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IN THE NAME OF WATER: An Inculturated Moral Vision to Address China's Water Crisis

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**IN THE NAME OF WATER
AN INCULTURATED MORAL VISION
TO ADDRESS CHINA'S WATER CRISIS**

A Thesis by

Feng Xu, S.J.

presented to

The Faculty of the

Jesuit School of Theology

of Santa Clara University

in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree of

Licentiate in Sacred Theology

Berkeley, California

April 2017

To
My Dearest Country
and
All her citizens
Both human and nonhuman

ABSTRACT

This thesis demonstrates China's water crisis and analyzes its social, economic, political, and ethical causes, in order to find a possible solution. I argue that China's water crisis is a human crisis. Therefore, to address it, I present an inculturated moral vision. This inculturated moral vision is a combination of Confucian notion of the harmony between Heaven, Earth, and all in between, and the Catholic notion of solidarity with the poor or preferential option for the poor.

The cosmological unity or harmony with everything else is the perfection of *Jen* in Confucianism. Likewise, solidarity with the poor or preferential option for the poor in Catholic social teaching is the fulfillment of the second commandment "love your neighbor" and a genuine response to Jesus' call that "just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."¹ Commiseration is a very important character of the superior person in Confucianism, it draws one out to act compassionately for the sake of suffering others, including non-human beings. Charity is at the heart of Christian faith, it compels us to become good Samaritans to care for the least and the marginalized.

¹ Matthew 25: 40. All biblical passages used in this thesis are taken from *Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version, Catholic Edition*. Epub ed. (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishers, February 2013), Kindle.

The cry of “the poor” and the cry of “sister water”² in the genetic community of life are a unified plea for mercy. Care for sister water is a care for ourselves and for all generations to come. To protect a blue China and a peaceful world, Chinese people must live ethically and responsibly now.

² The term “sister water” is borrowed from Francis of Assisi’s *The Cantic of the Creatures*. “The poor” used in my thesis does not refer to the least of our human society alone, but also refer to our common home earth (borrowed from Pope Francis’ encyclical *Laudato Si’*), our sister water, and all other members of non-human community of life whose right have been violated by our human species.

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I came to Jesuit School of Theology of Santa Clara University at Berkeley (JSTB) with the intention to study pastoral theology; however, after taking a course with professor Mary E. McGann, R.S.C.J. entitled *Ecology and Liturgy* during my first semester, I felt that I was led to a different path. With a rich background in liturgical studies and teaching, professor McGann has shown me her deep concern and love for God's creation throughout the course. Meanwhile, professor Kevin F. Burke, S.J., also invited us to reflect why and for whom we are doing theology. These questions not only helped me to find the meaning of my study, but also reconnected me with my people who are constantly battling against all sorts of environmental pollution. If professor McGann opened a window for me to ecotheology, professor Burke then showed me the direction. For that, I owe my sincere gratitude to them all.

During my second semester, I took a course with professor Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda entitled *Earth Ethics as Justice Ethics*. With hope, a great Christian virtue, professor Moe-Lobeda addressed directly the social, political, and economic structure or root causes that did injustice to earth and all her citizens. Her approach to initiate possible structural changes and the fire that empowered her has enlightened my way. The questions I learned from her classes have continuously guided me through this thesis. She is such a great inspiration and a good mentor as well. I thank her for the passion that she has shown me throughout the course and her generous acceptance to be my reader.

I took two courses with professor William R. O'Neill, S.J., entitled *Methods in*

Moral Theology and *Theories of Justice* during my third semester. Professor O'Neill's love for the poor and the least of the society and his passion for human rights and social justice have had a profound impact on me. For him, the poor and the marginalized are the ones to suffer the most in any given situation. He becomes a voice for the least brothers and sisters of our society through his teaching at JSTB and his ministry at Federal Women's Prison. He helped me weaving and knitting my thesis proposal, and accompanied me through each chapter. His wisdom, gentleness, and patience are far beyond my imagination. To him, I salute my heartfelt gratitude.

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Lastly, I can never give thanks enough to Almighty God who has formed me in my mother's womb and knitted me through the genetic family of life. He has called me

into religious life and led me to care for his marvelous and wondrous creation. To him, I surrender my life as an offering to heal the wounds of our planet—home earth.

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INTRODUCTION

I was with my parents during Chinese Lunar New Year 2015. I noticed something was wrong with the water we drank each day. After boiling it several times, there was a crust of scales accumulated in the inner lower part of our electronic kettle. Besides, its color was slightly yellowish. It has been like this since my childhood as far as I can recall. My parents do not know what's wrong with it and nobody tells us about it either. What shocked me the most was when the Ministry of Water Resources (MWR) of China claimed in 2016 that "more than 80 percent of the mainland's shallow groundwater has been polluted, and some areas are contaminated with heavy metals and toxic organic compounds."¹

I am surprised to see some San Franciscans drinking directly from the faucet. What amazes me is to see that there is almost nothing accumulated inside the electronic kettle even after several months of usage. I ask myself sometimes, what has happened to my own country and why we could not have the same quality of water that San Franciscans and most Americans do. I do believe that what Americans did we Chinese people could do as well if only we will.

Besides, I am sad to know that American theologians have been studying

¹ Lin Yi, "More Than 80 Percent of China's Groundwater Polluted," EPOCH TIMES, last updated April 22, 2016, accessed January 13, 2017, <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n3/2031587-more-than-80-percent-of-chinas-groundwater-polluted/>

ecotheology for nearly half a century and written many books, but I can only find a few books on ecotheology in Chinese. I do wish that more Chinese theologians would be interested in this field and become guardians of our come home—earth. Finally, deep in my heart, I know that I am doing ecoethics for my people who are constantly suffering from water and other environmental issues. Therefore, I wish to write my thesis *In the Name of Water* as an invitation for my people to treat water not as a natural resource only, but as an important family member, to do justice to sister water and those who are affected by her degradation and shortage, and to protect a blue future for generations to come, through an ethical and responsible way of living.

Scope and Nature

On the issue of China's water, many books and articles have been published by different individuals and institutions, such as *Toxic Pollutants in China* *Study of Water Quality Criteria*, *Water Criteria Green Book of China*, *Water Related Disasters and Disaster Risk Management in the People's Republic of China*, *The Yellow River: The Problem of Water in Modern China*, etc. In recent years, several authors have written books about Confucianism and Ecology, such as *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans*, *Confucian Thoughts and Ecological Civilization: Essays of The 5th International Conference on Confucianism*, *Introduction to Confucian Thoughts on Ecology*, *Argument Between Heaven and Humans: Confucianism*

and Ecological Civilization, etc.²

Reading the signs of the times, The Roman Catholic Church has also responded to the global ecological crisis and provided guidelines to address the crisis. Popes St. John Paul II, Benedict XVI, and Francis, have been constantly addressing the crisis with various talks, apostolic letters, and encyclicals. To address the global water crisis, The Holy See even published *Water, An Essential Element For Life, 2003*, and *Water, An Essential Element For Life, An Update, 2006*.

The harmony or unity between Heaven, Earth, and everything in between is a central theme throughout Confucian moral teachings. Such harmony is the highest good or happiness for Confucians, and the sage or the perfect human being knows the wisdom to achieve it. Therefore, the goal of Confucian morality is to achieve such harmony through cultivating virtues, especially *Jen*.

Jesus of Nazareth is always with the poor and the marginalized. One of the key themes in Roman Catholic social ethics is solidarity with the poor or the preferential option for the poor. Solidarity with the poor means to acknowledge the poor are not strangers but one of us. Through deep ecology or deep incarnation and evolutionary science, Christians realized that we are part of the web of life and we all come from water. Therefore, care for our sister water, one of the poor members in the community of life, is

² 伍鸿宇主编, *儒家思想与生态文明: 第五届儒学国际学术研讨会论文集*, (台湾: 学生书局, 2011). 乔清举, *儒家生态思想通论*, (北京: 北京大学出版社, 2013). 张立文主编, *天人之辩: 儒学与生态文明*, (北京: 人民出版社, 2013).

caring for ourselves indeed, and to protect it is to protect ourselves.

The water crisis in China is a complicated issue. This thesis will not focus on the depth and width of the issue, but the underlying social, economic, and political ideologies or ethics of the issue and a possible ethical way out. Therefore, I seek to propose an inculturated moral vision as a potential way to address the crisis.

Thesis Statement

China's water crisis today is basically a moral crisis or a human crisis, and the Chinese people are both a significant cause and an important solution of it. Therefore, a change of morality from human-centeredness to God-centeredness, or from crisis to harmony and solidarity, is the key to solving the crisis and protecting a blue future for generations to come.

Methodology

The methodology that I will use through this thesis is interdisciplinary. I will use a reclaiming or retrieval method that I have learned from professor Cynthia D.

Moe-Lobeda's course *Earth Ethics as Justice Ethics*. I will re-find or rehear the ecological voices in Confucian and Roman Catholic wisdom traditions which have been suppressed or ignored by the rapid development of industrialization and modernization. To support my argument, I will also use methods borrowed from deep ecology which

emphasizes the interconnectedness or interdependency of life and liberation theology which promotes an ethics of care and love for the poor.³ The thesis will touch several questions about theological ethics, such as: What's going on? What ought to be? What disables and enables our moral agency to move from what's going on to what ought to be? What are the practical implications of all of these?⁴

Significance

Since very few Chinese Christian scholars have written articles and books in ecotheology, especially in ecoethics. I am privileged to contribute my water ethics to the field of ecoethics. My interdisciplinary or holistic approach will not only bring Confucianism and Christianity together, but also the Chinese communist government and the Chinese church into dialogue for the sake of water. I believe my thesis will inevitably inspire future Chinese Catholic scholars to draw more wisdom from Chinese traditions to address both local and the global ecological crisis. After all, we are part of one and the same community of life. I equally contend that this thesis of mine will remind Chinese Catholic leaders of their role of social participation, and help the Chinese government to recognize that Chinese Catholics are a great potential for developing an ecological

³ Interconnectedness and interdependency of life is harmony in Confucianism, and care and love for the poor is solidarity with the least and the marginalized in Roman Catholic social ethics.

⁴ I learned this again from professor Cynthia D. Moe-Lobeda's course *Earth Ethics as Justice Ethics*. Professor Moe-Lobeda shared with us six questions that we ought to ask when we do theological ethics. These questions are: 1. What's going on? (Descriptive) 2. What could be? (Constructive) 3. What ought to be? (Normative) 4. What disables our moral agency to move from what's going on to what ought to be? (Force) 5. What enables our moral agency to move from what's going on to what ought to be? (community, wisdom, knowledge) 6. What are the practical implications of all of these? (actions to change)

civilization in China.

CHAPTER 1

THE CRY OF THE POOR:
AN ASSESSMENT OF
THE NATURE, SCOPE, CAUSES AND
CONSEQUENCE OF CHINA'S WATER CRISIS TODAY

Introduction

Life here on this planet earth began in the ocean and evolved into many forms throughout time and space. Indeed, human history is a history of water. Thus Christiana Z. Peppard asserts that “Fresh water is a condition of existence in cosmic and evolutionary senses, as well as in ecological, societal, civilizational, and individual terms. It is no exaggeration to say that in an ultimate sense, water charts human history.”⁵ Early human communities sought after water and lived alongside famous rivers and built great civilizations all over the world. For instance, the Yangtze River and the Yellow River are called the cradles of Chinese civilization.

Ministry of Water Resources of China (MWRC) also acknowledges that “Water is the foundation of survival, source of civilization and key to ecology.”⁶ Basically, in the community of life in our common home earth, “Water is required for agriculture, the generation of thermal power, washing of ores, and the production and manufacturing of

⁵ Christiana Z. Peppard, *Just Water: Theology, Ethics, and the Global Water Crisis* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2014), 19.

⁶ Ministry of Water Resources, People's Republic of China, *Water Resources In China*, 9, accessed January 18, 2017, <http://www.tnmc-is.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/8.WATER%20RESOURCES%20IN%20CHINA.pdf>

metals, semiconductors, food, beverages, paper, chemicals, plastics, and much more.”⁷

In short, we are connected to everything else through water.

Freshwater resources in China are about 2.8 trillion cubic meters (m³), only 6% of the global total. China thus ranks No. 6 in the world, after Brazil, Russia, Canada, USA and Indonesia. However, with its 1.3 or more billion people, China’s per capita water resources only stands at 2,100 m³, only 28% of the world average. China becomes one of the most water scarce countries in the world.⁸

Despite the limited freshwater resource, China’s consumption of water will skyrocket from 41 billion m³ in 2009 to 46.2 billion m³ in 2020. In addition to that, a 27% decline in glacial volume on the Qinghai-Tibet Plateau and in the Himalayas has been forecasted. This region is not only the origin of many rivers of China, such as the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers, but also the source of several transboundary arteries, such as the Salween, Ganges, Mekong, Ayeryawady, Brahmaputra, and Indus Rivers.⁹

Under the global water crisis, like many other nations in the world, China is experiencing its own water crisis. In this chapter, I will present two aspects of China’s water crisis, namely the quantity and quality of water, and two types of causes of the crisis, namely natural causes and human causes. Then, I will present a narrative story and

⁷ Claudio O. Delang, *China’s Water Pollution Problems* (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), 130, Kindle.

⁸ Ministry of Water Resources, *Water Resources In China*, 2.

⁹ David A. Pietz, *The Yellow River: The Problems of Water in Modern China* (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015), 2.

argue that China's current water policy and practice disfavor the poor and the marginalized.

China's Water Crisis

The first aspect of China's water crisis is the quantity of water or water shortage.

According to United Nations Environment Program (UNEP), United Nations

Development Program (UNDP), World Bank and the World Resources Institute (WRI),

Water resources levels of 1,000-2,000 m³ per person per year designate danger of water-stress. When the internal renewable water resources drop below 1,000 m³ per person per year, nations are considered water scarce, which means that the lack of water becomes a severe constraint on food production, economic development, and protection of natural systems. Nations with internal renewable water resources below 500 m³ per person per year are considered to experience critical levels of water scarcity.¹⁰

In 2011, Gansu, Liaoning, Jiangsu, Henan, Shandong, Shanxi, Hebei, Ningxia, Shanghai, Beijing, and Tianjin were in fact marked as the "The Dry 11" which represents regions below the water poverty mark.¹¹ Besides, China has only 6% of the freshwater resources in the world but has to quench almost 20% of the world population. Although China's annual per capita renewable freshwater availability is around 2,100 m³ which keeps it out of water-stress, yet it is still significantly below the G20 average of 9,400 m³ per person per year.¹²

¹⁰ "The Dry 11 Regions below the Water Poverty Mark," China Water Risk, accessed January 11, 2017, <http://chinawaterrisk.org/big-picture/dry-11/>

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Lucy Carmody, eds., *Water In China: Issues for Responsible Investors*. Research conducted by Dave Doré, Guo Peiyuan, Anna-Sterre Nette, Jiali An (Responsible Research, 2010), 16, accessed January 20, 2017,

Furthermore, two-thirds of China's approximately 660 cities have less water than they need and 110 cities suffer severe shortages. About 700 million people regularly drink water contaminated with animal and human waste. More and more Chinese people nowadays choose to leave their rural homes and live in urban cities. New urban residents and their changed lifestyle will further stress the limited water supply. McKinsey Global Institute foretells that China will have almost 110 cities with more than 1 million people by 2015 and more than 220 cities by 2025. These steady inflows of people will inevitably put more pressure on an already antiquated water infrastructure system.¹³

With fertility, diets, health and life expectancy improving annually, together with the recent released "second child policy", China's population will increase by a further 2-3 billion by 2050. By 2030, there will be over 1 billion people living in Chinese cities.¹⁴ In addition to that, influenced by the global meat culture, typically American diet culture, more and more Chinese people begin to drink milk rather than soy milk and eat more beef than pork. "Beef production, in particular, could have a devastating impact on supplies. The meat industry requires over 15,000 liters of water to produce 1kg of beef with intensively reared cattle. This is over 4.5 times as much water as is used per kg of rice production."¹⁵

http://www.sustainalytics.com/sites/default/files/water_in_china-_issues_for_responsible_investors_feb2010.pdf

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Carmody, *Water in China*, 8.

¹⁵ Ibid.

The second aspect of China's water crisis is the quality of water or water pollution. Unlike air pollution which attracts more local, national and international media attention, water pollution is hidden from the concerns of ordinary Chinese citizens. In general, people only begin to doubt and question that something might be wrong with their water when rivers, lakes, streams and other water sources turn to black, become smelly, or taste strange. Nevertheless, "water pollution is one of the most serious problems plaguing China today, with millions of people drinking water unfit for consumption."¹⁶

As one of the largest raw material markets and with the most factories in the world, China produces nearly 70 billion tons of wastewater each year excluding agricultural wastewater; that means China discharges 1.9 million tons of wastewater per day.¹⁷ One cannot but think how all this huge amount of wastewater is treated and where it eventually goes. The Ministry of Environmental Protection revealed a terrifying reality that more than 200 million tons of wastewater both from industrial production and households had been discharged into urban rivers every day.¹⁸

In fact, toxic organic pollutants have been found in China's major rivers, lakes

¹⁶ Delang, *China's Water Pollution Problems*, 20, Kindle.

¹⁷ Hongqiao Liu, *China's Long March to Safe Drinking Water*, trans. Hannah Short (China Water Risk and China Dialogue, 2015), 9, accessed February 1, 2017, <http://chinawaterrisk.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/03/Chinas-Long-March-To-Drinking-Water-2015-EN.pdf>

¹⁸ Delang, *China's Water Pollution Problems*, 202-203, Kindle.

and other water bodies. 107 kinds of toxic and hazardous organic pollutants have been identified in the Yangtze and Songhua Rivers basin alone.¹⁹ Besides, the magazine *Science China* published a review in April 2014, disclosing that 158 types of pharmaceuticals and other human care products were found in China's freshwater bodies. 68 kinds of antibiotics were detected among these 158 pollutants. Yet, eight months later, amoxicillin was found in Nanjing's tap water.²⁰

More alarmingly, the fact is that not only surface water bodies in China become public sewers, but also the underground aquifers are heavily polluted as well. In fact, "more than 80 percent of the water from underground wells used by farms, factories and households across the heavily populated plains of China is unfit for drinking or bathing because of contamination from industry and farming."²¹

In a 2015 research, Ting Feng pointed out that "the widespread dumping of toxic chemicals, agriculture runoffs, and industrial contaminated wastewater has poisoned most of China's water sources, both above-ground and underground."²² In another collective work, Lucy Carmody also presents that "70% of China's rivers and lakes are significantly contaminated, 50% of China's cities have polluted groundwater and over 30% of China is

¹⁹ Liu, *China's Long March to Safe Drinking Water*, 9.

²⁰ Liu, *China's Long March to Safe Drinking Water*, 18.

²¹ Chris Buckley and Vanessa Piao, "Rural Water, Not City Smog, May Be China's Pollution Nightmare." *The New York Times*, April 11, 2016, accessed January 20, 2017, https://www.nytimes.com/2016/04/12/world/asia/china-underground-water-pollution.html?_r=0

²² Delang, *China's Water Pollution Problems*, 194, Kindle.

affected by acid rain.”²³

Moreover, the Ministry of Supervision reports that China has had more than 1,700 water pollution incidents each year over the past few years. To list a few, in April 2014, drinking water in the city of Lanzhou in Gansu Province was polluted; in February 2013, in Wuhan, the capital city of Hubei Province, a water plant was contaminated.²⁴

China’s water quality has five Grades. Grade I is more commonly found in pristine nature reserves and is drinkable after simple treatment. Grade II is lightly polluted and might be used for drinking after treatment. Grade III can be used for recreational purpose, such as swimming and fishing, and also can become drinkable after proper treatment. Grade IV can be used for industrial purposes, the service industry or recreation as long as there is no direct human contact with the water. Grade V can be used for irrigation both for agriculture and general landscapes. Grade V+ is severely polluted and unsuitable for any use.²⁵

In 2015, China Water Risk reported that, 72.1% of China main river basins were under Grade I-III, 19.0% was Grade IV-V, and 8.9% was Grade V+; 70% of key lakes and reservoirs belonged to Grade I-III, more than 20% was Grade IV-V, and less than 10% was Grade V+; while only 9.1% of groundwater was Grade I, 25.0% Grade II, 4.6%

²³ Carmody, *Water in China*, 4.

²⁴ Yi, “More Than 80 Percent of China Groundwater Polluted.”

²⁵ Delang, *China’s Water Pollution Problems*, 216-223, Kindle.

Grade III, 42.5% Grade IV, 18.8% Grade V-V+. ²⁶

2012 Goldman Prize Recipient, and the founder and the Director of Institute of Public and Environmental Affairs, Ma Jun said in an article: “To some extent, water pollution and water shortage are reciprocal causation. On one hand, pollutants are hard to be diluted due to water shortage, on the other hand, water pollution damage the limited water sources and further worsens water shortage.”²⁷

Some Major Causes of China’s Water Crisis

Given the social, economic, geographical and political complexity of China, in a chapter like this, it is not realistic to present all causes on the issue of China’s water crisis. However, I will attempt to group several major causes of the crisis into two different categories, natural causes and human causes.

Distribution of water resources in time and space, and global warming belongs to the category of natural causes. In general, South China does not only have abundant water but also has more rainfall, while North China lacks water resources and is short of precipitation. For instance, from March 21, 2016 to May 18, 2016, there was less than 100 millimeter (mm) precipitation in most regions of North China with an exception of

²⁶ “China Water Risk, 2015 State of Environment Report Review,” posted June 17, 2016, accessed January 19, 2017, <http://chinawaterrisk.org/resources/analysis-reviews/2015-state-of-environment-report-review/>

²⁷ 马军, “中国水危机: 对策与出路,” 二十一世纪双月刊, 2005 年 2 月号, 总第八十七期, 16 页. Accessed January 20, 2017, <http://www.cuhk.edu.hk/ics/21c/media/articles/c087-200411040.pdf>

Jilin, Heilongjiang and Liaoning provinces which had a little more than 100mm but less than 200mm, while South China had a range between 100mm-800mm precipitation.²⁸

Moreover, North China has almost 45% of the country's total population but only has 20% of the country's water resources. The uneven distribution in population and water resources generates extremely low water availability on a per capita basis in many areas.²⁹ The distribution of mineral resources, land, and water resources mismatches the layout of production forces.³⁰

Global warming is no longer a scientific theory but a living reality, and its impact on China like on other countries is inevitable and will definitely worsen China's water crisis. Some meteorologists foretold that "global warming will bring changes to surface runoff, the frequency of droughts and floods and the water quality in some areas of China, and exacerbate the uncertainty of the country's water resources and contradictions between demand and supply." They also estimated that "the western regions of China will lack about 20 billion cubic meters of water from 2010 to 2030, and in 2050 the regions would still need 10 billion more cubic meters of water."³¹

Ding Yihui, a special adviser on climate change from China's Meteorological

²⁸ "全国累计降水分布图," 2016 年 03 月 21 日-05 月 18 日, accessed January 20, 2017, <http://ciiir.com/read/1230333468/>

²⁹ Carmody, *Water in China*, 22.

³⁰ Ministry of Water Resources, *Water Resources In China*, 3.

³¹ "Global Warming Affects China's Water Security," Xinhua News Agency March 24, 2003, cited by china.org.cn, accessed February 21, 2017, <http://www.china.org.cn/english/scitech/59403.htm>

Administration (CMA) said that more evaporation and less flow of water due to global warming in some regions would probably intensify the pollution of rivers and lower the water quality as well.³² Zheng Guogang, the head of CMA, also warned that more droughts, rainstorms, and higher temperatures would threaten river flows and harvests.³³

Intense population growth, urbanization, expansion of agriculture and industry, are main human causes for China's water crisis. When the People's Republic of China was formally established on October 1, 1949, it had a total population of 5.4167 million people. However, 66 year later, this population has almost tripled with a total number of 1.37462 billion in 2015. In 1949, only 10.64% of the entire population (5.765 million) lived in urban areas, while 89.36% (48.402 million) lived in rural areas. But in 2015, city dwellers increased to 56.10% (77.116 million) and rural dwellers decreased to 43.90% (60.346 million).³⁴ Fast population growth consumes more water as well as generates more wastes, in addition to that, as more people move to cities and live a new lifestyle, more water is needed.

Population growth leads to expansion of agriculture which eventually consumes more water. Agriculture is the number one global water consumer; it accounts for 70% of fresh water withdrawals and nearly 90% of global fresh water consumption. Agriculture

³² Ibid.

³³ "Climate change: China official warns of 'huge impact'," BBC News, March 22, 2015, accessed February 21, 2017, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-32006972>

³⁴ "2-1 Population and its Composition," in *China Statistical Yearbook 2016*, compiled by National Bureau of Statistics of China (China Statistic Press, 2016). National Bureau of Statistics of China, accessed February 10, 2017, <http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2016/indexeh.htm>

transforms water into food and only a little of the water withdrawn is returned to the system.³⁵ The total amount of irrigated arable land in China has been tripled in the past. In fact, MWRC states, “From the early days of the PRC to 2014, irrigated arable land expanded from 15.933 million hectares to 64.54 million hectares, irrigated forage land extended to 850,000-plus hectares, and total grain output grew from 113.2 million metric tons to 607.099 million metric tons.”³⁶ The statistics reveals that the total water consumption in 2015 was 6.1032 trillion m³, and agriculture alone counted for 851.5 billion m³.³⁷

Expansion of agriculture does not only use more water but also demands more fertilizers and pesticides which inevitably worsen the nation’s water crisis. China is one of the biggest users of pesticides and fertilizers in the world today and the amount of pesticides used per unit of arable land is three times the world average with a rather low efficiency. Indeed, only about 30% of the applied pesticides reach the target agriculture and the remaining 70% are released into the environment, such as soil, air, plants and water.³⁸

³⁵ Peppard, *Just Water*, 24.

³⁶ Ministry of Water Resources, *Water Resources In China*, 5.

³⁷ “8-12 Water Supply and Water Use,” in *China Statistical Yearbook 2016*, accessed February 11, 2017, <http://www.stats.gov.cn/tjsj/ndsj/2016/indexeh.htm>

³⁸ Liu, *China’s Long March to Safe Drinking Water*, 11.

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in China was only 47.21 billion US dollars in 1962, yet by 2015 it has reached to 1.100772 trillion US dollars.³⁹ In the global market, nothing is free; everything comes with a cost. Usually, nature pays the price for our industrialization. Claudio O. Delang asserts that “Over the past three decades, China’s rapid economic growth has led to the contamination and degradation of most rivers, lakes, reservoirs, and waterways.”⁴⁰ According to a study conducted by Statista, ten industrial sections in China alone discharged 49,248.11 million tons’ wastewater in 2013.⁴¹

W.H. Auden says that “thousands have lived without love; not one has lived without water.”⁴² We cannot live without water, therefore, we should ask “what is the consequence of China’s water crisis and who suffers the most?”

Consequence of China’s Water Crisis

In the web of life, everything connects to everything else and nothing can live without water. Because all things relate to water either directly or indirectly. Peppard states that “Fresh water is a baseline requirement for survival and flourishing—for human

³⁹ “China GDP 1960-2017,” Trading Economics, accessed February 11, 2017, <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/china/gdp>

⁴⁰ Delang, *China’s Water Pollution Problems*, 165, Kindle.

⁴¹ “Industries with the highest waste water discharge in China in 2013,” Statista, accessed February 11, 2017, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/282608/china-industrial-waste-water-discharged-by-sector/>

⁴² W.H. Auden, “First Things First,” line 32. Genius, accessed December 17, 2016, <http://genius.com/W-h-auden-first-things-first-annotated>

beings, societies, civilizations, and ecosystems—and it is nonsubstitutable.”⁴³ Therefore, the consequence of China’s water crisis is far beyond my calculations and is indeed immeasurable. For this paper, I focus its impact on the human species alone, especially on the rural poor.

Narrative Story: Cancer Village⁴⁴

Feng Xiaofeng moves down an alleyway toward her home in Wuli, an ordinary village in eastern China's Zhejiang province, with an extraordinary problem. Feng slides open the doors with a quick thrust. But before she says a word, she begins to cry and points at two identically framed photos side by side on her wall. They show an older and younger man. They look like blown up passport pictures or perhaps faded formal portraits.

These photographs haunt Feng. "I don't want to stay in this house. I don't want to sleep here at night," she says. "My husband was the pillar of the family and when he died it was like the pillar of our house collapsing. Then my son was taken too." Taken 10 years apart by cancer.

The sound of crying draws villagers to Feng's small courtyard. They have stories of their own. They say Wuli was once famed for wooded hills and fertile soil. Government

⁴³ Peppard, *Just Water*, 20.

⁴⁴ Jonathan Kaiman, “Inside China’s ‘cancer village’,” *The Guardian*, posted June 4, 2013, accessed February 14, 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/04/china-villages-cancer-deaths>

officials came in the 1990s and promised riches. "All the local officials did was fill their pockets with money," says an older woman angrily. During this period, a number of textile companies moved into Wuli, building their plants across town.

"All these factories should be moved, because they have caused the cancer," says one man, as others nod. "All of these factories should be removed from here." They tell us that Wuli is now a "cancer village."

In the past 50 years this region has gone from subsistence farming to heavy industry. "We complain and petition, but it is pointless, ordinary people can never fight officials and win," a farmer tells us near Binhai Industrial park. So, like many others here, he works in a dyeing mill at night. He says it's a dilemma that they have to learn to live with.

It may be the contradiction of Chinese growth, but for Feng Xiaofeng it is far simpler. She says that that industrial expansion in Wuli village has come at too high a price. She says there is no way she can be sure, but she is convinced that the factories caused the cancer of her husband and son. She hopes that the government moves her from her empty house.

"No one from the government ever bothered to come and see me or check on me."

"I am so sad. I have no more tears to shed," she says.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ David McKenzie, "In China, 'Cancer Villages' A Reality of Life," CNN, updated May 29, 2013, accessed January 17, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/05/28/world/asia/china-cancer-villages-mckenzie/>

The Suffering Poor in Rural Areas

Feng Xiaofeng and her village-mates are not alone, there are many villages like Wuli in China, they are all called cancer villages. In fact, Chinese media, academic and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have estimated that there are 459 cancer villages in China, spread across all provinces except far-western Qinghai and Tibet.⁴⁶

In the global economic market, striving to achieve more profit, many companies from the developed countries have built factories in developing countries. Similarly, Chinese officials from affluent provinces often relocate polluting factories to poorer western regions or inland regions.⁴⁷ Gong Peng, a Qinghua University professor, also affirms that some cities have even looked to underdeveloped suburbs for water.⁴⁸ In its 2008 annual report, the MEP stated that “with increased understanding of pollution issues and risks, water quality issues have tended to migrate from urban areas to rural areas as harmful industries relocate away from areas of high population density.”⁴⁹

Generally, people from rural areas, such as these cancer villages, have less economic, cultural, political and social health resources. Once water crisis occurs, they cannot form strong resistance for many reasons; for instance, limited resources and lack of information, but they bear the cost of it sometimes even with their lives. Therefore,

⁴⁶ Kaiman, “Inside China’s ‘cancer village’.”

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Liu, *China’s Long March to Safe Drinking Water*, 31.

⁴⁹ Carmody, *Water in China*, 24.

Peppard argues well that "...in terms of human impact, water stress and water scarcity most profoundly affect people living in poverty and other situations of vulnerability."⁵⁰

Urban and industrial waste water are discharged sometimes without any treatment directly to rivers, lakes and groundwater. Urban environments are improved but rural environments along these water bodies are extremely worsened. Once rural lands and water are polluted with pollutants, agricultural products are poisoned as well. Many people from villages along polluted rivers and lakes have been diagnosed with cancer and other brain and heart diseases.⁵¹

Xiao Jiadian of Fei city is a small village in the central part of Shandong province. It is located on the north bank of Dawen river. Along the south tributary of Dawen River, Xintai city is a home for paper mill, textile printing, chemical industry, machinery, metallurgy, mining, etc. Along the north tributary of Dawen River, Laiwu city is a nest for steel, mining, electricity, machinery, paper mill, etc. Besides, in the nearby city Taian, paper mill, brewery, food processing, spinning, textile printing, machinery, chemical industry, etc. are quite developed. Fei city itself is a new industrial city as well, the leading industries are mining, coking, paper mill and brewery. All these cities discharge their wastes into Dawen River. The Environmental Protection Department of Fei city

⁵⁰ Peppard, *Just Water*, 32.

⁵¹ 王书明, 张彦, “我国水污染与环境正义研究,” 河海大学学报 (哲学社会科学版), 第 11 卷第 3 期, 2009 年 9 月, 52 页. Accessed January 21, 2017, file:///C:/Users/USER/Downloads/%E6%88%91%E5%9B%BD%E6%B0%B4%E6%B1%A1%E6%9F%93%E4%B8%8E%E7%8E%AF%E5%A2%83%E6%AD%A3%E4%B9%89%E7%A0%94%E7%A9%B6.pdf

tested Dawen River and reported that in recent years many segments of the river were under the worst grade of water all year round, and nitrite, a cancerogenic chemical, was excessive.⁵²

In a scientific research, professor Lin Jingxing discovered that the soil, vegetables and even human hair of Xiao Jiadian village are polluted by poisonous elements to various degrees. Lin concludes that Xiao Jiadian villagers carry a special disease which might be possibly caused by an ecological change, it is an ecological disease. This kind of disease enters the human body through food grown in poisoned soil and watered with polluted water. Urban citizens of Xintai, Taian, Laiwu and Fei in the upstream of Dawen River are the producers of pollution, while villagers of Xiao Jiadian in the downstream of Dawen River bear the great cost of water pollution. This is extremely unfair and completely unjust.⁵³

“China has built in place a legal framework for water resources that centers round the *Water Law*, includes 4 laws, 19 administrative regulations, 55 departmental rules and over 700 local regulations and government rules. Water activities in all types have laws and regulations to comply with.”⁵⁴ Despite all of these water laws, regulations and rules, and the recent Action Plan for Water Pollution Prevention (APWPP) of the Chinese State Council, why does China’s water crisis worsen day after day? Ma Jun has pointed out

⁵² Ibid., 51.

⁵³ Ibid., 52.

⁵⁴ Ministry of Water Resources, *Water Resources In China*, 8.

four reasons. There is non-observance of the laws, lax implementation of laws, failure to punish lawbreakers, and the major water lawbreakers are food providers for the local environmental protection department.⁵⁵

Conclusion

The natural causes of China's water crisis are not subjected to our human control, but human causes to the crisis can be improved or changed. If the crisis were improved or eventually solved, the resultant suffering of the poor would end as well. In Chinese traditional medicine, Chinese doctors diagnose the root cause of the symptoms of their patients and attend it directly. Therefore, to address China's water crisis more directly from its root, we shall take a step further and examine its root causes which are the political, social, economic, and moral ideologies.

⁵⁵ 马军, “中国水危机: 对策与出路,” 19 页.

CHAPTER 2

WATER, POVERTY AND ECOLOGY: A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF UNDERLYING IDEOLOGICAL BELIEFS CONTRIBUTING TO THE CRISIS

Introduction

Dragon is a figurative feature in Chinese culture. It has power over wind and rain, sea and sky, and dominates all river bodies under the sun. Because of its great power, it becomes a national totem for Chinese people. During imperial times, Chinese emperors not only wore luxurious robes embroidered with beautiful dragons but also called their physical bodies *Long Ti* which literally means “dragon body.” In modern times, Chinese people often proudly call themselves descendants of the giant dragon of the east.

Dragon cannot live without water, so also the Chinese people, the descendants of the giant dragon. I have mentioned in the introductory part of the first chapter that human history is a history of water. Chinese history is a history of wrestling with water, from the well-known legendary Emperor Yu Tames the Flood to the Three Gorges Dam, the largest of its kind in the world, and the South-to-North Water Diversion Project, the most expensive water project in the world. These huge human designs are mirrors through which China has shown the world its will and power to control and conquer nature, and the world, has seen its unmeasurable ecological costs.

Knowing the complexity of China's water crisis and remembering what Judith Shapiro states that "Most environmental problems...are ultimately social, political, and cultural problems,"⁵⁶ I attempt to illustrate through this chapter how the Chinese people, as the descendants of the giant dragon of the east, arrive at this millennium of water crisis by analyzing the social, economic, moral, and political contributions to the crisis. "Rome was not built in a day," likewise, China's water crisis did not happen overnight. As a matter of fact, it took China more than 180 years to arrive the crisis today. I divide these years of Chinese history into three different eras, what I would call, the wounded dragon (1839-1949), the struggling dragon (1950-1976), and the flying dragon has returned (1977 onward).

The Wounded Dragon (1839-1949)

Prior to the 1830s, China like a beautiful lady, attracted many of her admirers all over the world. With her beauty and charm, she became the center of a global economic market. Robert B. Marks thus describes it:

From 1400 to 1800, China was the most populous political entity on earth with between one-quarter and one-third of the world's total population, and it had the largest economy, both in terms of agriculture and of industrial production. In 1750, China accounted for about one-third of the world's industrial output. During those centuries, which historians often term "the early modern world," China's vast consumption and production constituted a major engine of global economic activity.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Judith Shapiro, *Mao's War Against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1.

⁵⁷ Robert B. Marks, *China: Its Environment and History* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield

However, this situation dramatically changed. In the next 100 years, the giant dragon from the east was humiliated and wounded by foreign imperialist powers and torn by its own people as well.

In the first Opium War also known as Anglo-Chinese War (1839-1842), the British expeditionary force won the war and forced the Qing dynasty to sign the first unequal treaty, the Treaty of Nanjing, on August 29, 1842. As a defeated country, the Qing dynasty was required to pay Britain a huge indemnity and hand over Hong Kong to the British. In addition to that, another four treaty ports had to be open for the British.⁵⁸ After the first Opium War, China began its centuries-long nightmare of humiliation. The giant dragon of the east became a piece of pizza, many foreign imperialist powers wanted to get a free slice like the British did.

Following its first unequal treaty, the Qing dynasty was forced to sign many other unequal treaties. The Treaty of Wangxia with the United States and the Treaty of Huangpu with France (1844); Treaties of Tianjin with Britain, France, the United States, and Russia (1858); the Treaty of Aigun with Russia (1858); the Treaty of Beijing with Britain, France, and Russia (1860); the Treaty of Shimonoseki with Japan (1895); and finally, the Boxer Protocol with the Eight-Nation Alliance (1901). Under these unequal treaties, the Qing dynasty conceded its lands and water territories, such as Hong Kong,

Publishers, 2012), 223.

⁵⁸ The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, "Unequal Treaty," ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA, last updated April 17, 2015, accessed February 28, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Unequal-Treaty>

Taiwan, Penghu Islands, Vietnam, and granted foreigners in China privileges. While these foreigners were in China, they did not need to follow Chinese law, could travel in the interior of China, operate factories inside China, evangelize Chinese people, etc.⁵⁹ Marks remarkably uses “scramble for concessions” to describe how these foreign imperialist powers attempted to steal China’s wealth.⁶⁰

All these unequal treaties speeded the final fall of the last empire of China. With the fall of the Qing dynasty in 1912, some of these unequal treaties were annulled; nevertheless, the country was torn by regional warlords and “a debilitating, multi-phase civil war” between the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and *Guo Min Dang* (GMD) or the Nationalist Party. The Japanese invasion and the notorious “rape” of the city of Nanjing in 1937 brought CCP and GMD together to fight against the Japanese, their common enemy. But after the World War II, the civil war resumed. Eventually, CCP won the victory in the military game of power and founded the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949.⁶¹

Shapiro uses “superiority-inferiority complex” to describe the Chinese nation that remembers both its old glory in past Imperial times and its more recent humiliation under foreign forces from the mid-19th to mid-20th centuries.⁶² Tu Weiming also points out

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Marks, *China: Its Environment and History*, 230.

⁶¹ Judith Shapiro, *China’s Environmental Challenges*, 2nd ed. (UK: Cambridge and USA: MA, Polity Press, 2016), 87.

⁶² Ibid., 85.

something similar. He notices that there is another more powerful tradition that works chemically in Chinese intellectuals' hearts. He terms it the "grief and indignation tradition." He argues that nobody will escape from this tradition as long as he or she has some education, even primary education. This grief and indignation tradition has its climax in the May Fourth Movement (1919) since the Opium Wars. The climax is the attitude that nothing can weaken foreign forces and fight against western warships and their advanced weapons, and everything has become useless, including economy, politics, society and culture. Acknowledging this tradition, he nonetheless argues that Chinese intellectuals tried many ways to save the nation through science.⁶³

The first attempt was the Self-Strengthening Movement (1861-1895). It was launched by several anti-Taiping generals, including Zeng Guofan (1811-1872), Li Hongzhang (1823-1901), and Zuo Zongtang (1812-1885). These generals hoped to consolidate the power of the Qing dynasty through introducing Western technology. This movement first aimed to manufacture firearms and machines and then shifted to other fields of manufacture as well.⁶⁴

The second attempt was the May Fourth Movement. Tu points out that the May Fourth Movement's collective criticism is indeed a combination of anti-traditionalism and strong patriotism. The purpose of it is to save one's nation. He also asserts that in the

⁶³ 杜维明, *现代精神与儒家传统* (台北市: 联经, 1996), 303-312 页.

⁶⁴ "The first Opium War and its aftermath," *ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA*, accessed March 3, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/place/China/The-first-Opium-War-and-its-aftermath#ref590527>

humiliation tradition, saving China through science becomes a famous slogan and an urgent call for any Chinese who has a fervent love for his or her country. Tu further points out that under saving the nation through science as the main intellectual tradition, everything is politicalized voluntarily and initiatively. Otherwise, it means to give up one's right and responsibility to be an authentic Chinese.⁶⁵

To make China great again is every Chinese's desire and the common dream of CCP and GMD. An early communist song *Mei You Gong Chan Dang, Jiu Mei You Xin Zhong Guo* translated as "Without the Communist Party, There Would Be No New China" expresses this common dream well. The lyrics goes "the Communist Party strives to save China."⁶⁶ Therefore, the main task of this national dream is political by nature. It is to remove feudalism and imperialism or the two mountains from the shoulders of the Chinese people and make China thrive again. Feudalism was removed at the final fall of the Qing dynasty and imperialism was taken away when Japan surrendered on August 15, 1945. But, to make China great remains a dream for Mao Zedong (1893-1976) and his fellow comrades to struggle with in the years to come.

The Struggling Dragon (1950-1976)

At the First Plenary Session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative

⁶⁵ 杜维明, *现代精神与儒家传统*, 309, 312 页.

⁶⁶ "Without the Communist Party, There Would Be No New China." CRIENGLISH.com, posted August 22, 2008, accessed March 4, 2017, <http://english.cri.cn/4026/2008/08/22/63s397500.htm>

Conference on September 21, 1949, Mao Zedong's opening address *Zhong Guo Ren Min Zhan Qi Lai Le* which means that "the Chinese People Have Stood Up," marked a new political chapter in the history of China. He said with confidence that Chinese people had defeated their enemy, feudalism and imperialism, and the future of Chinese people was infinitely bright.⁶⁷ To keep his great promise of an infinitely bright China, Mao spent the last 30 years of his life to actualize his *Zhong Guo Meng*, or "Chinese Dream" in the English language. The wounded dragon under his leadership struggled to fly again.

Tu asserts that Marxism is the fruit of Western capitalist society and is anti-imperialist. This political ideology was embraced by Chinese intellectuals who have a strong patriotism which is a mixed feeling of anti-imperialism and anti-foreign invasion. Mao adopted Marxism and made it more Chinese. But, this left-wing politics or socialist thought basically inherited the anti-traditionalism thought from the May Fourth Movement.⁶⁸ Originating from Marxism, Mao Zedong's political philosophy actually was also a strong scientism that emphasized humanizing nature. Like Francis Bacon (1561-1626), Mao too encouraged people to use their power to force and excavate nature.⁶⁹ Shapiro points out sharply that the core philosophical ideology of Marxism "the class struggle" in Mao's own language is *Yu Tian Dou, Qi Le Wu Qiong, Yu Di Dou, Qi*

⁶⁷ 刘建美, "中国人民站起来了," 中国共产党新闻网, accessed March 4, 2017, <http://dangshi.people.com.cn/GB/221024/221027/14907158.html>

⁶⁸ 杜维明, *现代精神与儒家传统*, 317, 323.

⁶⁹ 郑文龙编辑, 杜维明, *二十世纪中国学术文化随笔大系第二辑* (北京: 中国青年出版社, 1999), 56.

Le Wu Qiong, Yu Ren Dou, Qi Le Wu Qiong, which means “to struggle against the heavens, the earth, and people, is endless joy”.⁷⁰

Early in 1967, Rhoads Murphey wrote that the Chinese Communist leaders had thought “nature is no longer to be accepted but must be ‘defied and conquered.’”⁷¹

Actually, Mao believed in *Ren Ding Shen Tian* which means that “Man Must Conquer Nature”.⁷² Thus, for Chinese Communist leaders, “nature was an enemy—an enemy to be attacked with the same kinds of mass mobilization and military campaigns that had brought them to power.”⁷³ Inspired by these ideas, together they launched a revolutionary movement against nature—their new enemy. This is *Da Yue Jin* which in English is “the Great Leap Forward” (1958-60). It is the largest mass mobilization in human history.

In his analysis, Marks argues that when the Communists came to power in 1949, almost all China’s arable land lacked nitrogen, and traditional methods to fertilize the land and increase the food supply were no longer effective. Therefore, he asserts that it would not be possible for China’s cultivated land either to produce a surplus to support its industrialization, or to feed a growing population and improve the existing

⁷⁰ Shapiro, *Mao’s War Against Nature*, 9.

⁷¹ Quoted by Marks in *China: Its Environment and History*, 272.

⁷² Shapiro, *Mao’s War Against Nature*, 9.

⁷³ Marks, *China: Its Environment and History*, 271.

population's standard of life.⁷⁴

Despite China's poverty, under Mao's leadership, the Great Leap Forward was launched as an attempt to "catch up with industrialized nations through a great burst of social mobilization." To move China to surpass its "elderly brother", the Soviet Union, and compete with other developed Western countries in industrial output and modernization, all "work units" in China, whether non-government institutions, such as schools, factories and hospitals, or government institutions, were counted to smelt steel in "backyard furnaces." All people killed the so-called Four Pests, rats, lice, sparrows, and mosquitoes; and peasants were compelled to experiment with deep plowing and closed planting in the hope to yield a great product.⁷⁵

Murphey argues that the mass campaigns to conquer nature nurtured in farmers a sense of "national pride" in a "holy war" in which commitment and action were more plausible than inaction or to resignation.⁷⁶ Millions of farmers were charged with great enthusiasm and zeal to conquer and control nature, their enemy. Perhaps, a Chinese poem composed during that period could provide us a taste of their national pride.

Let's attack here!
Drive away the mountain gods,
Break down the stone walls
To bring out those 200 million tons of coal.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 267.

⁷⁵ Shapiro, *China's Environmental Challenges*, xvi.

⁷⁶ Marks, *China: Its Environment and History*, 272.

Let's strike here!
Let the Dragon King change his job,
Let the river climb the hills,
Let us ask it for 8000 *mu* of rice paddies.

Let that valley open its bosom
To yield 500 *jin* of oats every year.
Cut down the knoll
To make a plain over there...

Let's wage war against the great earth!
Let the mountains and rivers surrender under our feet.
March on Nature,
Let's take over the power of rain and wind.

We shall not tolerate a single inch of unused land!
Not a single place harassed by disaster.
Make wet rice, wheat, and yellow corn grow on top of the mountain,
And beans, peanuts, and red gaoliang rise on sheer rocks...⁷⁷

Shapiro says well that during the peak of Mao's cult, a notion was cultivated that China, after its long history of humiliation under foreign imperialist powers, would lift itself up and become self-supporting in the face of international isolation, and recoup glory in the world.⁷⁸ It was under this illusion, Murphey further points out, that the Chinese Communist leaders "designed and implemented policies for agriculture and industry that put a human stamp on their environment, including as examples campaignsto scatter soot by airplane over the ice and snow in the mountains surrounding the Tarim basin to speed their melting for irrigation, to dam the silt-laden Yellow River in the huge Sanmenxia dam project, and to spread industry from the coastal

⁷⁷ Zhang Zhimin, *Personalities in the Commune*. Quoted by Shapiro in *Mao's War Against Nature: Politics and the Environment in Revolutionary China*, next to the copyright page.

⁷⁸ Shapiro, *Mao's War Against Nature*, 6.

regions to peripheral areas.”⁷⁹

However, history proves that ideology, zeal, and pride alone cannot accelerate the process of industrialization, and real industrialization needs also sound science and advanced technology. Eventually, distrust of agricultural and scientific expertise and mistrust of peasants, and the arrival of a three-year famine (1959-1962) together led to the failure of the Great Leap Forward.⁸⁰

The failure of the Great Leap Forward not only degraded ecosystems and damaged nature, such as forests, wetlands, lakes and rivers, but also weakened Mao’s political competence to empower China. In his last decade in power (1966-1976), Mao feared losing his political power, due not only to the failure of the Great Leap Forward but to urban social stratification as well. To consolidate his political power, in August 1966, he launched the largest youth based mass mobilization in human history, *Wu Chan Jie Ji Wen Hua Da Ge Ming* which is “The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution” or “The Cultural Revolution” in short. The revolution attempted: “to replace his [Mao] designated successors with leaders more faithful to his current thinking; to rectify the Chinese Communist Party; to provide China’s youths with a revolutionary experience; and to achieve some specific policy changes so as to make the educational, health care,

⁷⁹ Marks, *China: Its Environment and History*, 272.

⁸⁰ The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, “Great Leap Forward,” ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA, last updated August 20, 2008, accessed March 4, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Great-Leap-Forward>

and cultural systems less elitist.”⁸¹

The Cultural Revolution was Mao’s struggle against people after his struggle against the heavens and the earth in the Great Leap Forward. Indeed, it was more than a cultural movement but a political reform. He used the urban youth of the nation as *Hong Wei Bing* or “Red Guards” in English to “attack all traditional values [the so-called The Four Olds: old customs, culture, habits, and beliefs] and ‘bourgeois’ influence, and to test party officials by publicly criticizing them. Mao believed that this measure would be beneficial both for the young people and for the party cadres that they attacked.”⁸² Epoch Times reports that the campaign to destroy the Four Olds brought an unprecedented catastrophe to Chinese traditional culture. Buddhist and Daoist temples, Buddha statutes, historical sites, Chinese antiques, calligraphy and paintings throughout China were all listed as symbols of feudalism, capitalism, and revisionism. They became Red Guards’ main targets to destroy. As the main figure of Confucianism, Confucius became the center of the anti-traditionalism force. Confucius’ tomb, together with his many temples and statues all over China were all damaged in various degrees.⁸³

Attacking the Four Olds soon became the attacking of people. These young and unexperienced urban Red Guards “attacked and tortured respected teachers, abused

⁸¹ Kenneth G. Lieberthal, “Cultural Revolution: Chinese Political Movement,” *ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA*, last updated May 12, 2016, accessed March 4, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/event/Cultural-Revolution>

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ 孙琦骁, “破四旧毁无数中华传统文化古迹,” *EPOCH TIMES*, last updated August 19, 2014, accessed March 5, 2017, <http://www.epochtimes.com/b5/14/8/19/n4228595.htm>

elderly citizens, humiliated old revolutionaries, and, in many cases, battled former friends in bloody confrontations.” Urban Red Guards soon turned the country into a state of chaos, Mao had to force millions of them to the rural hinterland to be re-educated. This was the *Shang Shan Xia Xiang Yun Dong*, translated in English as “Up to the Mountains and Down to the Countryside Movement.” Eventually, a cultural revolution became a political reform. In this political game of power, two groups of Chinese communist leaders fought against each other to be Mao’s successor. Finally, the Cultural Revolution ended with the death of its initiator, Mao, in 1976.⁸⁴

The wounded dragon attempted to fly again, but failed after 26 years of trying under Mao’s leadership. Shapiro in fact identified a connection between abuse of the natural environment and abuse of people.⁸⁵ For her, “The state’s battle [the Cultural Revolution] against individualism, feudalism, capitalism, and revisionism was also a battle against nature,” and the “powerful national drive [The Great Leap Forward] toward expansion, mastery, and resource exploitation, fueled by population growth and new technologies, has contributed for millennia to widespread destruction of nature and ecosystems.”⁸⁶ It was in this context, the wounded dragon would recover its full strength and return with glory when Deng Xiaoping (1904-1997) regained his political power in 1977.

⁸⁴ Lieberthal, “Cultural Revolution.”

⁸⁵ Shapiro, *Mao’s War Against Nature*, xii.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 3, 7.

The Flying Dragon Has Returned (1977--)

To actualize the same dream that China will thrive again which had motivated many previous Chinese intellectuals and political leaders, communist leaders after Mao's revolutionary period embraced Deng Xiaoping's pragmatic theory *Fa Zhan Cai Shi Ying Dao Li* which means "Development is the Absolute Principle."⁸⁷ Empowered by this theory, the architect of China's reform and opening-up, Deng prudently "abandoned many orthodox communist doctrines and attempted to incorporate elements of the free-enterprise system and other reforms into the Chinese economy."⁸⁸ Inspired by the same ideology, his successors Jiang Zemin (1926-) took another economic leap by joining the World Trade Organization on December 11, 2001,⁸⁹ while Xi Jinping (1953-) promotes another *Zhong Guo Meng* or "Chinese Dream" that aims to reclaim national pride and achieve personal well-being.⁹⁰

After 40 consecutive year's economic and political reform, today's China has the world's tallest, fanciest, most innovative and expensive buildings, fastest trains, longest

⁸⁷ "发展才是硬道理," 中国共产党新闻网, last updated February 17, 2012, accessed March 6, 2017, <http://cpc.people.com.cn/GB/64162/82819/143371/8818522.html>

⁸⁸ The Editors of Encyclopædia Britannica, "Deng Xiaoping," ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA, last updated December 18, 2015, accessed March 6, 2017, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Deng-Xiaoping>

⁸⁹ "Jiang Zemin Fast Facts," The Cable News Network, last updated December 13, 2016, accessed March 6, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/01/17/world/asia/jiang-zemin-fast-facts/>

⁹⁰ "Potential of the Chinese Dream," China Daily USA, last updated March 26, 2014, accessed March 6, 2017, http://usa.chinadaily.com.cn/epaper/2014-03/26/content_17380146.htm

bridges, and even most modern airports.⁹¹ Indeed, the dragon has returned with its full speed and power! However, no matter what kind of economic and political theories is applied to make China great again, China's rapid economic growth or the Chinese Dream demands more electricity. Bryan Tilt points out that China's total annual energy consumption has increased five times between 1980 and 2010, and "Even conservative projections suggest that China's energy consumption will continue to rise in the coming years."⁹²

As China battles against severe air pollution and ambitions to reduce coal consumption, where and how will it generate more green energy to power the largest manufacturing hub in the world? Chinese Communist leaders have their eyes fixed on national water resources. However, treating water as potential sources of renewable energy will inevitably put a greater strain on China's water crisis. Especially when water is treated with a utilitarian ethics and accelerated by "the modernist belief" that emphasizes "the role of science is to understand, control, and manipulate nature for the greater good of human progress."⁹³

To feed its hunger for electricity, China has shifted its focus to dam building. Prior to 1980s, China built nearly 86,000 dams of various sizes mainly to "control flow,

⁹¹ Shapiro, *China's Environmental Challenges*, 88-89.

⁹² Bryan Tilt, *Dams and Development in China: The Moral Economy of Water and Power* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), 29.

⁹³ Marks, *China: Its Environment and History*, 273.

prevent seasonal flooding, or meet irrigation needs.” But since the 1980s, most of dams were built in “large-scale construction of hydroelectric facilities to help meet the nation’s growing energy demand.”⁹⁴ Seeking to control flooding in the Yangzi River basin and produce a significant amount of electricity from “thirty-two main generators to serve 400 million residents and industries in central China”, the Chinese government in 2006 completed a world hydraulic wonder, *San Xia Gong Cheng* or the Three Gorges Dam in English. As the largest reservoir in the world, the Three Gorges Dam was thought to be the “crowning achievement” of China in conquering and manipulating water for human use.⁹⁵

The completion of the Three Gorges Dam made a century long dream true. In 1919, Sun Zhongshan, founder of the Republic of China, first conceived the idea to build a dam on the Yangtze River in central China’s Hubei Province; Mao Zedong inherited his idea. Li Yongan, general manager of the Three Gorges Corporation, called the Three Gorges Dam “the grandest project the Chinese people have undertaken in thousands of years.”⁹⁶ However, the grandest project came with an unmeasurable cost. The Chinese government acknowledged that “The resettlement effort and the area to be inundated are

⁹⁴ Tilt, *Dams and Development in China*, 40.

⁹⁵ Marks, *China: Its Environment and History*, 305.

⁹⁶ Brian Handwerk, “China's Three Gorges Dam, by the Numbers,” National Geography, posted June 9, 2009, accessed March 7, 2017, <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/2006/06/060609-gorges-dam.html>

unprecedented in Chinese history.”⁹⁷ Without counting its ecological impact on the non-human community of life and many Chinese generations to come, it displaced more than 1.2 million people, flooded 13 cities, 140 towns, and 1,350 villages.⁹⁸ What the Three Gorges Dam buried are not only buildings, but also human and industrial wastes which will worsen the already polluted Yangtze River. The Three Gorges Dam flooded roughly 100,000 acres of fertile farmland which used to yield 10% of China’s annual grain. But, the Chinese Government only gave a less fertile and much smaller land area as compensation. Thousands of farmers who lost their land were forced to seek jobs in nearby cities which soon put a strain on the cities’ water supply.⁹⁹ Eventually, as always, the poor and nature have to bear the ecological impacts of the Three Gorges Dam.

Many Chinese environmental activists and scientists strongly opposed the building of the Three Gorges Dam. Dai Qing, 1993 Goldman Environmental Prize recipient, expressed her ecological concerns tirelessly by publishing *Yangtze! Yangtze!* in 1989 and *The River Dragon has Come* in 1998.¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, Chinese Communist leaders were too proud considering the Three Gorges Dam as an efficient model to solve

⁹⁷ “Some Facts about the Three Gorges Project,” Embassy of the People’s Republic of China in the United States of America, accessed March 7, 2017, <http://www.china-embassy.org/eng/zt/sxgc/t36512.htm>

⁹⁸ “Three Georges Dam,” INTERNATIONAL RIVERS, accessed March 7, 2017, <https://www.internationalrivers.org/campaigns/three-gorges-dam>

⁹⁹ “The Three Gorges Dam Project Social Impacts,” last updated December 19, 2005, accessed March 7, 2017, <https://www.mtholyoke.edu/~lpohara/Pol%20116/social.html>

¹⁰⁰ “Dai Qing,” Probe International, accessed March 7, 2017, <https://journal.probeinternational.org/three-gorges-probe/dai-qing/>

China's energy crisis. With the ongoing international debate on the ecological damages of the Three Gorges Dam, to quench the thirst of the dry north, the nation's breadbasket, they launched another massive water project, *Nan Shui Bei Diao* or the South-to-North Water Diversion Project. The project aims to link China's four major rivers (the Yangtze, Yellow River, Huaihe, and Haihe) and divert 44.8 billion m³ of water annually to North China.¹⁰¹ The ecological impacts of the project are already on their way. However, like the Three Gorges Dam's case, it will take us decades to measure the environmental damage of the South-to-North Water Diversion Project.

Conclusion

Over 150 years, China, this giant dragon from the east has managed to fly again. Today, it wants to fly higher than ever and surpass all other nations by chasing after the Chinese Dream. China's economic wealth is rich now, but its ecological debt is higher than ever. My grandparents and parents were poor farmers when they were young, but they had clean air, water, land, and safe food. They had no money, but they were richer in terms of ecological wealth than all Chinese people in today's China. The old Chinese Dream encouraged rapid and unsustainable exploitation of nature, and made Chinese people developmentalists, commercialists, materialists, short sighted, human centered, and abusers of nature.

¹⁰¹ "South-to-North Water Diversion Project, China," Water-technology.net. accessed March 7, 2017, http://www.water-technology.net/projects/south_north/

The art of damming rivers to accumulate water either for irrigating farmlands or generating hydroelectricity is dangerous indeed. By 1981, the Chinese central government acknowledged that 3,200 dams had collapsed. By 2006, that number reached 3,486. The largest and most destructive dam collapse in world history happened in China on August 7, 1975. It killed 85,600 people and afflicted 11 million others.¹⁰² We will never be able to calculate the ecological impacts of these dam collapses on other species.

Shapiro summarizes the shifts in attitudes toward nature of the pre-Mao, Mao, and post Mao periods as from *Tian Ren He Yi* or “Harmony between the Heavens and Humankind” to *Ren Ding Sheng Tian* or “Man Must Conquer Nature,” and from *Ren Ding Sheng Tian* to *Yi Qie Xiang Qian Kan* or “Look Toward Money in Everything.”¹⁰³ Look Toward Money in Everything is another expression of Deng Xiao Ping’s Development is the Absolute Principle. Confucius once said to Lu Ai Gong that *Shui Ze Zai Zhou, Shui Ze Fu Zhou* which literally means that “water can float a boat as well as overturn it.”¹⁰⁴ Therefore, China needs to be more careful when it deals with its water crisis; otherwise, the water crisis may put a full stop to the national race for wealth and status. To address China’s water crisis, as Donal Dorr points out, we need an “ecological

¹⁰² Marks, *China: Its Environment and History*, 301-302. “68 Dams Collapse in China Every Year,” EPOCH TIMES, last updated June 11, 2006, accessed March 7, 2017, <http://www.theepochtimes.com/n3/1731001-68-dams-collapse-in-china-every-year/>

¹⁰³ Shapiro, *Mao’s War Against Nature*, 10.

¹⁰⁴ 《荀子·哀公》第三十一篇，中国孔子网，last updated November 23, 2007, accessed March 7, 2017, http://www.chinakongzi.org/tjwh/ljsj/xunzi/200711/t20071123_2911819.htm

paradigm” shift. It is a shift from “a utilitarian technocratic capitalist mentality interested only in exploiting nature” to a “wider context of an ecological and cosmic vision” which is a solidarity with the entire community of life. This ecological paradigm shift is in fact a transformation from human centered development to earth centered sustainability. It is the beginning of an ecological civilization.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Donal Dorr, *Option for the Poor and for the Earth: Catholic Social Teaching* (Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, 2012), 431.

CHAPTER 3

SOLIDARITY WITH THE POOR: AN INCULTURATED INTERPRETATION OF KEY THEMES IN ROMAN CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHINGS IN LIGHT OF CONFUCIAN WISDOM OF HARMONY

Introduction

Ancient Chinese believe *chuan, qi zhi dao ye* which means “heavens use rivers to circulate or channel *qi*,” therefore, they manage rivers with great caution. Besides, they equally believe *guo zhu shan chuan* which means “the state depends on its mountains and rivers” and *chuan jie guo wang* which means “when rivers dry up, the state dies soon.” These three ancient Chinese beliefs reveal an intimate relationship between the state and its mountains and rivers. However, Qiao Qing Ju asserts that modern scientific theories neglect the integrity and wholeness of rivers and other parts of nature, and have treated rivers as the object of struggle and exploitation.¹⁰⁶ In the previous chapters, I argued that rivers or water sources in China have been exploited and polluted under the Chinese Communist government’s desire for progress.

Mary Evelyn Tucker, a research scholar at Yale University, says that “Ecological civilization requires new worldviews and ethics that are shaped by religious [or philosophy] traditions in their ecological stage.”¹⁰⁷ James Miller, a professor of Chinese Studies in the School of Religion at Queen’s University, Canada, and Director of the

¹⁰⁶ 乔清举，*儒家生态思想通论*（北京：北京大学出版社，2013），第153、146、154页。

¹⁰⁷ Mary Evelyn Tucker delivered this short paper without a title under “Cultural and Religious Perspectives on Ecological Civilization” at Qing Hua University’s Philosophy Department, Pulitzer Center, *Ecological Civilization* (Beijing: Yale Center Beijing, 2015), 532, Kindle.

Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Cultural Studies, also says that “. . . now the world is in need of a new revolution—an energy revolution and an ethical revolution.”¹⁰⁸ To address China’s water crisis, it is time now for a new revolution.

The new revolution that I propose in this chapter is not an energy one but an ethical one. It is a shift from human centered development to a cosmic centered or integral development in Pope Francis’ lexicon. I call such shift an ecological revolution. This paradigm shift is not a new way of thinking either in Confucianism or Catholic social teachings. The perfect person in Confucianism is the one who acquires *Tian ren he yi* or “to be in harmony or unity with Heaven.” While the highest virtue in Christianity is charity or to love one’s neighbor as oneself which is an expression of solidarity with the poor in the context of Catholic social teachings. Both harmony with Heaven, Earth, and humans in the Confucian wisdom tradition, and solidarity with the poor in Catholic social teachings, entail being one with all creation or the entire cosmic community of life, especially with the least in the web of life.

To make such an ethical revolution possible, throughout this chapter, I intend to interpret some themes, especially solidarity with the poor, from Catholic social teachings, in light of Confucian wisdom of harmony with Heaven and Earth. I will first retrieve and present the notion and the meaning of harmony between Heaven, Earth, and humans in Confucian contexts. Then, I will also draw two different but mutually related themes from Catholic social teachings to hear the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth, for this paper, the cry of the “sister water,” as one unified voice of suffering.

¹⁰⁸ Pulitzer Center, *Ecological Civilization*, 593, Kindle.

Chinese Cosmology

On August 8, 2008, in the National Stadium, also known as the Bird's Nest, China's King of Pop, Liu Huan, and British soprano, Sarah Brightman, performed hand in hand "You and Me" at the opening ceremony of the Beijing Olympics. The lyrics go: "You and me, from one world. Heart to heart, we are one family. For dreams, we travel thousands of miles. We meet in Beijing. Come together, the joy we share. You and me, from one world. Forever we are one family."¹⁰⁹ This song "You and Me" goes well with the theme of the Beijing Olympics "One World One Dream." For Chinese people, "One World One Dream" is not a new idea but an old one with a new expression. It echoes a famous story from the *Analects of Confucius*. Si Ma Niu once expressed with anxiety to Zi Xia that others all had their brothers but he did not have any. Zi Xia replied that *si hai zhi nei jie xiong di ye* or "all within the four seas will be his [the superior man] brothers."¹¹⁰

To be one with others is an expression of a fundamental thought in the Confucian tradition which is *tian ren he yi* or to be in "harmony or unity with Heaven." For ancient Chinese scholars, *qian* or Heaven, *kun* or Earth, and humans are not separate or independent beings, rather they are integral parts of the cosmos. Frederick W. Mote thus asserts that "the genuine Chinese cosmology is that of organismic process, meaning that all of the parts of the entire cosmos belong to one organic whole and that they all interact

¹⁰⁹ "Lyrics of Beijing Olympics theme song," XINHUANET, posted August 8, 2008, accessed March 22, 2017, http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2008-08/08/content_9053712.htm

¹¹⁰ "颜渊-Yan Yuan, favorite disciples of Confucius," 论语 *The Analects*, trans., James Legge, Bilingual ed. (Lionshare Media, 2016), 2026, Kindle.

as participants in one spontaneously self-generating life process.”¹¹¹ Likewise, Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong equally state that the universe is perceived in the Confucian tradition as “a vast integrated unit” and nature is considered as “unified, interconnected, and interpenetrating, constantly relating microcosm and macrocosm.” They trace the notion of all things being interconnected with one another back to the early Confucian tradition such as the *I Jing*, or *Book of Changes*, and some “correspondences of the elements with seasons, directions, colors, and even virtues” in the Han dynasty.¹¹²

Tu Wei Ming points out that continuity, wholeness, and dynamism are three basic motifs of Chinese cosmology. All forms of being, trees, flowers, stones, animals, humans, Heaven, Earth, etc., are “integral parts of a continuum” which is known as *da hua* or the “great transformation.” This continuum or “the chain of being” implicitly demonstrates that the cosmos is “an organismic unity, holistically integrated at each level of complexity.” And Chinese thinkers comprehend *tian xing* or the “course of Heaven” as *jian* or “vigorous” and instruct others to learn from “the ceaseless vitality of the cosmic process.”¹¹³ It is under these basic motifs of Chinese cosmology, that harmony or unity with Heaven has flourished throughout the history of Chinese thoughts.

Confucian Harmony or Unity with Heaven and Earth

¹¹¹ Tu Wei Ming, “The Continuity of Being: Chinese Visions of Nature,” in *Confucianism and Ecology: The Interrelation of Heaven, Earth, and Humans*, Religions of the World and Ecology, ed. Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), 119n2.

¹¹² Mary Evelyn Tucker and John Berthrong, “Introduction: Setting the Context,” in *Confucianism and Ecology*, xxxvi.

¹¹³ Tu, “The Continuity of Being,” in *Confucianism and Ecology*, 108-110.

The ideal person in Confucianism is the one who is at home with Heaven, Earth and all in between. Such a person forms a unity with Heaven and Earth. *Zhong Yong* or the *Doctrine of the Mean* thus says:

When we have intelligence resulting from sincerity, this condition is to be ascribed to nature; when we have sincerity resulting from intelligence, this condition is to be ascribed to instruction. But given the sincerity, and there shall be the intelligence; given the intelligence, and there shall be the sincerity. It is only he who is possessed of the most complete sincerity that can exist under heaven, who can give its full development to his nature. Able to give its full development to his own nature, he can do the same to the nature of other men. Able to give its full development to the nature of other men, he can give their full development to the natures of animals and things. Able to give their full development to the natures of creatures and things, he can assist the transforming and nourishing powers of Heaven and Earth. Able to assist the transforming and nourishing powers of Heaven and Earth, he may with Heaven and Earth form a ternion.¹¹⁴

To form a ternion with Heaven and Earth as the *Doctrine of the Mean* describes is the goal of Confucian education which emphasizes an ongoing formation of self-cultivation. The Confucian way, Tu says, “is a way of learning” to “be human.” Learning to be human in the Confucian context, Tu continues, “is to engage oneself in a ceaseless, unending process of creative self-transformation, both as a communal act and as a dialogical response to Heaven.” For him, the self is not an isolated being or a separate island but “a center of relationship.” As the center of relationship, the self is never a “closed static structure” but a “dynamic open system.” Consequently, he argues that “mutuality between self and community, harmony between human species and nature, and continuous communication with Heaven are defining characteristics and supreme

¹¹⁴ 中庸-*Doctrine of the Mean*, trans. James Legge, Bilingual ed. (Lionshare Media, 2016), 372-376, Kindle.

values in the human project.”¹¹⁵

In a similar way, Tucker and Berthrong both agree that Confucian idea of self-cultivation implies a “creative transformation.” For them, through this creative transformation, human beings are no longer dominating or manipulating nature, but simply participating in the transformation of the cosmos. In Tu’s lexicon, this is called an “anthropocosmic worldview” as opposed to an anthropocentric one.¹¹⁶

Forming a trinity with Heaven and Earth is understood as to become one body with all beings by two prominent Neo-Confucian scholars and siblings during the Song dynasty Cheng Hao (1032-1085) and Cheng Yi (1033-1107). Cheng Hao says that “The humane person [The person of *ren*] forms one body with all things comprehensively,” while his brother Cheng Yi believes that “The humane person [The person of *ren*] regards Heaven and earth and all things as one body.”¹¹⁷

In a famous dialogue between Cheng Hao and his master Zhou Dun Yi (1017-1073), Cheng asked his master Zhou, “Why don’t you weed the grass in front of your window?” Zhou replied, “The will to live that is in the grass is the same as mine.” Inspired by his master’s words, Cheng said, “Observe the disposition of all living things within Heaven and Earth.” For Toshio Kuwako, this story “suggests that weeds are not planted by human beings but are grown by the activities of Heaven and Earth; that the will to live found in all living beings should be regarded as identical to that of humans;

¹¹⁵ Tu Wei Ming, “Beyond the Enlightenment Mentality,” in *Confucianism and Ecology*, 13-14.

¹¹⁶ Tucker and Berthrong, “Introduction: Setting the Context,” in *Confucianism and Ecology*, xxxvii.

¹¹⁷ Rodney L. Taylor, “Companionship with the World: Roots and Branches of a Confucian Ecology,” in *Confucianism and Ecology*, 58n22.

and that we must be conscious of this identity, or continuity, between humans and nature.” Kuwako concludes that “the humaneness, or *jen* [*ren*], in humans reflects the life force in nature.”¹¹⁸

Another great philosopher from Song dynasty Zhang Zai (1020-1073) goes a step further and develops a more personal and blood based relation with Heaven, Earth, humans and everything else. Humans do not only share the same body and nature with the universe, but also are siblings with one another and companions with everything else. In his well-known text the *Western Inscription*, he 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.”¹¹⁹ Tucker and Berthrong together specify that “This relationship of Heaven, Earth, and human becomes expressed as a parental one, and central to this metaphor is the notion of humans as children of the universe and responsible for its care and continuation.”¹²⁰

Wang Yang Ming (1472-1529), a famous Neo-Confucian scholar from the Ming dynasty, further develops the idea of harmony with Heaven and Earth to love every creature in the cosmos so that one’s [*ren*] or humanity that forms wholeness with other forms of being can be realized. He says that “Everything from ruler, minister, husband,

¹¹⁸ Toshio Kuwako, “The Philosophy of Environmental Correlation in Chu Hsi,” in *Confucianism and Ecology*, 151.

¹¹⁹ Taylor, “*Companionship with the World*,” in *Confucianism and Ecology*, 58n23.

¹²⁰ Tucker and Berthrong, “Introduction: Setting the Context,” in *Confucianism and Ecology*, xxxviii.

wife, and friends to mountains, rivers, spiritual beings, birds, animals, and plants should be truly loved in order to realize my humanity that forms one body with them, and then my clear character will be completely manifested, and I will really form one body with Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things.”¹²¹

The Japanese Neo-Confucian philosopher Kaibara Ekken (1630-1714) resonances with Wang Yang Ming and says that the “root of the practice of humaneness [*ren*]” is to love everything in the cosmos. Ekken believes that this love has four sequential circles which are the orders of showing “compassion toward people and living things.” First, one loves one’s parents and other siblings. Next, one should love all other people, including relatives, retainers, and friends. Afterwards, one should love and not deliberately kill animals, for instance, birds, beasts, insects, fish, etc. Eventually, one should love and not carelessly destroy plants, such as grass and trees. Therefore, Ekken states that birds, animals, grasses and trees are all made by nature and “if we damage them recklessly, we should realize that it is a lack of filiality toward nature.”¹²²

German-born physicist, the founder of the special and general theories of relativity and the recipient of the Nobel Prize for Physics, Albert Einstein (1879-1955) wrote in a similar view. For he says, “A human being is a part of a whole [the universe]. . . limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings. . . as a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prism for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for the few persons

¹²¹ Taylor, “*Companionship with the World*,” in *Confucianism and Ecology*, 58n37.

¹²² Ibid., 58n38.

nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prism by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.”¹²³

Catholic Cosmology

In Confucianism, although the vital force is believed to exist in every being and to connect everything as an integral whole, it is never considered as a God, or the concept of God never becomes the center of concern. However, God plays an essential role in Catholic cosmology. According to the Catholic faith, the entire creation, including human beings and non-human beings, and all the known and unknown universe, was created out of nothing by a triune God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The Holy Trinity created everything in “divine intimacy” or perfect “harmony” out of its genuine love.¹²⁴ Unfortunately, because of the original sin of the first human parents—Adam and Eve, this perfect harmony between God and humans, and between humans and all creation, was “destroyed.”¹²⁵ Thus, Pope Francis recalls that the book of Genesis reveals “human life is grounded in three fundamental and closely intertwined relationships: with God, with our neighbor and with the earth itself. According to the Bible, these three vital relationships have been broken, both outwardly and within us. This rupture is sin.”¹²⁶

¹²³ Quoted by Mary Evelyn Tucker in her paper in *Ecological Civilization* (Beijing: Yale Center Beijing, 2015), 578, Kindle.

¹²⁴ *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #376, accessed March 27, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p1s2c1p6.htm

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, #400, accessed March 27, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc_css/archive/catechism/p1s2c1p7.htm

¹²⁶ *Laudato Si': Encyclical Letter of the Holy Father Francis on Care for Our Common Home*, May 24, 2015, #66, THE HOLY SEE, accessed March 30, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html

Humans by themselves can no longer reconcile with God, for this reason, the Son of God became human. It is through the passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God and redeemer, that humans were once again reconciled to God, and the harmony between God and humans was restored. However, due to the impact of the original sin, humans still need to be sanctified through sacraments which are channels of God's grace from death to eternal life. Because of this salvific theology, Catholics believe that the universe or the cosmos comes from God and will eventually return to God through Jesus Christ in eschatological time. Hence, unlike Chinese cosmology which puts humans at the center of the relationship, Catholic cosmology is God-centered. God is not only the center of the cosmos, but also the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of all creation. In Chinese cosmology, Heaven, Earth, and humans form a triad. But in Catholic cosmology, God, humans, and all other non-humans together constitute a trinity.

The biblical task for human beings is to till and keep the garden of God.¹²⁷ All creation has an intrinsic value. St. Augustine, Bishop of Hippo (354 - 430) argued that nature is a book through which God communicates with human beings “in a way that parallels the purpose of holy scripture.”¹²⁸ Moreover, Pope Benedict XVI states that nature “as a gift of the Creator who has given it an inbuilt order, enabling man to draw from it the principles needed in order ‘to till it and keep it’ (Gen 2:15). For him, “Nature

¹²⁷ Genesis 2:15.

¹²⁸ “Book of Nature,” Theopedia, accessed April 5, 2017, <http://www.theopedia.com/book-of-nature>

speaks to us of the Creator (cf. Rom 1:20) and his love for humanity.”¹²⁹ Pope Francis also points out that the triune God “has left its mark on all creation.” He recalls St. Bonaventure’s words that “*each creature bears in itself a specifically Trinitarian structure*, so real that it could be readily contemplated if only the human gaze were not so partial, dark and fragile.”¹³⁰ For Francis, God embraces all that exists with tenderness and love and dwells in the whole universe and in the least of his creatures. Therefore, all things speak of God. And “we are profoundly united with every creature.”¹³¹ Created in the image of God, humans were not made masters of the earth but “caretakers” or “stewards” instead. As caretakers and stewards of the earth, humans ought not to destroy the garden of God, but to “listen,” to “learn,” and to “contemplate” nature.

Centered always in God as the origin and the end of all creation, and acknowledging that “we share with all other living creatures on our planet a common genetic ancestry” and “we are all genetic kin in the great community of life,”¹³² in the face of a global ecological crisis, Catholics as children of our mother earth, emphasize the principle of Solidarity which is in fact a manifestation of a preferential option for the poor.

¹²⁹ *Caritas in Veritate: Encyclical Letter of the Supreme Pontiff Benedict XVI to the Bishops, Priests and Deacons, Men and Women Religious, The Lay Faithful, and All People of Good Will on Integral Human Development in Charity and Truth*, June 29, 2009, #48, THE HOLY SEE, accessed April 6, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html

¹³⁰ *Laudato Si*, #239.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, #246.

¹³² Elizabeth Johnson, “For God So Loved the Cosmos,” U.S. Catholic Faith in Real Life, accessed December 3, 2016, <http://www.uscatholic.org/culture/environment/2010/07/god-so-loved-world-jesus-and-environment>

The Preferential Option for the Poor

May 14, 1971, in his apostolic letter *Octogesima Adveniens* or *A Call to Action*, Pope Paul VI already mentioned the preferential option for the poor indirectly, although he did not use the same expression. Thus, he said that “In teaching us charity, the Gospel instructs us in the preferential respect due to the poor and the special situation they have in society. . .”¹³³ Influenced by liberation theology in the Conference of Latin American Bishops (CELAM), the United States Catholic Bishops interpreted Pope Paul VI’s language as an “option for the poor.” However, these bishops stated that the “option for the poor” did not favor a particular group and disfavor other groups, rather, it meant that “the deprivation and powerlessness of the poor wounds the whole community.” They even argued that individual Americans and the entire United States of America as a nation were called to make a fundamental “option for the poor” which meant “to speak for the voiceless, to defend the defenseless, to assess life styles, policies, and social institutions in terms of their impact on the poor.”¹³⁴

On December 30, 1987, John Paul II pointed out in his encyclical *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis* that “The option or love of preference for the poor” was “an option, or a special form of primacy in the exercise of Christian charity, to which the whole tradition of the

¹³³ *Octogesima Adveniens: To Cardinal Maurice Roy, President of the Council of the Laity and of the Pontifical Commission Justice and Peace, On the Occasion of the Eightieth Anniversary of the Encyclical “Rerum Novarum,”* Pope Paul VI, May 14, 1971, #23, THE HOLY SEE, accessed March 30, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/paul-vi/en/apost_letters/documents/hf_p-vi_apl_19710514_octogesima-adveniens.html

¹³⁴ “Economic Justice for All: Pastoral Letter on Catholic Social Teaching and the U.S. Economy,” United States Catholic Bishops, 1986, #88, #87 and “A Pastoral Message Economic Justice for All,” #16, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, accessed March 30, 2017, http://www.usccb.org/upload/economic_justice_for_all.pdf

Church bears witness.”¹³⁵ Pope Francis reaffirmed John Paul II’s statement in his own language and asserted that “the proclamation of the Gospel, which is itself the prime form of charity,” “without the preferential option for the poor,” “risks being misunderstood or submerged by the ocean of words which daily engulfs us in today’s society of mass communications.”¹³⁶

Indeed, the preferential option for the poor is a fundamental vocation for all Christians. Such a vocation is rooted deeply in the second commandment of the Lord that “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”¹³⁷ The Son of God became poor through the mystery of incarnation for our salvation. He attended the needs of the poor, the least, and the marginalized. He poured out his unconditional love unto them and empowered them with new hope and new life. Pope Francis believes that the poor have so much to teach or to evangelize us, because they know the suffering Christ. Likewise, he envisions “a Church which is poor and for the poor.”¹³⁸

John Paul II argued that the option for the poor did not only refer to material poverty but also other forms of poverty in modern society. He continued that various

¹³⁵ *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis: To the Bishops, Priests, Religious Families, sons and daughters of the Church and all people of good will for the twentieth anniversary of Populorum Progressio*, Pope John Paul II, December 30, 1987, #42, THE HOLY SEE, accessed March 27, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_30121987_sollicitudo-rei-socialis.html

¹³⁶ *Evangelii Gaudium: Apostolic Exhortation of the Holy Father Francis to the Bishops, Clergy, Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful on the Proclamation of the Gospel in Today’s World*, November 24, 2013, #199, THE HOLY SEE, accessed March 30, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html

¹³⁷ Mark 12:31.

¹³⁸ Audience to Representatives of the Communications Media, Address of the Holy Father Pope Francis at Paul VI Audience Hall, March 16, 2013. THE HOLY SEE, accessed March 30, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/march/documents/papa-francesco_20130316_rappresentanti-media.html

kinds of poverty were being experienced by different groups which “live on the margins of society,” such as the elderly and the sick, the victims of consumerism, refugees and migrants. Apparently, John Paul II has expanded the notion of the poor.¹³⁹ Perhaps, today we should add the ecological poor to the same list as well.

Twenty years ago, Leonardo Boff linked the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth together. Surprisingly, Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si'* also reaffirms Boff's theological idea that the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth are related intimately. Francis acknowledges that the deterioration of the environment interrelates with the poorest of the poor. He states that “Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest.” Especially, he points out that water pollution affects those who cannot afford to buy bottled water and the sea levels rising affects those poor coastal people who have nowhere else to go.¹⁴⁰

The poor and their concerns are at Pope Francis' heart. In his encyclical *Laudato Si'* alone, he uses the term “the poor” 38 times, and another similar term “the poorest” 5 times. He has made a fundamental or preferential option for the poor not only through his words but his actions as well. After his election as the pope, he decided not to live in the papal apartments in the Apostolic Palace but to live in a suite in the Vatican guesthouse. He considered himself poor and became the first pope who does not live in the papal

¹³⁹ *Centesimus Annus: Encyclical Letter to His Venerable Brother Bishops in the Episcopate the Priests and Deacons, Families of Men and Women Religious, All the Christian Faithful and to all Men and Women of Good Will on the Hundredth Anniversary of Rerum Novarum*, Pope John Paul II, May 1, 1991, #57, THE HOLY SEE, accessed March 30, 2017, http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_01051991_centesimus-annus.html

¹⁴⁰ *Laudato Si'*, #48.

apartments on the third floor of the Apostolic Palace in 110 years.¹⁴¹ His option for the poor has touched so many Catholics and influenced plenty other people of goodwill as well.

Donal Dorr argues that an option for the poor is primarily “a commitment to resist the structural injustice” and to “change the unjust economic, social, and political structures that determine how power and resources are shared out in the world” we live. Ultimately, an option for the poor is to bring about “a more just society” through a “solidarity with those at or near the bottom.”¹⁴² Therefore, the principle of solidarity is very essential to the preferential option for the poor.

The Principle of Solidarity

Pope John Paul II, in his encyclical letter *Laborem Exercens*, used the word “solidarity” 11 times on behalf of workers. He pointed out that “solidarity of the workers and with the workers” “must be present wherever it is called for by the social degrading of the subject of work, by exploitation of the workers, and by the growing areas of poverty and even hunger.” He even affirmed that the universal Church took solidarity as “her mission, her service, a proof of her fidelity to Christ.” Only through her commitment to solidarity with the workers, will the Church become truly the “Church of the poor.”¹⁴³

¹⁴¹ Cindy Wooden, “Pope Francis to live in Vatican guesthouse, not papal apartments,” Catholic News Service, posted March 26, 2013, accessed March 28, 2017, <http://www.catholicnews.com/services/englishnews/2013/pope-francis-to-live-in-vatican-guesthouse-not-papal-apartments.cfm>

¹⁴² Dorr, *Option For The Poor And For The Earth*, 9.

¹⁴³ *Laborem Exercens: To His Venerable Brothers in the Episcopate to the Priests, to the Religious Families, to the sons and daughters of the Church, and to all Men and Women of good will on Human Work, on the ninetieth anniversary of Rerum Novarum*, Pope John Paul II, September 14, 1981, #8, THE HOLY SEE, accessed March 30, 2017,

According to Donal Dorr, an early definition of “solidarity” in the language of John Paul II or Karol Cardinal Wojtyla, archbishop of Cracow then, means the individual person does not live and act alone but in unity with other fellow humans in any given society. Solidarity mutually relates with the common good and social participation. Cardinal Wojtyla stated that solidarity conveys “the fact that a human being exists and acts together with others.” He continued, “Solidarity is also the foundation of a community in which the common good conditions and liberates participation, and participation serves the common good, supports it, and implements it. Solidarity means the continuous readiness to accept and perform that part of a task which is imposed due to the participation as member of a specific community.”¹⁴⁴ He further points out that opposition to oppressive structure does not contradict participation but should be viewed as “an expression of the vital need for participation in the community of existence.” He concludes, “We are concerned with such a structure of community that permits the emergence of opposition based on solidarity. Moreover, the structure must not only *allow the emergence of the opposition, give it the opportunity to express itself, but also must make it possible for the opposition to function for the good of the community.*”¹⁴⁵

Likewise, the *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church* (CSDC) also affirms that “Solidarity highlights in a particular way the intrinsic social nature of the human person, the equality of all in dignity and rights and the common path of

http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_14091981_laborem-exercens.html

¹⁴⁴ Dorr, *Option for the Poor and for the Earth*, 274. Original text is from *Osoba i Czyn*, published by Karol Cardinal Wojtyla, English edition *The Self and the Act* included in the anthology published in 1981.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 274-275.

individuals and peoples towards an ever more committed unity.”¹⁴⁶ It mentions that solidarity is not a “feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people,” rather, “a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the *common good*.”¹⁴⁷ It asserts that “*The message of the Church's social doctrine regarding solidarity clearly shows that there exists an intimate bond between solidarity and the common good, between solidarity and the universal destination of goods, between solidarity and equality among men and peoples, between solidarity and peace in the world.*”¹⁴⁸ Pope Paul VI defined the common good as “the sum of those conditions of social life which allow social groups and their individual members relatively thorough and ready access to their own fulfillment.”¹⁴⁹ The common good is thus understood as “the social conditions that allow people to reach their full human potential.” The Holy See, moreover, states that “Water is a universal common good, a common good of the entire human family. Its benefits are meant for all and not only for those who live in countries where water is abundant, well managed and well distributed. This natural resource must be equitably at the disposal of the entire human family.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁶ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, “Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church (2004),” # 192, THE HOLY SEE, accessed March 29, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., #193.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., #194.

¹⁴⁹ “Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: *Gaudium Et Spes*, promulgated by His Holiness, Pope Paul VI on December 7, 1965,” # 26, THE HOLY SEE, accessed March 30, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651207_gaudium-et-spes_en.html

¹⁵⁰ “A Contribution of The Holy See to The Fourth World Water Forum (Mexico City, 16-22 March 2006), Water, An Essential Element for Life* An Update,” THE HOLY SEE, accessed March 30, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_200603

The Holy See claims that water is not only a basic human need, but also “an essential, irreplaceable element to ensuring the continuance of life.”¹⁵¹ The CSDC declares that “*the right to safe drinking water is a universal and inalienable right.*”¹⁵² In 2010, the United Nations eventually acknowledged and recognized “the importance of equitable access to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as an integral component of the realization of all human rights...the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights.”¹⁵³

If, as what John Paul II has pointed out, solidarity is the mission and the service of the universal Church and a proof of her fidelity to Christ, what this Church of the poor or the bride of Jesus Christ the universal King shall do today to restore justice to water, her poor sister, and to those who are suffering now from water crisis and those who will suffer? Sister water, both as a universal common good and a universal and inalienable human right, demands “an intergenerational solidarity” in this moment of human history.¹⁵⁴

22_mexico-water_en.html

¹⁵¹ “Water, An Essential Element for Life* An Update.”

¹⁵² “Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church,” #485, THE HOLY SEE, accessed December 18, 2016, http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/justpeace/documents/rc_pc_justpeace_doc_20060526_compendio-dott-soc_en.html

¹⁵³ “Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 28 July 2010: 64/292. The Human Right to Water and Sanitation,” United Nations General Assembly A/RES/54/175, posted August 3, 2010, accessed March 30, 2017, <http://www.un.org/es/comun/docs/?symbol=A/RES/64/292&lang=E>

¹⁵⁴ “If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation,” For the Celebration of the World Day of Peace, Pope Benedict XVI, January 1, 2010, #8, THE HOLY SEE, accessed March 29, 2017, https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/messages/peace/documents/hf_ben-xvi_mes_20091208_xliii-world-day-peace.html

It is a common practice in Chinese culture that parents try their very best to provide their children a bright future. For the sake of their children's future, Chinese parents are willing to sacrifice everything. Pope Francis in his encyclical *Laudato Si'* asks, "What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up?"¹⁵⁵ Who does not want to make sure that their descendants will have enough water to drink? Is it fair for future generations that we leave a deserted earth behind? Or is it just for us to exploit sister water, the universal good, as much as we can? To answer these questions, Pope Benedict XVI introduces the concept of "intergenerational solidarity." He calls it "a solidarity which embraces time and space."¹⁵⁶ Benedict argues that "The environment [water] is God's gift to everyone, and in our use of it we have a responsibility towards the poor, towards future generations and towards humanity as a whole."¹⁵⁷

Solidarity with the most vulnerable either from present generation or future generations, is a commitment to the second commandment of the Lord which is love one's neighbor as oneself. Although in Neo-Confucianism, the superior person or the humane person loves all other beings as himself or herself, it never mentions that such person will lay down one's life for the sake of others, such as the poor, the marginalized, and other creatures. However, solidarity with the poor or intergenerational solidarity in Catholic context, always requires one's participation as the voice of those who have no voice and being ready to lay down one's life in the name of charity as Jesus did. Thus,

¹⁵⁵ *Laudato Si'*, #160.

¹⁵⁶ "If You Want to Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation," #8.

¹⁵⁷ *Caritas in Veritate*, #48.

John Paul II said that “I become here the voice of those who have no voice, the voice of the innocent, who died because they lacked water. . .”¹⁵⁸

Conclusion

Harmony with Heaven, Earth and everything in between or to be one with the cosmos is the Confucian ideal. In that ideal, Heaven and Earth are the parents of humans, all humans are brothers and sisters, and everything else are companions of humans. What unites Heaven, Earth and all in between is the vital power. It is that same vital force which exists among all things makes everything equal with humans. In Christian faith, all human and non-human creatures were created by God out of his genuine and unconditional love. They are equally “good” before God. Therefore, the ultimate goal of the preferential option for the poor and the principle of solidarity is for a more just society where all people, the poor and the rich, and all other forms of life, are treated equally as genetic kin.

To make a fundamental option for the poor and to be in solidarity with the poor imply that we feel what the poor feel, eat what they eat, walk where they walk, and live as they live. Through the mystery of “deep incarnation,”¹⁵⁹ the Son of God whose name is Emmanuel, becomes what we are, “star stuff and earth stuff.”¹⁶⁰ Born a poor, lives and

¹⁵⁸ Marybeth Lorbiecki, *Following St. Francis: John Paul II's Call for Ecological Action*. (New York, NY: Razoli Ex Libris, 2014), 1372, Kindle.

¹⁵⁹ A term coined by Danish theologian Niels Gregersen to express the radical divine reach into the very tissue of biological existence and the wider system of nature. Cf. Johnson, “For God So Loved the Cosmos.”

¹⁶⁰ Johnson, “For God So Loved the Cosmos.”

dies as a poor, the Son of God enters not only human suffering but also the cosmos suffering.¹⁶¹ Through the most blessed sacrament of Holy Eucharist and the gift of the Holy Spirit, Emmanuel, the living Christ, still walks with the entire suffering cosmos. He does so because of his love for the Father and for all creation.

Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of those who care for creation, loved by God and loves God in return, made a fundamental option for the poor and lived a life of the poor for Christ. It is through solidarity with the poor, that Francis lived “in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself.”¹⁶² Facing China’s water crisis, commiseration and charity demand all Chinese people to make a preferential option for sister water, the poor, and to nurture a culture of care and love.

¹⁶¹ Roman 8:22.

¹⁶² *Laudato Si'*, #10.

CHAPTER 4

CARE FOR THE POOR: AN INCULTURATED MORAL VISION FOR A BLUE CHINA AND A PEACEFUL WORLD

Introduction

Both Confucian morality and Christian morality are essentially teleological.

Confucian morality aims to seek the *Dao*¹⁶³ through cultivating *Ren*,¹⁶⁴ and *Ren* forms

*Junzi*¹⁶⁵ who will eventually follow the *Dao* and govern states not through force but

through the virtue of *Ren*. To become a *Junzi* or person of *Ren* is not to satisfy one's own

¹⁶³ The original Chinese word is “道”. It is the way human beings ought to live their lives. The *Dao* plays the kind of role in ancient Chinese ethics that is analogous to the role played by *eudaimonia* or flourishing, in ancient Greek ethics. The *Junzi* is the ethical exemplar with the virtues making it possible to follow the *Dao*. Cf. David Wong, “Chinese Ethics,” *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, last revision March 13, 2013, accessed April 2, 2017, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/ethics-chinese/>

¹⁶⁴ The original Chinese word is “仁”. It is a unifying theme in the *Analects*. Before Confucius's time, the concept of *ren* referred to the aristocracy of bloodlines, meaning something like the strong and handsome appearance of an aristocrat. But in the *Analects* the concept is of a moral excellence that anyone has the potential to achieve. Various translations have been given of *ren*. Many translations attempt to convey the idea of complete ethical virtue, connoting a comprehensive state of ethical excellence. In a number of places in the *Analects* the *ren* person is treated as equivalent to the *junzi*, indicating that *ren* has the meaning of complete or comprehensive moral excellence, lacking no particular virtue but having them all. However, *ren* in some places in the *Analects* is treated as one virtue among others such as wisdom and courage. In the narrower sense of being one virtue among others, it is explained in 12.22 in terms of caring for others. It is in light of these passages that other translators, such as D.C. Lau, use ‘benevolence’ to translate *ren*. However, others have tried to more explicitly convey the sense of ‘*ren*’ in the comprehensive sense of all-encompassing moral virtue through use of the translation ‘Good’ or ‘Goodness’ (see Waley, 1938, 1989; Slingerland, 2003). Cf. David Wong, “Chinese Ethics”.

¹⁶⁵ The Chinese word is “君子”, originally meant “prince's son,” but in the *Analects* it refers to ethical nobility. The first English translations rendered it as “gentleman,” but Ames and Rosemont (1998) have usefully suggested “exemplary person.” Among the traits connected to ethical nobility are filial piety, a respect for and dedication to the performance of traditional ritual forms of conduct, and the ability to judge what the right thing to do in a given situation. These traits are virtues in the sense that they are necessary for following the *Dao*. Cf. David Wong, “Chinese Ethics.”

interest, but to act for the benefit of others. Thus, a famous conversation between Confucius (551-479 B.C.E.) and Zi Lu, one of his best known and most faithful disciples indicated,

Zi Lu asked what constituted the superior man [*Junzi*]. The Master said, “The cultivation of himself in reverential carefulness.” “And is this all?” said Zi Lu. “He cultivates himself so as to give rest to others,” was the reply. “And is this all?” again asked Zi Lu. The Master said, “He cultivates himself so as to give rest to all the people. He cultivates himself so as to give rest to all the people—even Yao and Shun were still solicitous about this.”¹⁶⁶

According to the *Catechism of Catholic Church*, Christian life is a life of virtues, such as the human virtues and the theological virtues.¹⁶⁷ In general, virtues are “habitual and firm disposition[s] to do the good.” “It allows people not only perform good acts, but to give the best of” themselves. Furthermore, “the virtuous person tends toward the good with all his [or her] sensory and spiritual powers; he [or she] pursues the good and chooses it in concrete actions.” Lastly, “the goal of a virtuous life is to become like God.”¹⁶⁸ That is to see, to love, and to embrace the cosmos or all creation as God does.

Cultivation of characters or virtues are very essential both in Confucian and Catholic wisdom traditions. In this chapter, I argue that to address China’s water crisis and to form a peaceful world, we need to cultivate virtues. Just imagine, if each Chinese person saves one cup of water a day, how much water can China save per day, per month,

¹⁶⁶ “宪问-Yuan Xian, student of Confucius,” 论语 *The Analects*, 2691, Kindle.

¹⁶⁷ *Catechism of Catholic Church*, #1804-1829, THE HOLY SEE, accessed April 8, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/___P65.HTM

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., #1803, THE HOLY SEE, accessed April 8, 2017, http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/___P64.HTM

and per year? As Jonathan Watts argues that when a billion Chinese jump, it will either save or destroy mankind.¹⁶⁹ Therefore, we must rediscover our good human nature and extend the feeling of commiseration that belongs to all human beings to include not only human beings, but also all other beings, especially sister water. Practicing of the second commandment love our neighbor as ourselves and cultivating a commiserating heart that embraces all creatures will lead us to be in harmony with all species, Heaven and Earth. Such harmony will protect sister water and guarantee a blue future for China and a peaceful world for generations to come.

The Doctrine of *Ren* and the Covenant of Love

Both Confucius and Mencius did not talk about love directly; however, love is nonetheless a central theme in their teachings. Love is closely related to *Ren*, the highest virtue in Confucianism. Once, Fan Chi asked Confucius about *Ren*, the Master replied and said that *Ren* is to love all men and women. When Fan Chi asked about knowledge, Confucius said that it is to know all men and women.¹⁷⁰ The person of *Ren* is someone that knows and loves all men and women. Such a person will be loved inevitably by all. It is obvious that there is reciprocity between the person of *Ren* and all whom he or she loves. Therefore, Mencius said “...The benevolent man [person of *Ren*] loves others...He

¹⁶⁹ Jonathan Watts, *When A Billion Chinese Jump: How China Will Save Mankind—Or Destroy It* (New York, London, Toronto, Sydney: 2010), front cover.

¹⁷⁰ “颜渊-Yan Yuan, famous disciple of Confucius,” 论语 *The Analects*, 2154, Kindle.

who loves others is constantly loved by them.”¹⁷¹

Consequently, if men and women of *Ren* or *Junzi* become rulers, Confucius believed that they will help the distressed and not add to the wealth of the rich.¹⁷²

Mencius equally stated, “When they [sages] had exerted to the utmost the thoughts of their hearts, they called in to their aid a government that could not endure to witness the sufferings of men [and women]— and their benevolence [*Ren*] overspread the kingdom.”¹⁷³ In fact, Mencius used parental relationship to encourage *Junzi* or the person of *Ren* to care for his or her citizens. If the king treats his or her people as his or her own children, there would be no injustice in his or her kingdom at all. Theoretically speaking, everyone in his or her kingdom will be treated equally.

To treat each one equally means that we do to others as what we wish them to do to us. And this is *Ren*, the perfect virtue in Confucianism. As what Confucius once replied to Zhong Gong and said, “It [*Ren*] is, when you go abroad, to behave to every one as if you were receiving a great guest; to employ the people as if you were assisting at a great sacrifice; not to do to others as you would not wish done to yourself; to have no murmuring against you in the country, and none in the family.”¹⁷⁴ In his response to Zi

¹⁷¹ “离娄-Li Lou, part 2,” 孟子 *Mengzi*, trans. James Legge, Bilingual ed. (Lionshare Media, 2015), 3320, Kindle.

¹⁷² “雍也-Ran Yong, student of Confucius,” 论语 *The Analects*, 836, Kindle.

¹⁷³ “离娄-Li Lou, part 1,” 孟子 *Mengzi*, 2720, Kindle.

¹⁷⁴ “颜渊-Yan Yuan, favorite disciple of Confucius,” 论语 *The Analects*, 1998, Kindle.

Gong's enquiry about the person of *Ren*, Confucius further said, "Now the man of perfect virtue [person of *Ren*], wishing to be established himself, seeks also to establish others; wishing to be enlarged himself, he seeks also to enlarge others. To be able to judge of others by what is nigh in ourselves-this may be called the art of virtue [*Ren*]." ¹⁷⁵

Therefore, the doctrine of *Ren* or the doctrine of love in classical Confucianism has two connotations. The first one is a negative commandment of love which means do not do to others what we do not wish them do to us. The second is a positive one which means do to others what we do to ourselves.

One scribe came to ask Jesus which commandment is the first of all. Jesus answered, "The first is, 'Hear, O Israel: the Lord our God, the Lord is one; you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.' The second is this, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' There is no other commandment greater than these." ¹⁷⁶ This Gospel passage contains the central message of Christian faith which is the covenantal love. This covenantal love consists of two dimensions. The first is a vertical love. It is the love between the Triune God and us, his children. God has loved us first and gave us his only begotten son Jesus Christ to set us free, and in return we shall love him with all our hearts, with all our souls, with all our mind, and with all our strength. The second is a horizontal love. It is a

¹⁷⁵ “雍也-Ran Yong, student of Confucius,” 论语 *The Analects*, 991, Kindle.

¹⁷⁶ Mark 12: 28-31. Other biblical passages about love one's neighbor, cf. Matthew 19:19; 22:39; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14; and James 2:8.

genuine love for our neighbor. We should love our neighbor as ourselves.

The biblical author Saint John understood this covenantal love well and said that we love because God has loved us first. He argued that “Those who say ‘I love God,’ and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars; for those who do not love a brother or sister whom they have seen, cannot love God whom they have not seen. The commandment we have from him is this: those who love God must love their brothers and sisters also.”¹⁷⁷ St.

John was right that we cannot love God if we do not love our brothers and sisters.

However, to love our neighbor, we must know first who our neighbor is. To answer this question, let us take a journey back to the Hebrew Bible first, then to the Christian Bible.

The book of Leviticus expresses the second commandment “love your neighbor as yourselves” through different laws. The biblical author wrote: “You shall not defraud your neighbor,”¹⁷⁸ “You shall not render an unjust judgment; you shall not be partial to the poor or defer to the great: with justice you shall judge your neighbor. You shall not go around as a slanderer among your people, and you shall not profit by the blood of your neighbor: I am the Lord.”¹⁷⁹ And “When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very edges of your field, or gather the gleanings of your harvest. You shall not strip your vineyard bare, or gather the fallen grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave

¹⁷⁷ 1 John 4:19-21.

¹⁷⁸ Leviticus 19:13.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 19:15.

them for the poor and the alien: I am the LORD your God.”¹⁸⁰

The Hebrew Bible did not confine our neighbor to those whom we know, but also included the poor and the alien whom we may not know. The second commandment to “love your neighbor as yourself” is immediately specified “you shall love the alien as yourself, for you were aliens in the land of Egypt.”¹⁸¹ Therefore, love our neighbor and love the poor and the alien are just two sides of the same coin. In the Christian Bible, our master and Lord, Jesus of Nazareth, explained the meaning of “neighbor” through a famous story. He thus said,

“A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, ‘Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.’ Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?” He [A lawyer] said, “The one who showed him mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go do likewise.”¹⁸²

The love of neighbor requires us to love those whose rights are violated, dignity disrespected, benefits forgotten, voices muffled, and life endangered. In China today, the poor are the seniors and children left in rural areas, peasants who have to leave their homeland and work as hard as possible in urban areas, women and children who have

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 19:9-10.

¹⁸¹ Leviticus 19: 18, 34.

¹⁸² Luke 10: 30-37.

been trafficked, indigenous people whose culture has been absorbed by the dominant Han culture, citizens whose houses have been collected most of the time by force, children who were aborted, people who have to drink contaminated water and suffer from all water-related diseases, the disabled, the sick, the homeless, foreign workers, and etc. In our world today, the poor also comprises of migrants and all kinds of refugees, such as economic refugees, political refugees, and climate refugees. In general, everyone, no matter what race, gender, religion, or nationality that one belongs to, is our neighbor. We shall, therefore, love everybody as God has loved us.

In the face of the water crisis in China and the ecological crisis in the world, our neighbors today do not only include those who are poor physically or materially, but also include all other beings that are essential for all forms of life, such as water, air, land, and forest. In fact, twenty years ago, Leonardo Boff prophetically portrayed the cry of the Earth and the cry of the poor are one unified cry. He wrote,

The Earth is also crying out. The logic that exploits classes and subjects peoples to the interests of a few rich and powerful countries is the same as the logic that devastates the Earth and plunders its wealth, showing no solidarity with the rest of humankind and future generations.

Such logic is shattering the fragile balance of the universe, built up with great wisdom by nature throughout fifteen billion years of labor. It has broken humankind's covenant of kinship with the Earth and destroyed its sense of connectedness—with all things. During the past four centuries human beings have felt that they are all alone in a universe seen as an enemy to be subjected and tamed.

Today these issues have gained a seriousness that they have never enjoyed before in human history. The human being—called to be Earth's guardian angel and watchful tiller—may be Earth's Satan. Humans have shown that they can commit

not only homicide and ethnocide, but biocide and geocide as well. It is not only the poor and oppressed that must be liberated; today all humans must be liberated. We are hostages to a paradigm that places us—against the thrust of the universe—over things instead of being with them in the great cosmic community.¹⁸³

Boff sought to liberate all human beings from an anthropocentric mentality or human-centered logic. Such liberation of men and women will be indeed a liberation of sister water and our mother Earth. To battle against a domestic and international water crisis or an ecological crisis, I agree that such liberation is needed. However, I take a different approach to such liberation. I shall turn to Chinese Confucian wisdom and Christian traditions to rediscover the commiserating and merciful heart that is common to all men and women.

A Commiserating and Merciful Heart

Chinese word *Xin*, translated as mind or heart in English, is very essential to Mencius. It actually appears 100 times in the book of Mencius. For him, heart is what connects all people, no matter whether they know each other or not. Mencius actually named it as a commiserating mind [heart]. To illustrate this, Mencius said,

All men have a mind [heart] which cannot bear to see the sufferings of others. ‘The ancient kings had this commiserating mind [heart], and they, as a matter of course, had likewise a commiserating government. When with a commiserating mind was practiced a commiserating government, to rule the kingdom was as easy a matter as to make anything go round in the palm. When I say that all men have a mind [heart] which cannot bear to see the sufferings of others, my meaning may be illustrated thus: even now-a-days, if men suddenly see a child about to fall into

¹⁸³ Leonardo Boff, *Cry of the Earth, Cry of the Poor*, trans. Phillip Berryman (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1997), 150-157, Kindle.

a well, they will without exception experience a feel of alarm and distress. They will feel so, not as a ground on which they may gain the favor of the child's parents, nor as a ground on which they may seek the praise of their neighbors and friends, nor from a dislike to the reputation of having been unmoved by such a thing.¹⁸⁴

Mencius went on to emphasize the gravity of this commiserating heart. He said, "From this case we may perceive that the feeling of commiseration is essential to man."¹⁸⁵

Actually, the direct translation of the original Chinese text is: a person shall not be called human without a commiserating heart.

Aside from this, Mencius also closely associated the commiserating heart with the highest virtue *Ren*. He said that "The feeling of commiseration is the principle [beginning] of benevolence [*Ren*]."¹⁸⁶ Therefore, we may say whoever wants to attain or practice the highest virtue *Ren*, has to begin with cultivating a commiserating heart. Whoever has a commiserating heart will not be indifferent to the sufferings of others, especially the poor, like sister water.

The feeling of commiseration in Christian language will be mercy or compassion. Mercy or compassion is the way through which God has shown his love for us from the beginning of the time. In fact, the word "mercy" and "merciful" were used 100 times in Holy Bible. It is not a coincidence that Pope Francis announced an Extraordinary Jubilee on March 13, 2015. He stressed that the mercy of God would be the center of the Holy

¹⁸⁴ "公孙丑-Gong Sun Chou, part 1," 孟子 *Mengzi*, 1380-1385, Kindle.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 1393, Kindle.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 1393, Kindle.

Jubilee. Inspired by the Gospel passage “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful,”¹⁸⁷ he wished that the Church might promote the New Evangelization so that it might come to life. Thus, it might bring the Gospel of mercy to each person.¹⁸⁸

Nearly one month later, on April 11, 2015, Pope Francis gave his apostolic letter *Misericordiae Vultus*, *The Face of Mercy* in English, to the world. In the letter, he defined mercy as: “the ultimate and supreme act by which God comes to meet us,” “the fundamental law that dwells in the heart of every person who looks sincerely into the eyes of his brothers and sisters on the path of life,” and “the bridge that connects God and man, opening our hearts to the hope of being loved forever despite our sinfulness.”¹⁸⁹ From his message, we can summarize that mercy like the feeling of commiseration in Mencius language, connects all human beings, and also connects God and all his children.

Pope Francis also stated that God is always merciful throughout the history of humanity.¹⁹⁰ He further pointed out that Jesus is the summary or fulfillment of God’s mercy. He said:

¹⁸⁷ Luke 6:36.

¹⁸⁸ “The Announcement of the Jubilee of Mercy,” Pontifical Council for the Promotion of New Evangelization official website, March 13, 2015, accessed April 2, 2017, <http://www.im.va/content/gdm/en/giubileo/annuncio.html>

¹⁸⁹ *Misericordiae Vultus: Bull of Indiction of the Extraordinary Jubilee of Mercy*, Pope Francis, #2, Libreria Editrice Vaticana, April 11, 2015, accessed April 2, 2017, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco_bolla_20150411_misericordiae-vultus.pdf

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., #6.

Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy. These words might well sum up the mystery of the Christian faith. Mercy has become living and visible in Jesus of Nazareth, reaching its culmination in him. The Father, "rich in mercy" (Eph 2:4), after having revealed his name to Moses as "a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness" (Ex 34:6), has never ceased to show, in various ways throughout history, his divine nature.... Jesus of Nazareth, by his words, his actions, and his entire person reveals the mercy of God.¹⁹¹

To illustrate that Jesus Christ is the face of the Father's mercy, he carefully and thoroughly explained:

The relationships he [Jesus] forms with the people who approach him manifest something entirely unique and unrepeatable. The signs he works, especially in favor of sinners, the poor, the marginalized, the sick, and the suffering, are all meant to teach mercy. Everything in him speaks of mercy. Nothing in him is devoid of compassion. Jesus, seeing the crowds of people who followed him, realized that they were tired and exhausted, lost and without a guide, and he felt deep compassion for them (cf. Mt 9:36). On the basis of this compassionate love he healed the sick who were presented to him (cf. Mt 14:14), and with just a few loaves of bread and fish he satisfied the enormous crowd (cf. Mt 15:37). What moved Jesus in all of these situations was nothing other than mercy, with which he read the hearts of those he encountered and responded to their deepest need. When he came upon the widow of Nain taking her son out for burial, he felt great compassion for the immense suffering of this grieving mother, and he gave back her son by raising him from the dead (cf. Lk 7:15). After freeing the demoniac in the country of the Gerasenes, Jesus entrusted him with this mission: "Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you" (Mk 5:19).¹⁹²

For Mencius, the feeling of commiseration is the principle [beginning] of benevolence [*Ren*], we cannot love our neighbor if we do not have a commiserating heart, and we will not become person of *Ren* if we do not love our neighbor. Therefore, the practice or the cultivation of the feeling of commiseration will lead to the highest virtue

¹⁹¹ Ibid., #1.

¹⁹² Ibid., #8.

of *Ren* and form person of *Jen*. In like manner, as what Pope Francis has called mercy is not only the key word in Holy Bible, but also the perfection of life. Jesus said “Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.”¹⁹³ What inspired Pope Francis, “Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful,” is indeed an echo of God’s invitation for us to be as holy as he is.

An Inculturated Moral Vision for a Blue China and a Peaceful World

Junzi or the person of *Ren* in Mencius’ teaching, both as ruler and parent, will never pretend not hearing the cry of his or her people. In fact, Mencius challenged King Hui of Liang and said,

Your dogs and swine eat the food of men, and you do not make any restrictive arrangements. There are people dying from famine on the roads, and you do not issue the stores of your granaries for them. When people die, you say, “It is not owing to me; it is owing to the year.” In what does this differ from stabbing a man and killing him, and then saying – “It was not I; it was the weapon?”¹⁹⁴

We can conclude that *Junzi* or the person of *Ren* has a responsibility for his or her fellow suffering men and women. And this responsibility is derived from the commiserating heart which is common to all men and women, and is the beginning of the highest virtue *Ren*.

Ren does not exist in human beings alone, but also exist in other beings. We are connected with other human beings and non-human beings through the very virtue of *Ren*.

¹⁹³ Matthew 5:7.

¹⁹⁴ “梁惠王上-King Hui of Liang, part 1,” 孟子 *Mengzi*, 150, Kindle.

For this purpose, Wang Yang Ming (1472-1529), a famous Neo-Confucian scholar during the Ming dynasty, began his essay *Inquiry on the Great Learning* with the following words:

The great man regards Heaven and Earth and the myriad things as one body. He regards the world as one family and the country as one person. . . . That the great man can regard Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things as one body is not because he deliberately wants to do so, but because it is natural to the humane nature of his mind [heart] that he do so. Forming one body with Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things is not only true of the great man. Even the mind [heart] of the small things is no different. Only he himself makes it small. Therefore when he sees a child about to fall into a well, he cannot help a feeling of alarm and commiseration [a commiserating heart]. This shows that his humanity (jen) forms one body with the child. It may be objected that the child belongs to the same species. Again, when he observes the pitiful cries and frightened appearance of birds and animals about to be slaughtered, he cannot help feeling an “inability to bear” their suffering. This shows that his humanity [*Ren*] forms one body with birds and animals. It may be objected that birds and animals are sentient beings as he is. But when he sees plants broken and destroyed, he cannot help . . . feeling . . . pity. This shows that his humanity [*Ren*] forms one body with plants. It may be said that plants are living things as he is. Yet even when he sees tiles and stones shattered and crushed, he cannot help . . . feeling . . . regret. This shows that his humanity [*Ren*] forms one body with tiles and stones. This means that even the mind [heart] of the small man necessarily has the humanity [*Ren*] that forms one body with all. Such a mind [heart] is rooted in his Heaven-endowed nature, and is naturally intelligent, clear and not beclouded. For this reason it is called “clear character [illustrious virtue].”¹⁹⁵

Thomas Berry spoke of the Earth as subject, not as object. He was concerned “with the material principle out of which we were born and whence we derive all that we are and all that we have.” He contended that we were born of the Earth, and we are earthlings. For him, the Earth is our origin, our nourishment, our support, and our

¹⁹⁵ Tu, “Beyond the Enlightenment Mentality” in *Confucianism and Ecology*, 21n12.

guide.¹⁹⁶ Berry equally held that everything on Earth is not merely a thing but a presence

to other beings. To demonstrate this, he used Confucian concept of *Ren* and said,

Nothing on earth was a mere "thing." Every being had its own divine, numinous subjectivity, its self, its center, its unique identity. Every being was a presence to every other being. Among the more massive civilizations, China gave clearest expression to this intimacy of beings with each other in its splendid concept of *Jen* [Ren], a word that requires translation according to context by a long list of terms in English, terms such as love, goodness, human-heartedness, and affection. All beings are held together in *Jen* [Ren], as in St. Paul all things are held together in Christ. But perhaps an even better analogy is to say that while for Newton, the universal law of gravitation whereby each particle of matter attracts and is attracted to every other particle of matter in the universe indicates a mere physical force of attraction, the universal law of attraction for the Chinese is a form of feeling identity.¹⁹⁷

One can easily find Wang Yang Ming's thought echoed in Berry's work. In the same article, Berry continued and said,

For this reason there is, in China, the universal law of compassion. This law is especially observable in humankind, for every human has a heart that cannot bear to witness the suffering of others. When the objection was made to Wang Yang-ming in the fifteenth century that this compassion is evident only in human relations, Master Wang replied by noting that even the frightened cry of the bird, the crushing of a plant, the shattering of a tile, or the senseless breaking of a stone immediately and spontaneously causes pain in the human heart. This would not be, he tells us, unless there exists a bond of intimacy and even identity between ourselves and these other beings.¹⁹⁸

The Hebrew Bible enjoins care of the Earth and allows all who live on it rest, by commanding its audience, the people of Israel, to observe Sabbath and Jubilee. The book

¹⁹⁶ Thomas Berry, "Spirituality of the Earth," in *Liberating Life: Contemporary Approaches in Ecological Theology*, ed. Charles Birch, William Eaken and Jay B. McDaniel (1990), 151-158, accessed April 2, 2017, https://ratical.org/many_worlds/SpiritOfEarth.html#hsin6

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

of Leviticus thus recorded this in two accounts,

Six years you shall sow your field, and six years you shall prune your vineyard, and gather in their yield; but in the seventh year there shall be a sabbath of complete rest for the land, a sabbath for the LORD: you shall not sow your field or prune your vineyard. You shall not reap the aftergrowth of your harvest or gather the grapes of your unpruned vine: it shall be a year of complete rest for the land.¹⁹⁹

...And you shall hallow the fiftieth year and you shall proclaim liberty throughout the land to all its inhabitants. It shall be a jubilee for you: you shall return, every one of you, to your property and every one of you to your family. That fiftieth year shall be a jubilee for you: you shall not sow, or reap the aftergrowth, or harvest the unpruned vines. For it is a jubilee; it shall be holy to you: you shall eat only what the field itself produces.²⁰⁰

Pope Francis in *Misericordiae Vultus* used Jesus' own words to remind all

Christians that whatever we do to the hungry, the thirsty, the stranger, the naked, the sick,

the prisoner, we do it to Jesus.²⁰¹ He said with great enthusiasm:

Let us open our eyes and see the misery of the world, the wounds of our brothers and sisters who are denied their dignity, and let us recognize that we are compelled to heed their cry for help! May we reach out to them and support them so they can feel the warmth of our presence, our friendship, and our fraternity! May their cry become our own, and together may we break down the barriers of indifference that too often reign supreme and mask our hypocrisy and egoism!²⁰²

In his Encyclical letter *Laudato Si—on Care for our Common Home*, Pope

Francis borrowed Saint Francis of Assisi's notion of Earth as our sister and mother who sustains and governs us, to remind us that we through our irresponsible use and abuse of

¹⁹⁹ Leviticus 25:3-5.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 25:10-12.

²⁰¹ *Misericordiae Vultus*, #15.

²⁰² Ibid.

the goods have made our mother Earth—our common home one of the most abandoned and maltreated of our poor. Now our sister and mother Earth cries out to us. He argues that we've forgotten that we are dust of the Earth and our bodies are made up of her elements, such as air and water.²⁰³ Furthermore, he also states that St. Francis of Assisi lived a simple but harmonious life with all creatures and God. He stated,

He [St. Francis of Assisi] was a mystic and a pilgrim who lived in simplicity and in wonderful harmony with God, with others, with nature and with himself. He shows us just how inseparable the bond is between concern for nature, justice for the poor, commitment to society, and interior peace. Francis helps us to see that an integral ecology calls for openness to categories which transcend the language of mathematics and biology, and take us to the heart of what it is to be human....His response to the world around him was so much more than intellectual appreciation or economic calculus, for to him each and every creature was a sister united to him by bonds of affection. This is why he felt called to care for all that exists.²⁰⁴

As I have argued in chapter 3, harmony between Heaven, Earth, and everything in between is central to Confucianism. Wang Yang Ming argued what unites the diversity of life with Heaven, Earth, and humanity as one person, body, and family, is the virtue of *Ren*. St. Francis of Assisi also embraced the harmony between the self, others, and God, through the virtue of love.

At the beginning of this chapter, I have mentioned that Confucius said what constitutes the superior man or woman [*Junzi*] is the cultivation of the self, and the cultivation of the self is to give rest to all the people. This idea is in accordance with what *The Great Learning* says, "Their thoughts being sincere, their hearts were then rectified.

²⁰³ *Laudato Si'*, #1-2.

²⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, #10, #11.

Their hearts being rectified, their persons were cultivated. Their persons being cultivated, their families were regulated. Their families being regulated, their states were rightly governed. Their states being rightly governed, the whole kingdom was made tranquil and happy.”²⁰⁵

Steven Solomon states that “the struggle to command increasingly scarce, usable water resources is set to shape the destinies of societies and the world order of the twenty-first century.”²⁰⁶ As the global water resources shrink, water has become the center of tensions for many countries. Similarly, the Holy See states that “Conflicts have already occurred for control over water resources and others may come center stage the more water scarcity manifests its consequences on the lives of the human beings and their communities.” The Holy See therefore argues that water “is a strategic factor for the establishment and maintenance of peace in the world.”²⁰⁷ Furthermore, Maude Barlow, the National Chairperson of the Council of Canadians who also chairs the board of Washington-based Food and Water Watch, argues that water tensions exist not only in sub-Saharan Africa and the Middle East, but are also present in Asia. In fact, she points out that China’s hydraulic developments in its major rivers have already caused frictions with its neighbor countries, such as Burma, Cambodia, Laos, Thailand, Vietnam and

²⁰⁵ *The Four Books: Confucian Analects, The Great Learning, The Doctrine of the Mean, and The Works of Mencius*, trans. James Legge (Shanghai, China: The Chinese Book Company), 313.

²⁰⁶ Steven Solomon, *Water: The Epic Struggle for Wealth, Power, and Civilization* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2010), 367.

²⁰⁷ “Water, An Essential Element for Life, An Update.”

India, and might inflict war in future.²⁰⁸

Harmony or unity between Heaven, Earth, and all in between is the perfection of *Ren*, the highest virtue or the ideal in Confucianism. To be in harmony with everything in the world is to be at peace or at rest with all forms of life. To achieve this harmony, peace, or rest, one has to cultivate a commiserating heart and to have compassion for all forms of life. Pope Benedict XVI has prophetically pointed out that if we want to cultivate peace, we must protect creation. Benedict directly quoted from the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, No. 198 and said, “creation is the beginning and the foundation of all God’s works.” To demonstrate the relationship between creation and peace, he further said,

Man’s inhumanity to man has given rise to numerous threats to peace and to authentic and integral human development—wars, international and regional conflicts, acts of terrorism, and violations of human rights. Yet no less troubling are the threats arising from the neglect—if not downright misuse—of the earth and the natural goods that God has given us. For this reason, it is imperative that mankind renew and strengthen “that covenant between human beings and the environment, which should mirror the creative love of God, from whom we come and toward whom we are journeying” (*Message for the World Day of Peace, 2008*).²⁰⁹

The covenant renewal is “a profound personal conversion of heart” or “an ecological conversion” in Pope St. John Paul II’s lexicon.²¹⁰ If all Chinese people and

²⁰⁸ Maude Barlow, *Blue Future: Protecting Water for People and the Planet Forever* (New York: The New Press, 2013), 270-276.

²⁰⁹ Pope Benedict XVI, “To Cultivate Peace, Protect Creation,” in *The Environment*, ed. Jacquelyn Lindsey (Huntington, Indiana: Our Sunday Visitor Publishing Division Our Sunday Visitor, 2012), 1529, Kindle.

²¹⁰ “A profound personal conversion” cf. “Address of John Paul II to the Participants in a Study Week Organized by the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, March 12, 1999.” The Holy See. Accessed April 10, 2017, https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1999/march/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19990312_acd-sciences.html

the people of our planet Earth can cultivate their commiserating heart or nurture a merciful heart, and embrace an inculturated moral vision, namely, care for water as our sister, and love Earth as our neighbor and mother, China and the world water crisis or ecological crisis will be gradually solved and world peace restored as well. Because, if we care for each other and other forms of life as family members and treat Earth as our mother and common home, we will stop whatever wrong that we are doing to our family members and our home right now. Ultimately, whatever we do to any form of life on this planet Earth, we indeed do it to ourselves. Whatever wrong we do to our sister water will return to us as health threats in different ways. This is simply because we are one body, one family, one humanity, one world, and one cosmos.

Conclusion

We are too connected with one another in the matrix of life not to make a profound change. Indeed, we should never underestimate our power to change. Whatever we choose and do will define who and what we are, and change everything else sooner or later. For a blue China and a peaceful world, let *Ren* or mercy begin with us and go beyond us so that we may help to cultivate the same virtue of *Ren* in others as well.

In solidarity with sister water and mother earth, and in union with all men and women of goodwill, together we trust that we can build a blue China and a peaceful

“Ecological conversion” cf. “John Paul II’s General Audience January 17, 2001.” The Holy See. Accessed April 10, 2017, https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/audiences/2001/documents/hf_jp-ii_aud_20010117.html

world. Let's hope that men and women of *Ren* or mercy will eventually rule China and the world, and govern them with the virtue of *Dao* or love. An ancient Chinese proverb says that a journey of a thousand miles begins with one step. Likewise, the cultivation of *Ren* or mercy must begin with little things in our daily life. We must act responsibly in the name of water now, before it's too late! "It is time to act," as Melanie Schultz van Haegen, Minister of Infrastructure and the Environment of The Netherlands, said.²¹¹

²¹¹ *7th World Water Forum Ten Major Outcomes*, 8, accessed April 4, 2017, http://www.worldwatercouncil.org/fileadmin/world_water_council/documents/news/20150717_7th%20World%20Water%20Forum%20Outcomes.pdf

CONCLUSION

In the Name of Water

All journeys in life begin with a quest and will eventually lead to somewhere known or unknown. Likewise, my theological adventure starts with a search for a possible ethical way to address China's water crisis and has led me to this moment of the journey. As what most travelers do at the end of their trips, I recall my experiences with my eyes closed. Each chapter like a beautiful picture becomes fully alive in front of my eyes.

In chapter 1, I briefly presented China's water crisis as the background of this thesis. In this macro view of the issue, I attended four questions: How much water is there in China? What is the quality of the water? What are the causes of the issue? And who benefits from it and who suffers? These questions guided me to discover that China has little drinkable water to quench her 1.3 billion people and to support her rapid economic growth, that her major water sources are polluted either by human or industrial wastes, that her present water policy and practice are in favor of the rich and disfavor the poor and the marginalized.

In chapter 2, I carefully examined the issue through a micro point of view. The main question I raised is what the root causes of the issue are. To answer this question, I found out the interconnection between economic, social, moral, and political factors. The

descendants of the giant dragon of the east threw their traditional values away due to the humiliating history of their mother country in her modern era. The desire to make China great again powered by the state in the past 68 years; focuses more on China's economic growth and failed to treat nature, especially water, as family member but as an enemy to conquer.

In chapter 3, I argued, to address China's water crisis today, that a different morality or mindset is needed. I sought wisdom from two world famous ancient traditions, Confucianism and Christianity. The questions I asked are these: What is the meaning of harmony between Heaven, Earth, and everything else in between, in the Confucian wisdom tradition? What are the meanings of "preferential option for the poor" and "solidarity with the poor" and who are the poor in the Catholic social teachings, especially in Pope Francis' encyclical *Laudato Si'*? Will solidarity with the poor in light of Confucian harmony restore justice to water and the poor, and address the crisis? I interpreted these two different but mutually related themes, the fundamental option for the poor and solidarity with the poor in light of harmony or unity with Heaven, Earth, and everything in between, in Confucianism, especially Neo-Confucianism. Finally, I reaffirmed Pope Francis' thought that the cry of the poor and the cry of the earth, including "sister water," are one unified voice of suffering, and we must treat water as a family member.

In the last chapter, I argued, to restore Confucian harmony or to be in solidarity

with the poor as an inculturated moral vision to address the crisis, we need to cultivate our morality through virtues. I addressed these questions: To care for our sister water and the poor, what kinds of virtues shall we cultivate or form? How shall we live and what ought we to do now in the name of water? To address China's water crisis and to form a peaceful world, I argued that we need to cultivate the virtue of care or charity. With a commiserating heart or a heart of mercy, we will love our neighbor as ourselves and water our sister, and form a unity with all creation and God. Harmony with all creation and God will make us caretakers or guardians of a blue future for China and a peaceful world for generations to come.

Virtue ethics alone cannot solve China's water crisis. To solve the crisis completely, we must address the social, political, and cultural structures, and encourage public participation in decision making as well. Virtue ethics does not address structural distortions directly. However, a Chinese famous adage says that one cannot change the world if he or she does not change his or her family.²¹² Confucius and Jesus of Nazareth have changed the world through a small group of disciples. It is true that both of them in their life time, were not able to see the change that their teachings eventually brought about. But they changed the world anyway. Therefore, one must never underestimate the gradual transforming power of virtue ethics.

Jesus said to his followers: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman

²¹² Original Chinese saying is 一屋不扫何以扫天下.

took and mixed in with three measures of flour until all of it was leavened.”²¹³ I hope this thesis may become an invitation for the Chinese Catholic Church to participate actively in ecological change as a response to her country’s call to protect water and other essential elements of the earth. I also wish that she may become yeast for China’s ecological civilization so that future Chinese people may inherit clean water, blue sky, and arable lands.²¹⁴

²¹³ Matthew 13:33

²¹⁴ On April 2, 2015, the State Council of the People's Republic of China published the “Action Plan for Water Pollution Prevention (APWPP).” APWPP not only encourages the public to participate in environmental law enforcement and investigation into water pollution cases, but also rewards the whistle-blower. 《水污染防治行动计划》第34和35号, 中华人民共和国国务院, accessed April 10, 2017, http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/content/2015-04/16/content_9613.htm

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