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Introduction

Author(s): Charles A. Moore

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Preliminary Report on the Third East-West Philosophers' Conference

INTRODUCTION

CHARLES A. MOORE

The Third East-West Philosophers' Conference was held at the University of Hawaii from June 22 to July 30, 1959. In sponsoring this conference, the University of Hawaii continued its activity in seeking to develop greater mutual understanding of the peoples of Asia and the peoples of the West in the area of their respective philosophies—their basic ideas and ideals. Earlier conferences were held at the University of Hawaii in 1939 and 1949. At these conferences primary attention was given to the more fundamental and technical areas of philosophy in the respective traditions, and in terms of these basic considerations genuine and significant understanding was achieved, and greater open-mindedness and cordiality to ideas, methods, and ideals of other traditions became the rule rather than the exception. The spirit and the practice of "world philosophizing" replaced prejudiced provincialism and isolation among the representatives of the several major philosophical traditions of Asia and the West.

Those first two conferences, however, failed to do justice to the more practical areas of philosophy and to the matter of mutual understanding in the significant areas of social thought and action; the necessity was felt of putting first things first with the hope of undertaking at a third conference more thoroughgoing and concentrated consideration of the practical applications of the technical studies made at the earlier conferences.

The third conference, building upon the foundation of understanding established at the first two conferences, directly and comprehensively attacked the more practical problems of social thought and action—and even considered most seriously the underlying problem of the very relationship between philosophical theory and social practice or cultural action.

The purpose of this third conference was to develop greater mutual understanding of the peoples of Asia and the peoples of the West in these special practical areas both directly and by reference to their bases in the fundamental philosophical systems, concepts, and methods of the respective traditions. In line with this purpose, the over-all topic of the conference was: "East-West Philosophy in Practical Perspective." The plan was to work out the applications and implications of the respective basic philosophical traditions with respect to the several areas of social thought and action. Or, to state the problem differently, the work of the conference consisted in an attempt to probe beneath or beyond practice—cultural, social, individual, traditional, contemporary—in order to seek greater mutual understanding of such practices in terms of their underlying philosophical groundwork.

The work of the conference was divided into six one-week Topic-Sections:

1. "The Relation of Philosophical Theories to Practical Affairs."
2. "Natural Science and Technology in Relation to Cultural Institutions and Social Practice."
3. "Religion and Spiritual Values."
4. "Ethics and Social Practices."
5. "Legal, Political, and Economic Philosophy."
6. "Conspectus of Practical Implications for World Understanding and Co-operation."

Participating fully in the formal plenary sessions were forty-one Program Members representing Asia, the Near East, Europe, Australia, Canada, and the United States. Conference meetings were also attended by some fifty to sixty Non-Program Members, all specialists in philosophy, and by a number of special guests invited because of the possibility of their significant use of the work of the conference in their activities (governmental, military, educational, or otherwise) with the peoples of Asia.

In conjunction with the conference, six courses, taught by Program Members of the conference, were offered in the Summer Session of the University of Hawaii, and five Public Lectures were given by representatives of the several major areas under consideration. These courses were: "Introduction to Indian Philosophy," "Introduction to Chinese Philosophy," "Introduction to Buddhist Philosophy," "Comparative Ethics and Social Philosophy," "Comparative Legal and Political Philosophy," and "Comparative Philosophy of Religion." Public Lectures were given by Dr. N. Bammate, of UNESCO, "The Islamic Cultural Tradition and the West"; Dr. D. T. Suzuki,

Otani University, Emeritus, "Zen and Parapsychology"; Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Vice President of India, "The Present Crisis of Faith"; Dr. Hu Shih, Academia Sinica, "John Dewey in China"; and Dr. F. S. C. Northrop, Yale University, "Comparative Philosophy and World Law."

The major work of the conference consisted in the presentation and discussion of forty formal papers within the six Topic-Sections of the conference agenda. The essential substance of this Preliminary Report consists of relatively brief summaries of these papers prepared by their authors. The official—and comprehensive—report of the conference will be published as soon as possible by the University of Hawaii Press under the title "Philosophy and Culture—East and West." That volume will contain the full text of all the formal papers presented to the conference, the five Public Lectures given in conjunction with the conference, and certain other materials and information considered of interest to readers of such a volume.

In addition to the Program Members whose papers are summarized herein, the following were also Program Members but did not present formal papers to the conference: Professor A. K. Stout, University of Sydney, U Thittila, University of Rangoon, and Professors Harold E. McCarthy and Winfield E. Nagley, of the University of Hawaii. Dr. Hideki Yukawa, whose paper is summarized herein, could not attend the conference in person, but his paper was presented *in absentia* and discussed.*

*See p. 90 for complete list of program members and their institutional affiliations.