able to grasp the truth, and they have grown arrogant and overbearing as a result. But today they are finding it increasingly difficult to defend their views.

Some of them, facing up frankly to the crisis conditions that have

been brought about by their destruction of nature, yet insist that the situation can still be saved by Western science. Some people label this the doctrine of scientism. But I believe it is absolutely impossible for Western science to bring about a successful solution. It is like a person seizing hold of his own hair and trying to pull himself up off the ground—it is utterly impossible.

Ikeda: As you have just said, Professor Ji, the crux of the problem lies in the method itself, the approach based upon the mode of analytical thinking that seeks to reduce things to their basic elements. Specialization that tears the object of study apart in the name of greater specialization, abstraction that takes a living, breathing reality and turns it into an abstract entity, mechanism that deprives that reality of the life force that infuses it, the method of reductionism that would strip away variety in order to achieve monism, that would cut up the whole into separate pieces—this ideal of modern times has been used as a weapon with which to dominate nature, and with the knowledge gained thereby, it has achieved unquestionable victories.

But the knowledge gained through this type of reasoning can never be more than a limited portion of the basic substance under observation. Yet this approach has become dogma in the thinking of people of modern times, dominating their whole outlook, and this has given rise to problems. And now, with the twentieth century, we see nature, which was thought to have been conquered and brought under control, taking a most ferocious revenge.

The environmental problems of a global nature we face today are highly complex in nature and intimately connected with other problems such as widening economic differences, the growth of poverty, and problems of population and energy.

The Buddhist World View of Dependent Origination

Ji: Is there any remedy for such problems? Surely there must be. As I see it, the remedy is for the synthetic mode of thinking of Eastern culture to come to the rescue of the analytical mode of thinking of Western culture.

We must first of all adopt the philosophy of the Chinese and the other peoples of East Asia, in particular the concept that is most vital to it, that of "Heaven and humankind as one," and on this basis deal with the world of nature, abandon our evil practices, adopt beneficial ones, and carry out a basic reform in our approach. Only when we do so is there hope that the human race may continue to enjoy a happy existence.

If we hope to bring a halt to the destruction of nature and escape nature's retaliations and punishments, we must use the Eastern concept of "Heaven and humankind as one" to put an end to the type of thinking and approach that seeks to conquer nature. Using the same methods as those used by religion, we must preach the doctrine of "Heaven and humankind as one" until it has become deeply embedded in people's hearts and minds, until they come to honor and obey it as a matter of second nature. And this doctrine must be preached not only to the West, but to the East as well.

Jiang: As Professor Ji has pointed out, the problem is that we cannot ignore this question of scientism. If we could deal properly with the problem of scientism, this inordinate belief in the validity of the scientific approach, it would be tantamount to effecting a cure for the disease that threatens the very life of human society, for the greatest ill of our present age.

This disease of scientism has spread throughout the entire world, and its symptoms are a belief that science is all-powerful, and a tendency to emphasize reason and slight the humanities. To cite China as an example, we may note that science has become widely misunderstood in that country. Everywhere we see the word "science" used in careless and mistaken ways; in Chinese society, particularly in the colleges and universities, there is a tendency to emphasize reason and slight the humanities. Such tendencies are by no means new, and in fact are growing more prevalent with each passing day.

By now the disease has become chronic. And the only cure for this illness of scientism is to cultivate the type of thinking that positively exalts the humanistic aspects of the human spirit and promote correct aims and values, and with such thinking set about to educate people and control society. Stated in specific terms, it is what Professor Ji has just proposed, namely that we use "the same methods as those used by religion, preaching the doctrine of 'Heaven and humankind as one' until it has become deeply embedded in people's hearts and minds, until they come to honor and obey it as a matter of second nature. And this doctrine must be preached not only to the West, but to the East as well."

Ikeda: As has been stated earlier, East Asia has a long and rich tradition of synthetic type thought. The concept expressed in Chinese thought of "Heaven and humankind as one" and the Buddhist concept of *Eshō Funi* or the oneness of life and its environment are typical examples of such synthetic thinking.

These days we hear a great deal about the study of "complex systems," but this concept bears a very striking resemblance to the Buddhist world view of dependent origination. The study of the process by which various elements, while maintaining a mutual relationship, generate and develop in such a way as to create a new type of order—this is the concept of dependent origination.

Ji: In the West in recent years the study of such new fields has become very popular, as we know from references to "fuzzy theory" or "chaos theory." Such new fields of academic study are not necessarily all alike in content, but even where they differ in content, I believe they have certain intellectual characteristics in common. These characteristics differ from those of the traditional Western mode of analytical thinking. Rather they tend to stress universal relationships, and to be in this sense closer to the Eastern mode of synthetic thinking, since they include a certain number of generalizing ideas.

Ikeda: These days, even in the West, the paradigm or definition of what is meant by the word "knowledge" is undergoing a change. It is shifting from a mechanistic world view to one based on the concept of the life force, from an approach that reduces things to their basic elements to one that sees them comprehensively, from a view of nature as made up of unrelated phenomena to one that stresses the interrelatedness of nature. In other words, it is moving in a new direction that brings it closer to the generalizing concepts of Eastern thinking.

And therefore in many fields such as the social sciences, economics, science and technology, we see the use of new terms such as ecology, fluctuation, self-organization, holon, homeostasis and symbiosis, terms that refer to the inclination of all things to live together in a symbiotic relationship.

And any new world order that emerges must likewise be based upon the synthetic mode of thought, one that is capable of simultaneously understanding both the impulses toward unification and those toward variety that are inherent in the present. We must, it seems, respond to two contradictory demands, one that seeks to create a single global culture, and another that sees the need to develop a variety of different local cultures.

In the world at present, where information and capital are rapidly being globalized in nature, there is a strong tendency for Western or European values to become the single standard. At the same time, the countries or local areas that are unable to keep up with this tendency are

becoming isolated and set apart from the rest of the world because of their differences.

But any culture, whatever it is, will take on a new shape when it is combined with elements from other and different cultures. Particularly in our modern age, it is sincere confrontation with the dilemma of whether to become Europeanized or to retain native ways, whether to opt for progress or for tradition, that provides the chief motive power for cultural creation. In this sense, therefore, we should not be unduly alarmed at the prospect of a "clash of civilizations." This is especially true for East Asia, which possesses a rich store of wisdom that will enable it to surmount any such clashes.

Thirty Years, River West; Thirty Years, River East

Ji: At present the cultures of East and West have become fused, and this process of fusion will no doubt continue in the future. If this means there has been a fusion of the very best elements in Eastern and Western culture, then undoubtedly human culture as a whole will be elevated to new levels of excellence.

But to my way of thinking, in this process of fusion one party must act as leader and the other must be the follower. Eastern culture must be the leader, and Western culture must accept the role of follower. Because only Eastern culture can save culture as a whole from the predicament in which it finds itself.

There are only two major cultural systems in the world today, that of the East and that of the West. If the light fades in the West, then the East will shine. The twenty-first century will as a matter of course be a time when the light of Eastern culture once more shines forth.

Ikeda: Ah yes, "The light from the East," as the saying has it. The time has surely come when the dawn light of Eastern wisdom will shine out upon the world.

But if this vision should make a single misstep one cannot help fearing that it may fall into a kind of self-centered Asian-ism or Japan-ism. In Japan before and during the Pacific War, we may recall, there were loud calls for what was known as "a modern conquest," in which the crisis brought about by the material civilization of the modern West was to be overcome by an adherence to the traditional spiritual values of Japan and East Asia. Just how much self-righteous delusion can be brought about by thinking of this type has been amply demonstrated by the unprecedented suffering inflicted upon the rest of Asia, and upon China in particular, by the aggressive warfare carried out by Japan with

this ideology as its justification.

Jaspers, in his "The Origin and Aim of History," states: "The confrontation between Europe and Asia must not be substantialized in metaphysical terms. To substantialize it in such fashion would be to turn it into a fearful specter." To invest what is no more than a dualistic representation with substantial form verges on an excessive simplification of reality.

Ji: My approach, needless to say, does not envision any rejection or wiping out of Western culture. It is entirely different. Such an approach as that would be utter foolishness. I am not in any sense denying the shining achievements that have been realized up to now by Western culture. That would be quite impossible, and would go against the principles that govern the advancement of human society.

What I am suggesting is that, building on the high level of advancement already achieved by Western culture, we should progress a step further, aiming for a new height never before reached in the history of human culture. As I have indicated earlier, the saying "Thirty years, River west; thirty years, River east," or turn and turn about, is the way we should proceed in order for human society to realize its objective.

The correct procedure is to carry on all the splendid achievements realized by Western culture over the past several hundred years, and at the same time use the synthetic thinking of Eastern culture to rescue us from the predicament brought about by the analytic thinking of Western culture, in this way advancing human culture as a whole to newer and higher levels of development.

Dr. Toynbee's Views on Asia

Ikeda: Advancing human culture to new heights never before achieved—it seems to me a splendid vision of a global civilization! To seek to raise human culture to new heights is to make human beings more humane, to make civilization more truly civilized.

But, Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno (1903–69) and Max Horkheimer (1895–1973) as though anticipating the tragedies of Auschwitz and Hiroshima, in *The Dialect of Enlightenment* write, "Why does humankind, instead of entering into a condition of true humanity, sink rather into some new kind of barbarism?"

Reason in modern times, while shining with the beam of enlightenment, has also revealed to us new areas of barbarous darkness where such light never penetrates. The attempt to pursue rationality to its furthest extent has on the contrary led to the destruction of human beings

and threatens to destroy the globe itself, the only habitation we humans possess—paradoxically irrational result if there ever was one!

The East, I believe, must transcend the dualistic confrontation of East and West and employ its creative power to work for the advancement of human culture as a whole. Dr. Toynbee placed profound hopes in the enormous hidden powers of China to work toward this end.

Ji: In the dialogues held between you and Dr. Toynbee, you touch often on the problems facing humankind in the future. This is indeed a very important question, I believe.

Dr. Toynbee, speaking on this subject, has the following to say; "Eastern Asia preserves a number of historical assets that may enable it to become the geographical and cultural axis for the unification of the whole world. These assets are, as I see them: (1) the Chinese people's experience, during the last twenty-one centuries, of maintaining an empire that is a regional model for a literally worldwide world-state; (2) the ecumenical spirit with which the Chinese have been imbued during this long chapter of Chinese history; (3) the humanism of the Confucian Weltanschauung; (4) the rationalism of both Confucianism and Buddhism; (5) the sense of the mystery of the universe and the recognition that human attempts to dominate the universe are self-defeating (to me, the most precious intuitions of Taoism); (6) the conviction (shared with Buddhism and Shinto by Chinese philosophy of all schools, except perhaps the now extinct Legalist school) that, far from trying to dominate nonhuman nature, man's aim should be to live in harmony with it; (7) the demonstration, by the Japanese people, that it is possible for East Asian peoples to beat the Western peoples at the Westerner's own modern game of applying science to both civilian and military technology; (8) the courage shown by both the Japanese and the Vietnamese in daring to challenge the West. This courage will, I hope, survive but be dedicated, in the next chapter of mankind's history, to the constructive enterprise of helping mankind to put its affairs in order peacefully." (*Choose Life* p. 249.)

And you, Mr. Ikeda, in response to this have stated: "I do not think that the Chinese are a people with aggressive ambitions. On the contrary, I regard them as essentially pacificists seeking peace and security for their own country." (*Ibid*, p. 252.)

I am wholly in agreement with these views.

Jiang: I too am of the same opinion as Professor Ji. Traditional Chinese culture has always sought to achieve "peace throughout the realm;" it is

a culture of peace. The Chinese people are unparalleled in their love for peace.

As you know, China pays immense respect to the memory of upright officials and heroes of the people such as Bao Zheng, Hai Rui, Yue (Yo) Fei, Wen Tianxiang, Deng Shichang, Lin Zexu and Zhang Xueliang. The patriotism of the Chinese people of course strives to repel any outside invasion and to protect the nation, but it shows no tendencies toward foreign invasion or expansionism.

Twenty years have passed since the reformed liberation policies were first put into effect in China, and the economy of the nation has begun to develop and advance. But there are still many complex problems associated with the task of reform.

Certain persons have appeared in various countries of the West who speak loudly of the "threat posed by China," but such persons have wholly misunderstood the history of China and its present condition. My purpose in mentioning such misunderstandings here is to emphasize that what the world needs now is greater exchange and communication among the peoples of the various different nations.

Scientific and Technological Advance and Spiritual Stagnation

Ikeda: For several years now I have been warning against the tendency toward nationalism that exists in certain circles in Japan. As in the so-called textbook controversy, we observe various statements and actions that tend to deny the historical reality of Japan's aggressive warfare against China, and I find this highly regrettable. In order to do everything within my power to combat such tendencies, I hope to continue my efforts to promote cultural and educational exchange with the people of China.

Dr. Toynbee, speaking of the crisis facing modern civilization, characterized it as in essence a "morality gap." By this he meant that, while science and technology have advanced to an overwhelming degree, morality, ethics, the things of the spirit have stagnated, and this has created a gap between the two areas. This is particularly true in the more advanced countries, where, in contrast to the great expansion in material wealth, spiritual anomie has reached alarming proportions.

With the so-called information revolution, it has now become possible for us to receive vast amounts of information. But, rather than profiting from this, we find ourselves swamped in data, mentally and spiritually we lose our sense of control and are left in a state of stupefaction. Spiritual advancement—the only way to achieve this is to engage in an

incessant struggle of the mind and spirit against the state of stagnation in which we find ourselves.

As Dr. Toynbee has pointed out in the passage quoted earlier, China, with its basis in Confucianism, Taoism and Chinese Buddhism, has a rich spiritual soil capable of providing the ethical and moral foundations needed to support the spirit of humanism and pacifism. In order to advance in spirit, humankind must learn from the spiritual and ethical heritage of Chinese people.

Ji: With regard to the future of humankind, it seems to me that the persons in our country and abroad can be roughly divided into three classes, namely, the optimists, the pessimists, and those who haven't thought about the matter and don't care anyway.

The optimists, believing that the more humanity changes, the better it becomes, foresee a rosy future. The pessimists proclaim that the human race will very soon meet its end. Some even predict that the end may well come about in the twenty-first century.

The third category embraces the vast majority of human beings. It includes some who get along swimmingly in the world and spend their days eating and drinking, and others who are in the depths of poverty and are struggling just to stay alive. Most of these people give not a single thought to the future of humankind, but continue, as in the past, to spend their days in a wholly meaningless and indiscriminate manner.

I belong to the party of the optimists. Yes, at present society faces a great many problems. Public feeling is in a state of turmoil; natural disasters, human-made disasters, the flames of war spread all around us; moral values are vanishing, everything is topsy-turvy, and all signs point to a calamitous ending. But I continue to believe that these are no more than passing phenomena, and that the future of the human race will invariably take a turn for the better.

The Great Unity and the Creation of Value

Ikeda: Like Professor Ji, I too belong to the optimist party. I take my stance in a firm doctrine of optimism and feel a strong responsibility to work to create a shining future for humankind.

Jiang: I am like Mr. Ikeda, a believer in optimism. I am firmly convinced that human beings possess an inexhaustible fund of wisdom, unlimited courage and creative power, and that they will surely open up a bright path into the future.

Ji: In China from early times we have had the concept of *Datong*, the Great Commonalty or Great Unity. According to this concept, though it may require much time and many steps in the process, humanity will invariably keep moving in the direction of an ideal state known as the Great Unity. In his work entitled *Datongshu* or *Book of the Great Unity*, the philosopher and reformer Kang Youwei described the ideal in somewhat Utopian terms, and yet the basic spirit underlying it is quite rational and it embraces values that are highly worthy of adoption.

Jiang: It is just as you have said. Human society will at some point unfailingly set out to realize the ideal world of Great Unity. In China this concept of *Datong* has penetrated deeply into the hearts and minds of the people.

When I was an elementary school student, my schoolmates and I read in our Chinese language textbook the passage from the *Record of Rites* in which Confucius describes the *Datong* ideal, and we discussed its meaning. Even today when people refer to a society that is peaceful and stable, they use the phrase *Tianxia wei gong*, "a world shared by all alike," which comes from that passage, or speak of a society in which "people do not pick up objects dropped in the road, and gates are not locked at night," words that describe the ideal world of Great Unity. I dare say that in China there is no one who opposes the Great Unity ideal. There is much that is worthy to be learned from this concept as it is set forth in Kang Youwei's *Book of the Great Unity*.

And Kang Youwei's ideas for social and political reform also deserve careful consideration. The most important thinker in present day China who carries on and works to promote these reformist ideas of Kang Youwei is the eminent philosopher Li Zehou. I myself agree in general with Professor Li's opinions.

Ikeda: Kang Youwei faced squarely up to the dilemma confronting China as to whether to seek to preserve traditional ways or to adopt a course of Westernization, and he fought resolutely to achieve the ideal of a Great Unity in which all persons and all things comprise a single entity. This concept of the Great Unity described in the *Liyun* chapter of the Confucian classic, the *Record of Rites*, envisions an ideal society that subsumes both traditional Confucian ideas and those of Buddhism and Western science and technology as well.

As Kang Youwei himself states in his *Book of the Great Unity*, "Since we have all received life from the great earth, the people of the entire globe are all my brothers and sisters, and when I come to know

them, I will feel a sense of love and kinship for them."

Kang Youwei's whole life was devoted to understanding all living beings, living in harmony with them and sharing their joys and hardships, a life pulsating with emotions of love and humaneness. At the same time he clearly had a very concrete conception of how social systems could be step by step unified, nations could merge together, until in the end world federation government could be established. And he was also a confirmed feminist, insisting that the equality of men and women was a principle established by Heaven and the correct path for humanity.

In the concept of Great Unity and the spirit behind it I myself see a model for what I call the ethos of symbiosis, a method by which people and people, people and nature, can live together, aiding and supporting one another and achieving a state of mutual prosperity.

Tsunesaburo Makiguchi, the first president of the Soka Gakkai, believed and taught that the aim of human life should be the "creation of value," and that education should develop the power to create value. I myself think that the aim of humanity and the aim of civilization should be the creation of value. And that what we should strive for now is the worldwide creation of the value of Great Commonalty or Great Unity, of symbiosis and harmony.

The "wisdom of the East" which we three have been examining in our discussions here will without doubt enable us to overcome the many global problems that confront us, to develop the creative power of humankind, and to continue to create values of global validity. My wish is that I may join with you two gentlemen in creating an era when the wisdom of the East will shine forth, a Century of Life.

Ji Xianlin

Born 1911 in Qingping (now Linqing), China. Graduated from Tsinghua University in 1934. Traveled to Germany in 1935 and spent the years 1936–1945 at the University of Göttingen studying the ancient languages of India and Tocharian, receiving a Ph.D from the university in 1941. Returned to China in 1946 to post of professor at the Oriental Languages Faculty of Peking University. Subsequently held a variety of posts including head (dean) of the Oriental Languages Faculty; Vice-President of Peking University; member of the Philosophy and Social Sciences Faculty of the Chinese Academy of Sciences; member of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference; Member of the Standing Committee of the People's Republic of China National People's Congress; Chairman of the Linguistics Society of China, and Chairman of the China Comparative Literature Society. Current posts include Chairman of the Chinese Dunhuang-Turpan Society. Major works include a collection of essays on ancient Indian languages; *The Language Problems of Primeval Buddhism*; *Papers on the History of Sino-Indian Relations*; *Papers of Ji Xianlin on Buddhist Studies*; *China and Eastern Cultures*; *Tocharian Studies*; *Translation from the Tokharian Maitreyasamitinataka*; *A History of Sugar*, and *Collation and Annotation on* "*Records of the Western Regions of the Great Tang Dynasty*" (editor-in-chief). Translated works include *Ramayana* and *Shakuntala* and prose: *Ji Xianlin: Essays* and *Studying in Germany for Ten Years*.

Jiang Zhongxin

Born 1942 in Shanghai. Graduated 1965 from the Oriental Languages Faculty of Peking University, becoming a research assistant at the Institute of Historical Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. 1979 appointed Assistant Research Fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences/Peking University Institute of South Asian Studies; 1986 an Associate Research Fellow at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, and 1991 a Professorial Research Fellow of the same Institute. Major works include *Saddharmapuṇḍarīkasūtra: a Sanskrit Palm-leaf Manuscript Kept in the Library of the Cultural*

Palace of the Nationalities (facsimile edition), *A Sanskrit Manuscript of Saddharmapuṇḍarīka Kept in the Library of the Cultural Palace of the Nationalities, Beijing* (romanized text), *The Tradition of Manu: Translation and Annotation, Collation and Annotation on "Records of the Western Regions of the Great Tang Dynasty"* (coeditor), *A Modern Chinese Translation of "Records of the Western Regions of the Great Tang Dynasty"* (co-translator), *Sanskrit Lotus Sutra Fragments from the Lüshun Museum Collections*. In 1990 awarded the "Commendation for young and middle-aged experts of most illustrious contributions" by the Ministry of Personnel of the People's Republic of China.

Daisaku Ikeda

Born 1928 in Tokyo. Honorary president of Soka Gakkai. President of Soka Gakkai International (SGI). As a Buddhist leader, author, poet and educator has launched numerous initiatives in areas such as peace, the environment and education, lectured at universities on these topics, always with an underlying theme of the "humanism" of Buddhism, and engaged in dialogue with many national and cultural leaders and academics worldwide. Founder of numerous educational institutions including the Soka Kindergarten, Soka Elementary School, Soka Gakuen Educational Foundation and Soka University, plus academic research institutions and peace organizations including the Toda Institute for Global Peace and Policy Research, Institute of Oriental Philosophy and Boston Research Center for the 21st Century, and cultural institutions such as the Tokyo Fuji Art Museum and Min-On Concert Association. Ikeda is also author of over 100 publications including a novel, *The Human Revolution* (in 12 volumes), and collected dialogues including *Choose Life: A Dialogue* (with Arnold Toynbee), *Spiritual Lessons of the Twentieth Century* (with Mikhail Gorbachev), and *Quest for a Bright New Century* (with Jin Yong). The majority of these works have been translated and published in English, Chinese and numerous other languages. Awarded the United Nations Peace Medal in 1983. Recipient of honorary professorships and doctorates from many universities around the world, including Peking University.