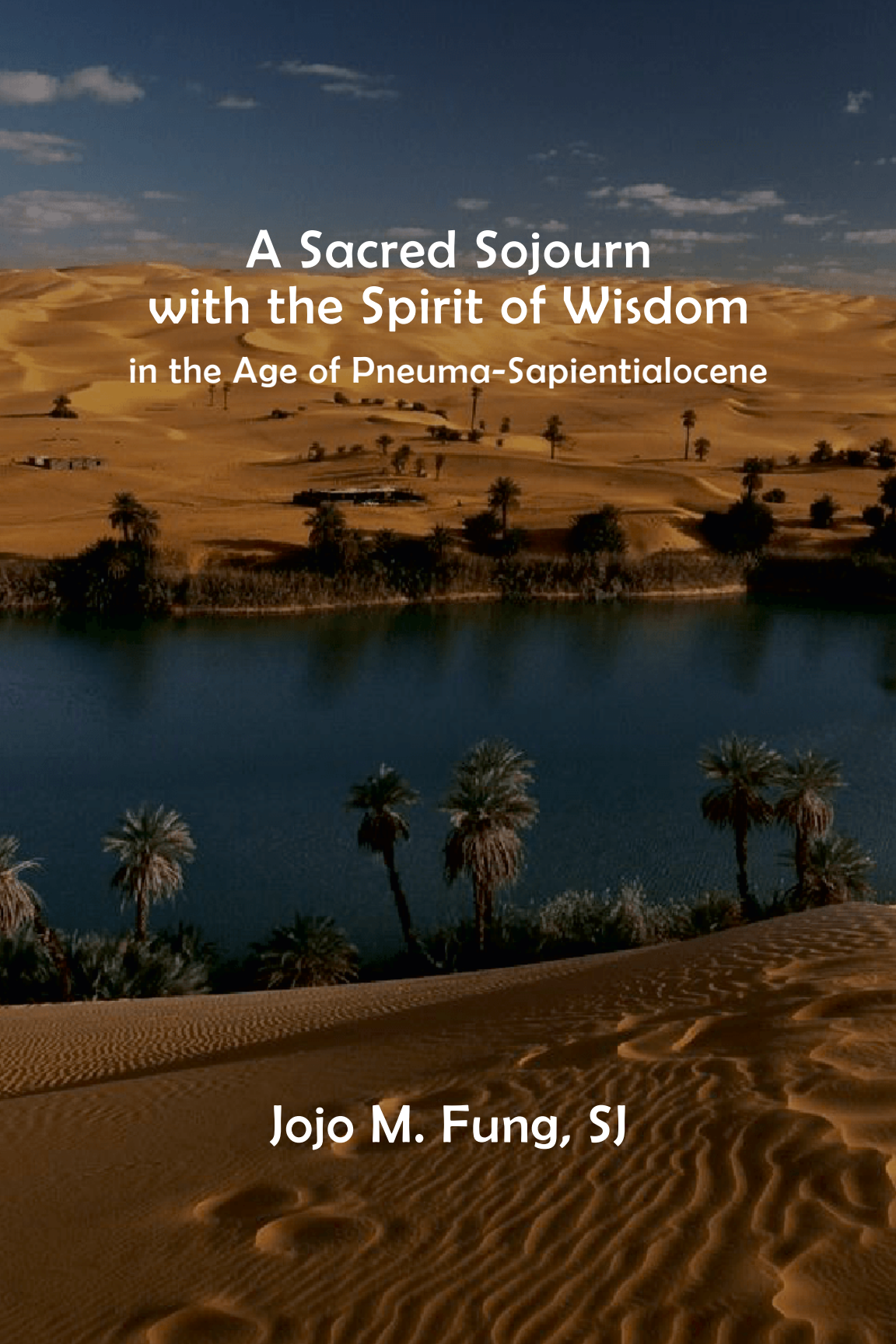


A Sacred Sojourn with the Spirit of Wisdom

in the Age of Pneuma-Sapientialocene

Jojo M. Fung, SJ

A Sacred Sojourn

with the Spirit of Wisdom

in the Age of Pneuma-Sapientialocene

A Sacred Sojourn

with the Spirit of Wisdom

in the Age of Pneuma-Sapientialocene

Jojo M. Fung, S.J.

with forewords by
Martin Palmer
Celia Deane-Drummond

ISPCK/LST 2023

A Sacred Sojourn with the Spirit of Wisdom in the Age of Pneuma-Sapientialocene - jointly published by the Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (ISPCK), Post Box 1585, Kashmere Gate, Delhi-110006 and Loyola School of Theology, Loyola Heights, 1108 Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines

Nihil Obstat: Jose Mario C. Francisco, S.J. (Censor Deputatis)
Imprimi Potest: Francis Lim Chin Choy, S.J. (Regional Superior of Malaysia-Singapore)

© Jojo M. Fung, 2023

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system, without the prior permission in writing from the publisher.

The views expressed in this book are those of the author and the publisher takes no responsibility for any of the statements therein.

To order online, visit http://ispck.org.in/book.php

Also available on amazon.in

ISBN: 978-81-958489-5-9

Laser typeset by the **Indian Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (ISPCK)**
Post Box 1585, 1654, Madarsa Road, Kashmere Gate, Delhi-110006
Tel: 23866323
E-mail: ashish@ispck.org.in • ella@ispck.org.in
Website: www.ispck.org.in
Printed at Saurabh Printers, NOIDA.

Contents

Dedication … vii

Acknowledgements … ix

Foreword … xiii

Introduction … 1

Chapter 1: Wisdom-Oasis of the *Longongon Murut* … 7

Chapter 2: Wisdom-Oasis of *Máoshān* Daoism … 35

Chapter 3: Wisdom-Oasis of the *Decaloris* … 69

Chapter 4: Wisdom *par excellence* of *Rûah Elohim* … 87

Chapter 5: Wisdom from the Oasis at the Margin … 113

Conclusion … 135

Epilogue: Oases as Sacred Springs of Wisdom … 143

Glossary … 147

Bibliography … 151

Index … 161



Mdm. Chong Su Jin

Date of Birth: December 12, 1934

Date of Passing: July 3, 1967

Dedication

This oeuvre is a heartfelt filial love-offering to my beloved mom, Mdm. Chong Su Jin, who would have been 88 had she been alive on 12 December 2022. She brought up her four sons according to how she herself lived—with interculturality.

In addition, this book is dedicated to all the wisdom figures defending the religiocultural wisdom of Borneo, the Congo Basin, and the Amazonian Basin: Garing Bin Muntalan, Master Lee, and Romo Sintus, and very specially to Davi Kopenawa, an author, philosopher, spiritual leader, linguist, educator, spokesperson, and, above all, reputable and renowned Yanomami shaman who was mentored in his shamanic journeying by his father-in-law, the community's "great man" (*pata t^{h}ë*) and a renowned shaman firmly rooted in Yanomami shamanism.

Davi was born in Marakana, a large communal house of approximately two hundred people living in the tropical forest foothills along the upper Rio Toototobi, in the far northeastern part of the Amazon state of Brazil near the Venezuelan border, a region that was, at the time, very remote from the world of white people.

I take great delight in having met Davi at Campion Hall on 6 February 2020, and I stand strong in spirit with him for being awarded the United Nations Environment Programme Global 500 prize in 1988 and the Right Livelihood Award (also known as the "Alternative Nobel Prize") in 2019.

Davi Kopenawa made me feel that we are kindred spirits. I felt him when he spoke about Omame, the Creator, and the Xapiripë, the spirits of mythological animal ancestors. I felt encouraged when I heard him say that there is a gathering of 15,000 shamans in communion with the Xapiripë not just in Latin America but also in the United States and on a mountain in Japan.

I stand with him in his words of wisdom:

> I would like white people to stop thinking that our forest is dead and [was] placed here without reason. I would like to make them listen to the voice of the xapiri who play here incessantly, dancing on their glittering mirrors. Meanwhile, in the silence of the forest, we shamans drink the powder of the yãkoana trees, which is the xapiri spirits' food. Then they take our image into the time of dream. This is why we can hear their songs and contemplate their presentation dances during our sleep. This is our school to really know things.[1]

I draw strength from his strong passion and resilience, and from the spirit of the Yanomami ancestral wisdom, to "feel strong" in my spirit and stand with all the reputable shamans of local indigenous communities in our global village. Let us pray that Omame, the Creator, and the Xapiripë spirits and their wisdom become part of the firm foundation of the era of "Pneumatolocene" & "Sapientialocene."

---

[1] Davi Kopenawa & Bruce Albert, *The Falling Sky: Words of a Yanomami Shaman*, trans. Nicholas Elliott & Alison Dundy (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013), 12, 31.

Acknowledgements

My sincere thanks to Antonio F. Moreno, S.J., the JCAP President, for securing a scholarship from the British Province of the Society of Jesus for my postdoctoral research as a Visiting Fellow at Campion Hall and Academic Visitor at the University of Oxford. My thanks also to Arthur Leger, S.J., to whom I first broached the idea of taking a break, and to Peter Pojol, S.J., the former director of EAPI, and Christopher Soh, the former Regional Superior, for their support of my sabbatical.

I also extend my gratitude to Damian Howard, S.J., the Provincial of the British Province, for his support of my Visiting Fellowship; to James Hanvey, S.J., the former Master of Campion Hall, for approving my application for a fellowship; to Frank Turner, S.J., the superior, and Nick Austin, S.J., the current Master, of Campion Hall; and to all the Campion community members: Alfonso, Henry Shea, Ian Tomlinson, Joe Simmons, Matt Dunch, Matthew Powers, Mark Rotsaert, Nick King, Pat Madigan, Pat Riordan, Philip Molle, Yervant Kutchukian, Wilin B. Arias, John Barton, Graham Ward, Gavin Flood, Philip Kennedy, O.P., Marten Bjork and Natasha, Lucida Armstrong, and especially Mark Aloysius, Vijay de Souza, Yoshida Suzuki, Peter and Jane Davidson, Kazutomo Karasawa, Minlib Dallh, O.P., and the staff—Alec, Kevin, Kia, Kim, Mark Goodlake, Sarah Gray, Trudi, and Wilma. My gratitude also goes out to Celia Deane-Drummond, Becky Artinian-Kaiser, Zhou Lan-Lan, Liew Jin San, and Séverine Deneulin

of the *Laudato Si'* Research Institute; to Oliver Putz of the Institute for Advanced Sustainability Studies; to Martin Palmer of Faith-Invest; to Pia and William Jolliffe and their three children; to Laura Rival and Bruce Albert who are friends of Davi and Dario Kopenawa; and, more so, to John and the homeless at the Rose Place, for their heartwarming companionship from 8 August 2019 to 26 August 2020.

My sincere thanks also to all my fellow Jesuits in Rome (Fratern Masawe, Jojo Magadia, Aloysius Mowe, Benedict Jung, and Danny Huang), Cambodia (Indon, Ingun and Edward Dass), East Timor (Venancio Periera), Indonesia (Benny Juliawan, Greg Soetomo, Priyo Poedjiono, and Budi Hartono), Japan (Cyril Veliath), MAS (Alberto, Colin, Charles, Paul Dass, Philip Heng, and Ravi Michael), Myanmar (Mark Raper, Pho Cho, Paul Tu Ja, and Pius Lin), the Philippines (Albert Alejo, Ambrosio Flores, Eric Eusebio, Nono Alfonso, Rogel Abais, and Pedro Walpole), Hong Kong (Marcelino Baptist, Philip Fung, Stephen Law, Stephen Wong, Joseph Wong, Paulini Zhai, Stephen Rothlin, and Emilio Zanetti), the Thai Regions (Pitoyo, David T., Paul P., Pipat, Tep, Tom M., Saichon K., Vinai and Vichai), and to all my dear ASEAN/Asian-Pacific friends (Airya, Charles Bertille, Bro. Anurak, Sr. Anura, Dicky Sofjan, Kihe, Pho Niphot, Larry, Lunchai, Ponchai, Tobo Yasi, Norma Gonos, Nadarajah, Pusedi, Rev. Boochuai, Singtong Sunthorn, Victor Karuna of RTRC-ASW, Archbishop Tony Ledesma, S.J., Edna Manlapaz, Kath Joy Sayam, Lanny Nanagas, Honeybee Hubahib, Ciel and Ruben Habito, Pauline Bautista, Nina Viluan, and Pinky Valdez of Sacred Springs: Dialogue Institute of Spirituality & Sustainability); to Ravi Tissera, Michael Mmadubueze, Kevin Ahern, Philip Ledouble, William Nokrek, Helen Grace Udtuhan, and Bertha Sampuno (IMCS AP); to Dr. Ana Maria Bidegan and Luis Maria Goicoechea of ICMICA, Pax Romana, and Luis Goikoetxhea of Pax Romana; to Felicia Dian Ravenska, Maryanne and Florence and Paul Hwang of ALL Forum; Angelica Suimin and Natividad DL T Delson (Footprints); to Karen Sta. Maria and mom, Jude and John Loh, and Puan Cecilia (Msia), to Audrey Ruyters and Rose Boon (Spore); to Bien Tran, Sinh Phan Huu, Paul Luong, and Moon MnPL (VN); to Alfredo and Grace Alejo

(PH); to Chayon R.P. and Martha M (BGD); to Bren Balingasa and the spirit of Pedro Arrupe (Rome); to fellow theologians and friends: Agnes Brazal, Aloysius Pieris, Bagus Laksana, Christina Kheng, Danny Pilario, Edmund Chia, Felix Wilfred, Gemma Cruz, Jonathan Tan, Mario Francisco, Michael Amaladoss, Peter Phan, Sharon Bong, Albert Alejo, Alfredo and Grace Alejo, Peter Pudato, Eric Eusebio, Rogel Abais, Rex Mananzan, and Oliver Dy; and to countless others who accompany me on this sacred sojourn and on the brown and green face of Mother Earth.

My heartfelt gratitude to the LST Administrative Council for approving the manuscript for a joint LST-ISPCK publication and request to have the E-Version for posting on the LST Publications website. Above all, sincere thanks to Jose Mario Francisco, S.J., and Mark Aloysius, S.J., for vetting through the manuscript to facilitate Regional Superior Francis Lim, S.J., to grant the *imprimi potest*, not to mention my appreciation of the thorough editorship of Josemaria Roberto Reyes.

A very special thanks to the Ruyters Family for their sponsorship of the ISPCK publication of this book. Additional thanks to Johnson Matthew, Kelvin Tan, Augustine Wong, and YB Teresa Kok for their sponsorship of the E-version of this book.

Above all, my heartfelt thanks to my family members far and near: Mdm. Chee Choon Moi, siblings and families of John Fung and Gertrude, James Fung and Sharon, Oliver Fung and Olivia, David Fung, Grace Fung, Hui and Daniel, Phyllis Fung and Nyun Fung, Gel, Ger, and BSSC.

Foreword

I don't think I know anyone else like Jojo. And it had been a long time since I found myself talking with someone who shared so many of my fascinations as a Christian deeply involved with Daoism, the world of the Hakka folk, the Taiping Rebellion, *Guan Ying*, and shamanism. To talk with Jojo is to travel the world like an immortal and be touched by angels' wings. You never know where the conversation will go, yet whatever path it takes is utterly fascinating, and challenging, too, and leaves you exhilarated as well as slightly exhausted.

For those of you who will read this extraordinary book, you are about to be swept along on a tremendous adventure. Here is a Catholic priest, a Jesuit in the finest tradition of Matteo Ricci and Ferdinand Verbiest, the pioneer Jesuits in China who came to embody all the best in both Catholic and Chinese culture. Here is a man who walks with the spirit of Teilhard de Chardin, the Jesuit who became one of the greatest of archaeologists and anthropologists as well as one of the most brilliant Cosmic Theologians, breaking barriers of mind and thought by offering us a vast vision of the meaning of God. Here is a Jesuit whose ancestor Hong Xiuquan, a failed Hakka Imperial scholar, converted to Protestant Christianity and, believing himself to be the Second Son of God, launched the bloodiest peasant revolt in history. I could go on. Jojo links so many worlds that it would take me pages to do justice to him, though I will add one more. He, like me, has a special devotion to the Chinese deity *Guan Ying*, a deity shaped by

Hinduism, Buddhism, Daoism, and Christianity. Like Jojo, someone who emerged from the interaction of so many cultures, *Guan Ying* is now the most popular goddess figure in China.

Perhaps Jojo's greatest gift is that he is a brilliant storyteller. As we journey with him into the villages of Sabah to meet with shamans and even rather fundamentalist Protestant pastors, or to visit Daoist temples in China and Malaysia, go on retreat with the Decaloris school of Catholics engaging with integrity and intensity with Indonesian mysticism and its deep roots in Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, and local traditions, or in his engagement with *Rûah Elohim* and his extraordinary encounter with the homeless in Oxford, he asks us to see a totally new world—a world filled with the Spirit, hence the title of this book.

Jojo takes us on a cosmic quest, drawing inspiration as well as, at times, frustration, making mistakes (his first interview with a spiritual leader in Sabah, for example), and putting side-by-side things that most would see as utterly foreign or even hostile to each other.

This is a book of journeys that are of this world and beyond this world. This is the quest of a sojourner seeking to understand where the springs of wisdom now lie, and taking us gently, often humorously, by the hand, he takes us with him on his quest.

For many, this will be an uncomfortable journey because Jojo has no fear of difference, and he questions to its very essence what Catholic spirituality should be about.

Jojo also has a marvellous gift for discovering unique people, whether they be a Daoist master on a mountain, a shaman in the forest, or a homeless person outside Tesco in England. For him, the whole world shows the Glory of God, and the God he shows us bursts all our preconceptions.

I urge you all to read this book and to drink from the oases of wisdom that Jojo will take you to. And then set out on your own journey because by the time you finish, the small god most of us

think we know will be long gone and the adventure of traveling with the Cosmic God will have begun.

Safe travels—this is not the phrase to end this with. Exciting travels is.

Dr. Martin Palmer
Faith-Invest & Former Secretary-General,
Alliance of Religions and Conservation (U.K.)

This book is a remarkable and creative testimony of the life of the Spirit as experienced through time, in a biographical account of an Asian sojourner's journeying. The author welcomes rather than avoids syncretic and hybrid notions of that life of the Spirit on the basis that these can never be avoided. It is a narrative not just about how the author has sought to come to terms with his Chinese identity from the perspective of a Jesuit priest but also how, with openness to learning from others living and embedded in different indigenous religious traditions, he has sought to understand and fully identify with them, even passing through numerous ritualistic and initiating practices to achieve status as a teacher and shaman.

Parts of this book read more like a written diary of encounters—logged as carefully and meticulously as any sojourner anthropologist might do. In doing so, the reader is caught up in a movement with and in the different practices described, opening up new horizons that can seem both strange but also deeply illuminating. It is among the poorest indigenous communities and those living within the margins of wealthier societies that the true Spirit world is understood.

Graphic descriptions of encounters with those who are dead also lead into other descriptions of deep mystical experiences of a more traditional Christian stripe, such as with the Trinity and Jesus Christ as well as the Virgin Mary. These Christian mystical encounters feature and have some authority in this account. But tracing the action of the

Spirit to a cosmic dimension also draws in the breadth and powerful insights of pioneers such as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, who was also a Jesuit priest heavily influenced by his experiences in China.

Above all, it is an account of profound respect for those living and dead whom Jojo has encountered across many years of travel and searching. It is also a demonstration of where openness to that encounter and a perceived movement of the Spirit takes a sincere believer and practicing Jesuit priest. This grounded sense of the Spirit dwelling in all beings and the cosmos brings an "animist flavour" to traditional Christian notions of the meaning of the Spirit in creation.

Jojo honours those whom he has encountered in this way as gurus in his journey, each adding to greater illumination for him and therefore for others as readers who travel along with him. And, in common with his other teachers, they are ones who live necessarily close to the earth.

Overall, this book is one that deserves to be widely read and appreciated.

Dr. Celia Deane-Drummond
Ph.D. in Plant Physiology & Ph.D. in Theology

Senior Research Fellow in Theology
Director,* Laudato Si' *Research Institute
(Campion Hall, Oxford, U.K.)

Visiting Professor in Theology & Science
(CCS, Durham University, U.K.)

Introduction

Life is a sacred pilgrimage in the perennial age of "Pneumatolocene" for an Asian sojourner like myself, one who began his formation in spirituality and theology in religious houses and theological schools in Asia and the Global North which was punctuated by periodical immersions in marginal communities. Upon my return to Asia, I found myself immersed in the religiocultural oases of wisdom at the margins, increasingly realizing that an *ecclesia discens* (learning Church) has to drink of the wisdom from the plural oases of indigenous peoples, of popular Daoism and *Kejawèn* or Javanism in Asia, and also of the cosmos, the homeless, and the natural world in the vicinity of the University of Oxford, U.K.[1]

These oases become the sacred grounds where, Aloysius Pieris opines, I "sit at the feet of Asian gurus not as an *ecclesia docens* (a teaching Church) but as an *ecclesia discens* (a learning Church), lost among the 'religious poor' of Asia, among the *anawim* who go to their

[1] "Pneumatolocene" is a perennial age of the active presence of *Rûah Elohim* in creation, Mother Earth, and the marginal communities. In this book, the terms "oases" and "schools" or "schola" are used interchangeably; I prefer the lush image of oases with their rich biodiversity and species that sustain the lives of humankind and other kinds. The term "school" or "schola" denotes the guru-disciple relationship more than it does the physical building.

gurus in search of the kingdom of holiness, justice, and peace."[2] In this way, the learning Church will be better disposed to understand the *telos* of mission in Asia by discerning and collaborating with the indwelling presence of the Triune God whose *Rûah* is already active in the midst of the poor and in various ecological crises, who is alive in the plural histories, cultures, and communities of believers of the primal and world religions of Asia.

This sacred pilgrimage in Asia foregrounds invaluable resources of the local epistemologies of indigenous, Daoist, and Javanese religiocultural communities while, at the same time, emphasizing the value of local knowledge at the interstices and margins of society in the Global North. Above all, this pilgrimage alerts many to a pneumatic mystagogy that disposes sojourners to be encountered by *Rûah Elohim* and thus become transformed as respons-*able* subjects. This pneumatic mystagogy is grounded in a creational pneumatology where God's creative *Rûah* is everywhere in creation, in every God particle and stardust in the universe, and which is corporealized in the matter that constitutes Earth, our common planetary home. In other words, God's creative *Rûah* is in all persons, all faiths, all spiritualities, all things, and all created life-forms.

This pneumatic mystagogy encourages sojourners to imbibe the spiritual wisdom of the plural religocultural traditions outside of Christianity. It calls for periodic immersion in their villages to imbibe their embodied and lived spiritualities, prioritizes "concrete, embodied experiences" as sources "charged with spiritual meaning"[3] for doing contextual theological reflection, pays avid attention "to the theological significance of creativity, narrative and practice" outside of academia, and encourages sojourners to be always "open to the ever new reality of God's Godself" revealed through the theophanic moments at the

---

[2] Aloysius Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretians, 1988); Aloysius Pieris, *God's Reign for God's Poor: A Return to the Jesus Formula* (Kelaniya, Sri Lanka: Tulana Research Centre, 1999), 47.

[3] Francis, *Querida Amazonia*, §79.

frontiers/margins of society.[4] The plural context-specific experiences are then critically reflected upon in a discerning process of theological reflection in light of this corpus of knowledge. The entire process aims to generate emerging perspectives that will contribute to the Church's theology of the pluralism of religions.

This crucial process of critical reflection takes to heart the need to decolonize learning from what Aníbal Quijano identified as the "coloniality of knowledge."[5] This decolonization has to be done through the "constant double movement of unveiling the geo-political location of theology, secular philosophy and scientific reason [while] simultaneously affirming the modes and principles of knowledge that have been denied by the rhetoric of Christianization, civilization, progress, development, and market democracy" as advocated by Walter D. Mignolo.[6] At the same time, this theological reflection, which is borne out of lived experiences, aims to make a conscious epistemic shift away from what Daniel P. Horan debunked as the "unacknowledged privilege" and "ethnocentric universality" that further occlude the existence of the subaltern through the oppressive systems of marginalization, silencing, and erasure.[7] Moreover, this epistemic shift consciously foregrounds local wisdom and indigenous spiritualities as (re)sources that *Querida Amazonia* recognizes as "charged with spiritual meaning" and which "can [be] used to advantage and [are]

---

[4] Stefanie Knauss & Carlos Mendoza-Alvarez, "Queer Theology and Theologies," in *Queer Theologies: Becoming the Queer Body of Christ*, eds. Stefanie Knauss & Carlos Mendoza-Alvarez (London: SCM Press, 2019), 7–10, here cited at 8.

[5] Walter D. Mignolo, "Delinking: The Rhetoric of Modernity, the Logic of Coloniality and the Grammar of De-Coloniality," *Cultural Studies* 21:2–3 (2007): 449–514; also see Aníbal Quijano, "Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America," *International Sociology* 15:2 (2000): 215–232.

[6] Mignolo, "Delinking: The Rhetoric of Modernity," 463.

[7] Daniel P. Horan, "Deconstructing Anthropocentric Privilege: *Imago Dei* and Nonhuman Agency," *The Heythrop Journal* 60:4 (2019): 560–570, here cited at 565. See also Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Feminist Review* 30:1 (1988): 66.

not always considered a pagan error" in constituting the hybridized identity of inter-religiocultural sojourners.[8]

The specific contexts of these sacred pilgrimages are known as oases or schools (*schola*). Each oasis represents the diverse autobiographical human experiences of an "embodied stardust" expressed in the form of a spiritual diary akin to that of St. John XXIII's *Journal of a Soul*.[9] The entries lay bare a sojourner's soul which learns to behold mystagogically and with deep reverence contrastive religious-theological dissonances (rather than validate their orthodoxy using an asymmetrical eurocentric/western Christian lens and taxonomy for "arrogant dismissal and erasure") while gratefully savoring affective resonances in these multilayered experiences, even experiencing a "mystical upliftment" of *Rûah Elohim* within the decolonial inner space of "epistemic contrasts." The first chapter describes the experiences of imbibing the indigenous wisdom found in the epistemically-rich indigenous pneumatology of the Longongon Murut. This initiatory experience of the spirit world entails the crossing of an intercultural-religious boundary or threshold within the shamanic tradition of the Longongon Murut of the southern interior of Sabah, East Malaysia, under a reputable shaman, Garing Bin Muntalan.

The "immersional" experience in the first oasis then cascades into the second oasis of *Máoshān* Daoism, which dates back to the sacred *Máoshān* mountain in the Jurong County of Jiangzu Province, located approximately 75 kilometers southeast of Nanking City in China. This oasis is rich in the Daoist ancestral theology of the *Máoshān*. The wisdom of *Máoshān* Daoism is learned through a sacred journey of many stages, one marked by rituals presided over by Master Lee and with the accompaniment of Ah Nam, a disciple-brother in the religiocultural tradition of *Máoshān* Daoism. This is dealt with in chapter two.

---

[8] Francis, *Querida Amazonia*, §79; cf. §78.

[9] See "Excerpts from the Journal of a Soul," https://www.papagiovanni.com/sito/images/pensiero/journal_of_a_soul/excerpts.pdf.

The sacred pilgrimage continued with the imbibing of wisdom at the Decaloris oasis which has a Trinitarian theology grounded in a traditional religiocultural tradition known popularly as *Kejawèn* or Javanism in Indonesia. Mentored by Romo Sintus, a Claretian priest from West Papua, this sacred pilgrimage culminated in initiatory rituals that will be explained in chapter three.

The sacred pilgrimage in these three Asian oases cascades further into an oasis *par excellence* of cosmic wisdom under the mentorship of *Rûah Elohim* who intimates this sojourner into the deeper communion with the Divine *all*ness as well as God Particles, strings, and neutrinos in the cosmos. This will be discussed in the fourth chapter.

The final chapter describes a sacred pilgrimage that enables this sojourner to imbibe the wisdom of the homeless through conversation and the sharing of food at the margin of society, all in the midst of the natural world of Oxford.

In savoring the sources of these religiocultural oases, there is a deepened awareness that this Asian sojourner is accompanied and mentored by *Rûah Elohim* while on this sacred pilgrimage. This accompaniment involves a discerning process of attentive listening, affectively deciphering the promptings of *Rûah Elohim* in the different oases/schools of wisdom.

This sacred pilgrimage begins with the first oasis where the wisdom of the Longongan Murut is learned under the canopy of the green equatorial forest of the southwestern interior of Sabah, in the northern part of Borneo Island.

Chapter 1

Wisdom-Oasis of the *Longongon Murut*

The Murut communities are located in the southwest interior of Sabah, East Malaysia, specifically in the districts of Keningau, Tenom, Nabawan, and Beaufort along the Sapulut and Padas rivers. They can also be found in Lawas and Limbang, at the border of Sarawak and along the Tagal river, from Labang to Masalong in North Kalimantan, Indonesia, and in Brunei on Borneo Island.[1] More appropriately, the term "Murut" means dwellers in the forest. The Murut population in Sabah is divided between lowland (Timugon) and highland (Tagol/Tagal) subgroups who are the Tagal, Tidung, Timugon, Sembakung, Paluan, Bookan, Kalabakan, and Serundung, and they number around 135,000.[2] They speak the Murutic languages, a branch of the Austronesian family.

---

[1] Abd Hakim Mohad, "Spiritual Journey of Murut Tahol in Sabah and Its Effect to Their Headhunting Practice," *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity* 4:6 (2014): 426–429, available at http://www.ijssh.org/papers/392-H00009.pdf (accessed 4 May 2020).

[2] "Tagal Murut in Malaysia," Joshua Project, https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/15174/MY (accessed 4 May 2020).

Shamanic Traditions of the Muruts

The Muruts enjoy a shamanic legacy of beliefs in *Aki Kaulung* as the spirit-power of their lives. *Aki* refers to grandfather, the source of existence, while *Kaulung* means the largest or greatest. *Aki Kaulung* originates from the cosmos and brings forth the land, sea, hills, mountains, rivers, plants, animals, and human beings. All these things have their own spirits known as *aru*, and these *aru* influence people's lives. The presence of *aru* enables the Muruts to live the moral imperative that nature and animals must be respected. To ridicule and disrespect them always incurs relational rupture that requires reconciliation while to honor and respect them brings blessings and rewards.

In line with their beliefs, the Muruts observe a custom known as *amupuk* whenever they sail past or are underneath some boulders along the river.[3] Water from the river is sprinkled on the heads of those who are making their first trip to the sacred sites, particularly young kids, as they sail upstream. It is a sign of respect paid to the spirits or *aru*. At the same time, it is customary to utter a few words when they pass the boulders, asking to be excused or offering an apology for the use of the passage. During such times, no one is allowed to shout, bang the boat, or swim in the river out of deference for the *aru* of the boulders. The Muruts relate to the spirit-world through taboo, divination, ritual, and magic. The taboos governing their everyday life are communicated to them via dreams, and the omens and divinations enable them to avoid coming into conflict with the supernatural spirits. They also placate these spirits through individual and group rituals.[4]

The Muruts in the Longongon district use the term *lumaagon* to denote their shamanism, and ensuing practices that entail the use of incantations, knives, and lemons known as *sasambui* are commonplace.

---

[3] Jojo M. Fung, "The Legendary Batu Punggul," *Sabah Society Journal* 15 (1998): 70.

[4] Jojo M. Fung, "Sacred Encounter of the Living Spirit: Narratives and Living Faith in *Rûah Elohim*," *Asian Horizons* 13:4 (2019): 655–667.

The Murut *lumaagon* gains its legitimacy from the shamanic power of three giants of bygone years—Ontoros, Korom, and Garing.[5]

Ontoros. According to Garing bin Muntalan, the last of the reputable trio, Ontoros was born in a village called Ulu Siliran. Garing, who admitted that he had not met Ontoros in person, remarked, "Many people went to the caves to see his remains but they were afraid that their feet would be swollen. I went to see the caves but I did not suffer any pain."[6] Garing also remarked that he had heard the stories about Ontoros from two of his women ancestors, Sibal and Liguran, who came to stay with him for a month in his village known as Bantul. Both of them have since died.[7]

As narrated by granny Sibal, Ontoros was a representative of the village of Ulu Siliran. The villagers had great hope in his shamanic knowledge and power. However, Ontoros was relying on his *jinx*, which did not help him because of his rebellion against the government. He wanted to rebel but the villagers ran away. Yet when the police fired at him, four bullets morphed into air and rain. The bullet came out of the gun, travelled upwards, and exploded in the air.

Ontoros also smoked a pipe, called *tung* in Murut, and placed all his hopes in it because he had no guns. He hoped that his enemies in the direction in which he blew the smoke of his pipe would die. Ontoros fought against the *Orang Putih* (a term in Malay which literally means white person, although used in this context to refer to the British soldiers), half of whom perished. When the *Orang Putih* saw

---

[5] Elap Garing clarified that among the Murut at the border of Kalimantan (the largest landmass of the island of Borneo that belongs to Indonesia) and Sabah (the erstwhile British North Borneo which joined Malaysia), the term *lumagon*, which denotes shamanic practices, is pronounced as *lumaagon*, as per our conversation in his village called Bantul on Thursday, 15 April 1999.

[6] Based on a personal interview with Garing bin Muntalan in the longhouse of the Bantul village on 15 April 1999. His son, Elap, acted as my translator from Murut to Malay.

[7] Both Murut women have personal knowledge of Ontoros.

that they could not overpower him, they hoisted a flag to signify their surrender and admitted that they failed in their attempt to capture him. Ontoros had won the battle, and the *Orang Putih* called out to him and asked him for his pardon.

However, it was a ploy to capture him. The *Orang Putih* called on Ontoros to leave his pipe in the cave and come out, promising him that he would be conferred an honorary title. Ontoros came out of the cave with the intention of granting pardon to the *Orang Putih*, who had the police lined up and standing on guard. He came out of the cave without his pipe, met with the *Orang Putih*, and shook hands with all of them.

According to Garing, Ontoros wanted to kill the *Orang Putih*, but they surrounded Ontoros and tied his hands securely with wire. Ontoros questioned them, "Why did you tie me up?" The *Orang Putih* replied to him, "We want you to free yourself so that you can earn your honorary title." Ontoros retorted, "You want to kill me. But I am still alive. This is my pouch. Open it." When they did, it immediately turned into silvery tin. The *Orang Putih* then fired at him but the bullets did not kill him. Ontoros then rejoined, "I will only die if you give me a pistol and I shoot myself. Then I will die." Then Ontoros requested for a golden bullet which could kill a person like him who had shamanic power. Yet when he fired the pistol into his ear, the bullet came out the other ear. Ontoros aimed the pistol at his mouth, and the bullet came out through his anus.

Ontoros asked the police to bring him from Kapayan near Kota Kinabalu to his village. They agreed and brought him home, although upon reaching his village, Ontoros immediately disappeared into his cave and was nowhere to be found since. Antanum, another Murut hero, searched for him in Kemabong but his grave had disappeared.[8]

---

[8] Antanum was a famous and influential Murut legendary warrior from Sabah. According to local oral traditions, he claimed to have shamanic powers. Antanum gained the popular support of the chiefs and villagers from around Keningau, Tenom, Pensiangan, and Rundum when he staged the Rundum uprising against the British

Many people also feared to visit the cave where he holed up during the rebellion for fear of being inflicted with swollen feet or death. In honor of Ontoros, it is prohibited to cut a tree found beside the cave.

Korom bin Andoat. Korom, as he is fondly remembered, was born in the village of Kakatur in Sumatalon. Samuji recounted that Korom was named as such because his eyes did not open for a week after he was born. He was a person blessed with power—even the cobra that came to suck his blood ran away.[9] When Korom was one and a half months old, his parents offered him to Andua for adoption for a token gift of 5 MYR (approx. 0.93 GBP or 1.17 USD). His deceased wife's name was Angalas, and his only daughter, who now resides in the village of Sibuah, is named Hita binte Korom. Garing remarked that Korom's parents were Chinese with mixed parentage (or *beranakan cina* in Malay).[10] He was a decorated hero and a shamanic personage with enormous power.[11] Tall and resembling a European, he had the ability to cause fatal injuries with a single blow.

The British recommended that Korom join the police, and he was sent to be trained in London. When the war with the Japanese was over, Korom's father requested that he return. Korom was with the police for twenty-two years, from 1937–1959. He was stationed at Batu Tiga, Kapayan, and became a Lance Corporal. Korom also killed many *Orang Putih* in Sandakan and KK.[12]

North Borneo Company. He met his fate in the battle with the company army in Sungai Selangit village near the interior town of Pensiangan.

[9] Based on my conversation with Mr. Samuji bin Lumbis, in the town of Pakalungan, on Thursday, 11 March 1999.

[10] *Beranakan Cina* is a term in Malay that denotes a person of mixed parentage where one parent is Chinese and the other is not.

[11] Based on a personal interview with Garing bin Muntalan in the longhouse of the Bantul village on 15 April 1999.

[12] Based on my conversation with Mr. Samuji bin Lumbis, in the town of Pakalungan, on Thursday, 11 March 1999.

Not too long after being stationed at Batu Tiga, Korom asked for a transfer to Ranau after having a dream in which he was instructed to climb Mt. Kinabalu.[13] He began his ascent at 6:00 AM and reached his destination by 4:00 PM. After he went to sleep at a spot with two bamboo trees, a woman appeared to him in his dream and said, "Marry me and I will assist you in whatever difficulties you encountered." Later that night, the woman pointed out to him a place up in the mountain where he could locate water, saying to him, "Your body is too hot."[14]

The woman took care of him. As the rain poured and the wind blew, the only area that was not drenched was where Korom was bathing. After he married the woman, he did not eat for two weeks and yet did not feel hungry. At night, as instructed by his wife, Korom bathed in the stream at the bottom of Mt. Kinabalu, where he witnessed a flowering plant blossoming out of the rocky ground. While at first Korom received knowledge that was about destroying human life, the woman made it known to him that she would offer him additional knowledge with the bathing.

Upon completing his initiation, he was sent to London to take part in a boxing match where his punches damaged his opponent's jawbone. Then he returned to Kota Kinabalu, the state capital of Sabah, and was stationed at nearby Kapayan. Although Korom was put to the test during the time of the British, the amulets he wore gave him immense power. He was tied up, put in a sack, and thrown into the middle of the sea, only to be seen later on enjoying a drink in a coffee shop. During the Japanese occupation, when he was chopped up and burned in a fire, he turned into a piece of wood.[15] Korom was

---

[13] Ranau is a town located 108 km (67 miles) east of Kota Kinabalu, the state capital of Sabah, East Malaysia. As of the 2010 census, the population of the district was 94,092 and made up of an almost entirely Dusun ethnic community.

[14] Based on a personal interview with Garing bin Muntalan in the longhouse of the Bantul village on 15 April 1999.

[15] Based on my conversation with Elap Garing in the town of Pakalungan on 12 March 1999.

known for the power in his knife (*parang* in Malay) which had great supernatural power—it was short while in the sheath but elongated each time it was drawn. He had used his *parang* to kill three to four Japanese soldiers. During hunting trips, Korom would put his head to the ground and be able to hear the sound of the wild boar searching for food in the muddy holes, although he would forego the hunt willingly whenever someone else hunted a wild boar he had already traced. The poison he drank and the broken glass he swallowed were neutralized. He could break out, to the bewilderment of all, whenever he was locked behind bars in a prison cell. However, when he became a Muslim, he abandoned his shamanic beliefs and practices—for him, the shamanic rituals could cause death because these were "too hot" in the sense that these were deemed harmful to him.

Garing shared about his conversation with Korom on whether or not the latter would eat pork. Garing said to Korom, "I do not believe that you do not eat pork." In response, Korom enacted a magical performance before Garing: he wrapped a bowl with a cloth and then removed it; what appeared was a bowl with pork as well as another bowl with fish. Then Korom answered Garing, "What I can eat is fish, not pork." Garing then chided Korom for becoming a Muslim and betraying his Murut identity that was so intertwined with the dietary habit of eating pork. Taking a matchstick that was as dry as a twig beside the bowl of pork, Korom struck it, lit it up, and then explained, "This is the witness that if I eat pork, my heart would wither like the match-fire."[16]

Korom then came home to Pakalungan from Pensiangan.[17] With fraternal admonition, Garing urged him, "You better not display/exhibit your power unnecessarily." Garing knew that there would be people who would test his power and offer substances that would

---

[16] Based on a personal interview with Garing bin Muntalan in the longhouse of the Bantul village on 15 April 1999.

[17] Pensiangan is the most remote town in the interior and is 275 km (171 miles) from Kota Kinabalu, the state capital of Sabah.

kill him. Korom retorted, "I have survived all trials. I will not die." Garing added, "People would put in substances that would kill you. Please remember. If you accidentally consume substances connected with the black magic that is not associated with the power that exudes from your *parang*, you will die." Korom remarked, "Do not remind me about that. I have a good grasp of what you wanted to convey to me." Garing countered, "It is not that I do not have my own concerns. I tell you this because I pity you. We are like friends." Korom bragged, "Wherever I consume the charm, I will not die." Garing rejoined, "If that is true that you will not die, then please go on your way." Korom left Garing and then met someone who invited him for a drink but whose name he did not know. They began drinking hard liquor at first, in an attempt to make Korom drunk. Then this stranger poured Korom some coffee into which he had mixed a fatal substance and invited Korom to drink it.

The stranger then left Korom and died when he reached his house. For four days afterward, Korom was sick but conscious. After that, he lost weight and became very skinny because the charm was stuck to his heart and stomach. He was sick for a year in Pakalungan. Then Korom came to see Garing in a place called Baal Bandila, near the Sabah border where the cave was. When he reached Garing's house, Korom said, "I want to stay the night with you. I am going to die soon." Garing took pity on Korom, "That is why I forewarned you but you never listened." Korom replied to Garing, "What you said is true. What can I do now?"[18]

Korom stayed with Garing for two nights. Then he requested Garing to bring him to Sumatalong. His last request was that no one should weep over his death. He also requested Garing to stay away, which the latter did. However, halfway through on the journey, Korom passed away before reaching the place called Takutar in Seligu. The post of the house broke before his last breath.

---

[18] Based on a personal interview with Garing bin Muntalan in the longhouse of the Bantul village on 15 April 1999.

Korom's people brought his corpse, which immediately turned black, back on a boat to Sumatalong. His brothers could not refrain from weeping; the women, too, wept as they mourned his death. Garing came back to see the corpse, and over the next two days they built Korom a coffin. During the wake, police from Pensiangan—Daud, who was a Sergeant, along with William and Joseph—arrived. Then Garing telephoned the *Orang Putih*, who also came and asked that the coffin be opened so they could pay their last respects. They, too, wept, and contributed MYR 50.00 (approx. 9.36 GBP or 11.69 USD) for the expenses incurred. A European priest prayed and blessed Korom's remains, and then his tomb was built afterwards.

Six months later, the *Orang Putih* asked to open the coffin. The corpse was found not to be corrupt. Coffee still dripped from its mouth. The cloth buried with it was still white, intact with Korom's whistle and red stripes.

Garing recounted that visitors who paid their respects at the grave found their feet swollen. The exception to this was Garing himself and six *Orang Putih*, and the villagers respected them. Then Garing attended the ceremony called *buka pantang* to remove the taboos related to Korom's death; this helped prevent their feet from getting swollen. But a visitor by the name of Antuki visited the grave and found that his feet had became swollen. He swore that he would not want to visit Korom's grave again. All throughout, however, Garing did acknowledge that he was not sure where Korom's grave really was since a tractor had bulldozed the area.[19]

Garing bin Muntalan. Garing was born in a village called Sibuah, in the district of Sumatalong. His father's name was Muntalan bin Kalanong and his mother's name was Apoi. At the age of fourteen, he married his first wife by the name of Kantul bte Matob, of Sumontibal, Kalimantan, Indonesia. Garing divorced Kantul who then married Angasak, father of Sagitun, his stepson who became the village head

[19] Based on a personal interview with Garing bin Muntalan in the longhouse of the Bantul village on 15 April 1999.

of Bantul. Angasak and Kantul bore six children: the first son was Sitangah, the second, Kemuri, the third, Sagitun, the fourth, Pulutan, the fifth, Besikin, and the sixth, Basima. Then Garing married his second wife by the name of Girau bte Munkian, from the village of Ginokot. However, she died and they had no children. Then Garing married his third wife by the name of Darling bte Agitung, from the village of Tugulon, Kalimantan, Indonesia. Darling was the ghost who threw stones on the roof one night.[20] It was Darling's second marriage and Garing's third; they, too, had no children. Then Garing remarried his first wife, Kantul, and this time they had five offspring. The first son was Elap, the second was a daughter by the name of Bonong, the third, a son called Puin, and the fourth was Mentakag, who passed away. His name was given to him after Garing was bitten by a cobra and sent to the hospital in Keningau, where Kantul, who accompanied Garing, gave birth. The fifth was a son named William who died of stomach sickness when he was only four years old. In total, Garing was married five times and had ten children.

He joined the Border Scouts when he was 34 years old and was with them for 45 years (from 1923–1967). He was with the Golkar soldiers for three years, living in Sapulut, Pensiangan, and Keningau, and has flown with them on aeroplanes and helicopters. When I asked him about how many people he had already killed, he replied, "When we were with the Golkar soldiers, they shot at me, I have to shoot back; as many as fifty died." During the infamous confrontation (*konfrontasi* in Malay) between Indonesia and Malaysia in Sumalumun, Sumintobol, as many as one thousand soldiers died exchanging gunfire with 20–50 Golkar soldiers who themseves suffered no casualties. Among those who were shot and wounded was the fostered son of Likinun, a Murut from the village of Saririrang.

[20] The incident took place on the night of 14 April 1999.

During the war between Indonesia and Malaysia known as the "confrontation,"[21] Garing acted as the border scout who guided Golkar soldiers to the battle fronts where they often engaged in fierce exchanges of gunfire. Part of his responsibility as a border scout was to do reconnaissance by climbing trees and taking photographs of enemies' whereabouts. In one incident, the Golkar soldiers requested Garing to remove some branches while he was scouting atop a tree so that his camera could get a clearer view. But the branches he stepped on broke and he descended in a hurry. The Indonesian soldiers heard the branches snap and fired upon him. They shot off all the branches and fired mortars as well. All the Golkar soldiers below the tree fled. They all thought Garing was killed, but he escaped unscathed. They returned to their base in Pensiangan, reported to the officer in charge, and a helicopter airlifted them to Rundum where they were honored with a feast of pork and rum.

The officer in charge discussed retaliatory measures with Garing, who replied, "If you ask me to take revenge, I will. But if you ask me not to, I will not." Impressed, the officer ordered him to pick his team. Garing picked eight hundred Golkar soldiers to join him; a hundred of them stayed at Mount (*gunung* in Malay) Landos, near the Bantul village, while seven hundred were stationed on top of the mountain called Gunung Tagugon in Kinokot. They had to bring their own ammunition; Garing himself was using a gun known as a Bruning. By 4:00 PM, the troops reached the site where Garing was shot at. There, two corporals and one sergeant holed up in a tunnel with Garing. At 5:00 PM, Garing and his team telephoned the battalions at the Landos and Tagugon hilltops and told them to get ready for battle, alerting the troops that shooting would commence at 5:30 PM and last until 4:00 AM the next day.

---

[21] The "Confrontation" or *Konfrontasi*, which began in 1963 and ended in 1966, was Indonesia's response to the formation of the Federation of Malaysia which was occasioned by the British decolonization process in Southeast Asia. *Konfrontasi* involved armed incursions, bomb attacks, and other subversive acts aimed at destabilizing the states of Singapore, Malaya, Sarawak, Brunei, and Sabah when these formed the Federation of Malaysia.

During the shootout, enemies blasted the tunnel Garing was in and wounded one of his companions. Garing was ordered to check out the enemy's whereabouts. He was instructed to shoot his gun four times in the air to signal if enemies were in the vicinity, with the battalions assuring Garing that the Golkar soldiers would retaliate if the enemy fired upon him. But no untoward incident occurred. Garing went down the river and saw no enemy troops—their boats had already left before another shootout could occur. The eight hundred-strong battalion, with Garing leading them as ordered by their officer, returned to the pick-up point where planes arrived and airlifted them back to base.

Living Narratives about Garing. On a boat trip from the village of Salung to the remote town of Pensiangan, Bawon shared with me that Garing had power from the water-spirits who would come to him whenever he summoned them.[22]

Garing's own son Elap narrated that his father was about 80 years old based on his identification card issued in 1966. Garing had an older brother by the name of Lintim bin Muntalan who was single and who died after swimming across a river. Elap surmised that Lintim suffered an affliction from the spirit of the river because he suddenly died when he reached his home after the swim.

Elap admitted that the shamanic practice of his father was lifegiving because it was for the purpose of self-protection, for bringing healing unto others.[23] Elap remarked that his father received the shamanic power when he was fourteen years old and that it came to him through dreams. He also heard that Garing went to be alone in a cave for ten days and, according to other accounts, that he could turn into a wild boar when he was a young border scout and even transformed himself

---

[22] The boat ride from Salung to Pensiangan, which took 3 hours (4:00–7:00PM), was on Wednesday, 3 February 1999.

[23] Elap differentiates between *lumaagon* (Murut shamanic practices) that are good (*bagus* in Malay) or lifegiving and those that are death-dealing (*jahat* in Malay) which are aimed at inflicting sickness and death. Conversation with Elap Garing in Pakalungan on Friday, 12 March 1999.

into a pig and swam across the river. Elap said his father would never beat his children because doing so would inflict severe injury or even kill them.

Simpanan, from the Murut village of Selungai, narrated his personal experience of being apprenticed by Garing. In one instance, he saw Garing's whole body turn dazzling white before suddenly disappearing from sight. During the bathing ritual, Simpanan explained that "eggs were broken and the egg whites turned into lather, flowing from upstream to downstream and washing over us." Simpanan added, "Garing instructed me to bathe without using soap; that the left hand must tap the right side of the heart seven times and, likewise, the right hand tap the right side of the heart seven times." In another instance, Garing told Simpanan and his companions to lift up a boulder in the river. After a few of them failed to do so, Garing came to the rock and lifted it up as if it were made of cotton. Then Garing insisted that they bathe again in the water of a stream. Simpanan added, "We went up the stream. Suddenly there was a big flood. Some of us shouted. Others stood their ground. When they went home, they got sick. I realized that it was not so much a flood as a snake swimming downstream." Simpanan described the place as suitable for meditation and forecasting what is to come. It was the same place where Garing could disappear from sight by entering a small hole.[24]

Journey Leading up to the Initiation

The initiation was preceded by a journey that began with the first meeting with Garing and led up to the actual ceremony of initiation.

Monday, 8 March 1999. First Encounter. I was grateful to God for providing me with an occasion to meet up with Garing in the village of Selungai. When I first approached him and showed him the letter of recommendation from Mr. Thomas Angor, the Assistant District

[24] Conversation with Simpanan Angkong, head of the Selungai village branch of the political party Parti Bersatu Satu (Sabah United Party) on Monday, 8 March 1999.

Officer, he replied that he would be going to the next village called Pakalungan to vote and would be back at Kg. Bantul after 12 March 1999, as the Sabah state election was scheduled to be held on 11 or 12 March. While I was grateful to have met Garing at Selungai, I was disappointed that I could not go to Kg. Bantul and Mansalong. That night, I took a boat to Pensiangan.[25]

Monday, 8 March 1999. A Dream. I arrived in Pensiangan and stayed the night at the house of Pastor Lim Jit Ping. That night, I had a vivid dream. I was looking at Garing with filial love. There was a tall person by the name of Egbertus, who was his son. I had already started the apprenticeship, and was in Garing's village called Bantul for a visit. Garing, acting as my guru, requested that I immerse myself in a river, which I did. I settled into a horse-riding kung fu stance in the water. Egbertus told me that all I needed to do was to have my hand crossed over my nose and stay underwater.[26]

Tuesday, 9 March 1999. Interview with Garing.[27] The interview with Garing, which was conducted in the Border Scout house in the village of Pakalungan and with Pastor Ping as my interpreter, was a grave mistake. First, it was un-Asian—the Asian way would have been to build up a relationship before the interview. Second, Pastor Ping represented the face of Protestant Christianity which required that Murut Christian converts renounce their shamanic beliefs and practices.

Nevertheless, the interview gave me the opportunity to clarify that I was not from the government. Unbeknownst to me, Garing felt threatened by the official letter of introduction from the District Office. It raised a red flag in his mind: "Why did the government

---

[25] Journal entry at Pakalungan, 8 March 1999.

[26] Later I heard from Elap that "crossing hands" was the way Jeffrey Kitinggan slept, with his hands forming a cross and resting on his chest.

[27] The interview was conducted on Tuesday, 9 March 1999, at the border scout house at the village of Pakalungan.

send this person to inquire about my knowledge of *lumaagon*?" What assuaged his fear was the explanation of Pastor Ping who mentioned that the Assistant District Officer was a Catholic and that I, as a Catholic pastor, belonged to the same church as Dr. Jeffrey Kitinggan and Parin Kitinggan, two brothers who met Garing in his village of Bantul. However, when I asked Garing if he knew about the *lumaagon*, he flatly denied having any knowledge of it, using the Murut word *kando* or "no" which he repeated throughout the rest of the interview.

I also impressed upon Garing that what he shared with me would be published in a book of which I would be the author. This constituted a second threat to him. Pastor Ping thus informed me that Garing was unwilling to divulge his knowledge about the *lumaagon* and that we needed to wrap up the interview. In fact, Garing chided me by using the Malay word *rahsia*, stating that *lumaagon* was part of the Murut's esoteric knowledge which belonged to him and his people and was not to be shared with any outsider.

I apologized through Pastor Ping for my insensitive approach and assured Garing that I would not publish anything without first seeking his consent. Garing showed signs of opening up in response to my apology. He offered that I stay in Kg. Bantul for at least a week—a month, if possible—to learn from him. Garing said that Pakalungan was not an ideal place for him to share his knowledge as the people there neither received him well nor valued his shamanic knowledge and practices.

Unbeknownst to me, Garing's two wives were sizing me up as well, to assess for themselves what kind of a person I was. Toward the end, Garing also alerted Pastor Ping: "What is in it for me? What benefits do I get from sharing with him? Can I count on him for help when I need it? Monetary or otherwise?" Garing felt misunderstood by others in the past. He was also afraid that people would remark that he was lying. He felt that there was a false association between him and the rebel Antanum and that this might lead to his imprisonment as the authorities might think that he was one of Antanum's followers. He

urged me not to publicize his invitation to meet with him on 11–18 April 1999.

Garing's last remark about how this interview would benefit him left me perturbed. From past conversations I had with a Jesuit who became a Claretian priest at Woodlawn in Chicago, Illinois and with Tijah bte Chopil of the Semai village of Chang Lama, Perak, in Peninsular Malaysia, I learned that only those who practiced "black magic" (*ilmu hitam* in Malay) became self-serving. I was at a quandary: "Do I accept Garing's invitation to be an apprentice?" As I reflected and prayed while Pastor Ping was cooking chicken for dinner, it dawned on me that, according to anthropology, one has to be one's informant and that one has to reflect on one's own experience. I also remembered what a renowned Sri Lankan Jesuit liberation theologian, Aloysius Pieris, mentioned to me—that an Asian like me would have to be baptized in the River Jordan of Murut shamanism and be enriched by the shamanic religiousness of the poor.[28]

With regard to esoteric knowledge, I remembered speaking with a native chief, Joseph Paul, in Vancouver, Canada. In that conversation, I mentioned to him that I would like to be apprenticed in the shamanism of the indigenous communities, to which he replied, somberly, "Why should they initiate you into the secrets of their people?"[29] Thus, it was to my consolation indeed that an opportunity had been offered to me, halfway across the world, in my own country. I became more aware of how opportune it was for me to cross this shamanic boundary especially now that I was convinced of the reality of the multiverse and of shamanic worlds. I entertained the thought of becoming invisible like Garing and experiencing the extra-anthropological dimension of human existence!

---

[28] Aloysius Pieris, *An Asian Theology of Liberation* (Quezon City, Philippines: Claretians, 1988), 45–50.

[29] Journal entry, 9 March 1999.

11 March 1999. Third Encounter. I visited Garing when his son Elap Garing, who also acted as my interpreter, was with him in the house of the Border Scouts.[30] Elap requested that I stay the night, to which I agreed.

I recounted my dream in Pensiangan to both father and son. With enthusiasm, Garing replied that the tall person was his friend from the shamanic world. Elap then asked me, "How did you come to know my father?" In all honesty, I replied, "Through the Assistant District Officer, Thomas Angor." But then I added, "I felt drawn to come to see your father because I needed someone to teach me and initiate me into the shamanic world and [its] practices. I was looking for someone and I am thankful that there is someone among the Muruts who can teach and initiate me." Elap then interjected, attributing my sudden appearance on their horizon to the work of the spirit (*semangat* in Malay) and especially because we met in Pakalungan where Garing was not accepted. Both father and son welcomed my presence as spirit-sent! Satisfied with my motives and my dream, Garing subsequently instructed me not to shout whenever the *jinx* appears in its many forms during the initiation. Elap added, "The *jinx* likes to play with you." Garing thus assured me that I could get the power in a week. During the week of initiation, I would have to refrain from consuming salt and chili and would have to live on eggs, instant noodles, onions, and rice. Elap requested me to bring some petrol and a special oil known as "2T" for the boat ride from Salung to his village, Bantul, and for the many trips to the cave where the initiation will take place.[31]

12 March 1999. Early Morning. I woke up at 4:00 AM, sat up, and prayed. It was time to pray through my fears and own up to my fear of the unknown, of the baptism at the Pakalan stream. What came to me was that this initiation would be an anointing by the Spirit of the Lord. It would be a baptism with a Christological orientation as stated in Luke 4:18–19, bringing healing, social transformation, and integral

[30] Elap spoke Murut to his father and translated what his father said to me into Malay.

[31] As per my conversation with Elap Garing in Pakalungan on Friday, 12 March 1999.

human liberation. I also realized that the crossing of boundaries, be these shamanic or cultural, would bring with it a new understanding because the other side of the boundary has a theological presence. It is not an emptiness nor a void but the fullness of God's presence. God is already there before me.[32]

This insight was confirmed earlier during a regional retreat in Ponggol, Singapore, from 31 May–9 June 1999, especially with a sense of awe and wonder when I prayed on Jesus's Emmanuel-presence at the talk given by Sean, the retreat master. In my prayer on 5 June 1999, I wept with joy when Jesus assured me, "I will be there, for you, at the shamanic initiation, at the Pakalan stream."[33] This consolation uplifted my understanding and encouraged me to look at shamanism through the struggles and lives of these three legendary Murut heroes: Ontoros, Korom, and Garing.[34]

That morning, after Elap finished his chores, we left for Salung—Elap, his first wife Jainap, and myself—on his boat. While on the journey, Elap showed me a black pouch that contained some rocks with shamanic powers. One was shaped like a measuring rock and the other an oval. Elap said that he obtained them through dreams which instructed him about the locations of these stones.

A Second Dream. On the boat ride to Salung, Jainap shared her dream with us. In the dream, she was on the boat as we sailed from Garing's village of Bantul to the village of Selungai. I was being apprenticed at the cave, near the Pakalan stream, when I suddenly became double and the fireflies surrounded me. According to Elap, the dream was a sign that the spirit came to me, a sign that I desired to be close to the Muruts.

---

[32] Journal entry, 12 March 1999.

[33] Journal entry, 5 June 1999.

[34] Journal entry, 5 June 1999.

The following conversation that I had with Elap revealed a lot about the difference between the *jinx* and *aru*.

Jojo: Is the *jinx* like *aru*/spirit?
Elap: *Aru* is from the devil. *Jinx* is like the spirit of God which helps us.
Jojo: Is Jainap's dream a good dream?
Elap: It's very good!

Aware of my own disappointment that Garing, who was supposed to be there for the initiation, was away from his village of Bantul from 10 April 1999 onwards, I took the opportunity to ask Elap:

Jojo: Did your dad forget that I am coming to the Bantul village?
Elap: He is busy in Keningau. He wants to meet his son, Puin.[35]

Monday, 12 April 1999. Fourth Encounter. After alighting from the boat at the village of Salung, we drove to the town of Keningau, the capital of the interior of Sabah. When we reached Keningau, we had dinner at the Cathedral of St. Francis Xavier (KSFX) then visited Garing. My spirit was pleased when I met him in the Biah village in Keningau. We stayed the night at the parish house of the Cathedral. There Elap insisted that I share a room with him because he was not used to sleeping alone; moreover, I also sensed that he wanted to have a conversation with me before we retired. That night, I dreamt of three incantations[36] with the morning prayer from the nearby mosque in the background. I felt that the three incantations needed to be realigned so that these would be in sync with Murut shamanic traditions. Indeed, I felt as though the water-spirit had already gifted me with three shamanic incantations.

---

[35] I realized that there was a cultural difference. Having come from an urban/dominant society where time denoted punctuality, keeping the promise, and efficiency, I needed to unlearn these dominant values so that I could appreciate and imbibe the richness of the Murut culture and enjoy their lifeworld. I needed to learn to appreciate how the Murut culture values family, persons, and, above all, relationships and interconnectedness first.

[36] I learned from Elap that he used the Malay term *baca-baca* to refer to the incantations.

13 April 1999. Trip to Bantul. Garing, Elap, and I drove off in a Suzuki jeep to the Bantul village where the initiation was to take place. On the way, when we stopped at the shops in the town of Sook to get some food, a bystander noticed that the jeep's gasoline tank was leaking and that one suspension spring under the chassis was broken. I drove the jeep to a nearby workshop and ordered spare parts. We then stayed the night in the Sook Mission House. The repairs on the jeep were finished the next day, on 14 April. We resumed our journey at 4:00 PM and arrived at the village by 10:30 PM.[37]

That night, I was wondering why Garing chose to sleep in the same room with me, his youngest son Puin Garing, and his wife Ganap. I was under the impression that the Master desired to know more about his disciple. The real reason dawned on me the following morning when Elap told me that there was a commotion in the house upon our return last night. According to Elap, the spirit of Darling, Garing's former wife, was annoyed that Garing had been absent from the house for a long time and manifested her tantrum by throwing stones on the zinc roof and water at Kantol, Garing's current wife.[38]

The next day, 15 April, I found myself praying alongside the sounds of men exchanging the latest news outside my room. Dogs were scurrying past me in the room and children were crying and running along the veranda of the longhouse. I thus realized that I was praying in a physical place already in composition and no longer had to perform the Ignatian practice of composition of place in one's imagination during prayer. I also realized, when I came into Puin's room the night before, that I was no longer bothered by spittle on the veranda and general dirt around the house. I had acclimatized myself to the rural life and unchained myself from an urban lifestyle that valued cleanliness. I even appreciated the glow of the flame from the kerosene lamp in my room at night.

---

[37] Journal entry, 13 April 1999.

[38] Journal entry, 14 April 1999.

After a breakfast of instant noodles and coffee, I disclosed to Elap that I had dysentery. Elap offered a cure—he chanted over a glass of water and offered it to me to drink. I agreed, with the intention of offering myself as a primary informant of the Murut *lumaagon* and testing how effective his shamanic incantation was.

At 10:30 AM, I asked Garing when we would approach the cave for the initiation. Garing responded, "It's difficult now as it is flooded. It will be better during the dry season. Even one night will suffice."

Over lunch, I shared with Elap my intention of writing the biography of the three Murut heroes—Ontoros, Korom, and Garing. I mentioned to Elap that this biography would serve two purposes: document the stories about these Murut heroes for the younger generation and approach Murut shamanism through their lives. Elap was well disposed to my ideas and subsequently broached my proposal to his father who was equally receptive to the idea of a book.

Later that afternoon, at 3:45 PM, I used a video camera to record Garing in his official uniform as the village headman while he held up his medal of bravery awarded by the Queen of Britain for his act of valor during the "confrontation," along with a wooden plaque. When I jokingly remarked to Garing that he looked like a minister of the state government of Sabah, he retorted, "Head of the Muruts!" I must admit, it was a title that befitted him.

That same day, Elap mentioned to me that his father would wish that I come see him once I was adopted as a fostered son of the family, especially before he passed on. I was deeply moved as I realized that Garing already regarded me as his adopted son even though I had not yet established a strong filial bond with him.

Before retiring, Garing turned to me and informed me that we would be going tomorrow (Friday, 16 April 1999) to Labang, a Murut village in Kalimantan, and that we would have the initiation ceremony on our return on Saturday, the 17th of April. When Garing asked, "Do you want?," I readily replied, "Yes, I want to." Then Garing added, "This is for protecting your own body. We will go there and I can

call upon the *jinx*." So I responded, "Elap wants to come along and learn more." Garing added, "I will let you know and then you will write down and if you want, you can come back later." I understood in retrospect what Garing meant—that I would have to bring a pen and paper to write down the incantations communicated to him for my keeping and that I could return at other times to continue the initiation on my own.

At 7:45 AM on Friday, 16 April 1999, when I brought Garing breakfast in the village of Labang, he manifested to me his keenness to conduct the initiation: "Let us go first and we will bathe in the river." We missed the opportunity to take leave on 17 April, and so on Sunday, 18 April, I asked Garing about it, and he mentioned that we could leave that very night for the initiation. However, I told him that I had scheduled a Eucharistic celebration in Pakalungan. Garing implored me to call it off, but when he realized that I had to keep my promise, he advised me to come back to the Bantul village and stay from the 27th until the 29th of April.

The length of my stay in Bantul, from 12–18 April, proved to be more rewarding than I expected. I was able to document the story of Ontoros and Korom and attend the official launch of a wooden platform, which rested on a human-made spring composed of logs, called *papan tinagot* in Labang, in commemoration of the 100th-day memorial hosted by a son in honor of his late father.

The monsoon rain, however, made it inopportune for the initiation. I left the village only to return in the middle of July 2001.

The Initiation: *Na Rio*

Tuesday, 17 July 2001. A Full Circle. I arrived in the village of Pakalungan en route to the Bantul village. As I laid in bed in the house of Pulutan in Pakalungan, I thought to myself, "I have come full circle because I started two years ago, right here in Pulutan's house, when I visited Garing with Pastor Lim Jit Ping, bearing a letter from

Thomas Angor, the ADO of Nabawan District."[39] I offered this prayer before I retired:

> O Lord, allow me to be baptized in the River Jordan of Murut Shamanism.
> O Holy Spirit, come to me in the form of the spirit!

I saw clouds swirling, as if the heavens opened, as I prayed for my own baptism in the Bantul village. With that, I fell asleep.

Wednesday, 18 July 2001. Na Rio *as Initiation*. Elap first used the Murut term *na rio* to describe the bathing ritual in the river that is integral to the rite of initiation.

At 1:15 PM, I inquired of Garing about the possibility of being initiated at that time. His reply was "Let us see your lucky star. If you are lucky then you will be initiated. If it is rainy, they do not come forth. During the dry season, we can go up there." Garing indicated to me where the cave was which referred to the dwelling place of the water-spirits.

Initial Visit. At 3:10 PM that same afternoon, Garing approached me. He had put on a shirt and a cap and had a torch in his hand. Sapu, a young Murut, also joined us, holding a torch loaded with the four new batteries that I bought him. We set out for the *na rio*.

At 3:45 PM, Garing instructed me as we walked, "Under no circumstances should you yell."[40] He added, "Tomorrow, we will go up. Today, we will just inform them." Then Garing inquired about the time, to which I replied that it was 4:00 PM.

Garing, Elap's son Hiam, Sapu, the son of Pulutan, the border scout living in the village of Pakalungan, and I took a boat over to the sacred site. It felt as though we were going on a pilgrimage, approaching the site of the sacred, the supernatural, the beyond. As the boat approached the sacred site, I closed my eyes and prayed

---

[39] Journal entry, 17 July 2001.

[40] The Malay phrase is *jangan teriak*.

with gratitude to God. Even the sense of awe was most visible on the faces of the local Muruts, especially the younger ones. Then Garing walked on ahead of us. I admired the skill he had demonstrated in communicating with the world beyond. The rest of us walked up to Garing and sat behind him. We heard him call out to the spirits with a shout, "Ooi," which was then followed by silence as Garing waited for a response from the water-spirits. At one point, he called out, "talur talur," referring to the eggs we brought. We passed the plastic bag with three eggs to Garing.

Garing then recounted, "There was a time when a group came for the *na rio* and a snake appeared and they shouted." Although Garing narrated this incident jokingly, it was to reinforce a point—that I should not shout, no matter what happens. At the same time, Garing wanted to emphasize that the water-spirits tended to be playful when they appeared in the form of a snake.

Garing then got a reply—it was *nunsuab*, a term in Murut which means "come tomorrow," and so we left. As we walked back to the boat, I found myself walking in the wet footprints Garing was leaving behind on the rock. I thought to myself, "I am walking in the footsteps of the master indeed!" Once we were in the boat, Garing called out to me; I went over to him and he said, "Tomorrow, we will let Elap know and we will stay there. We will bring food along." After we alighted from the boat, I walked after Garing, in the footprints of the grand master and guru. Then we sat on the rock as he talked to his grandson.

Thursday, 19 July 2001. The Initiation. Under the green canopy of the equatorial forest, with myself immersed in the crystal clear water of a stream and seated a few meters away from Garing my father (*ama* in Murut) and guru, the ritual began in the presence of a Triune God whose essence pervaded the ambience of this event, so ordinary yet so extraordinary, as it crossed a shamanic threshold, the invisible spirit world in communion with the visible world of fauna and flora, humankind and otherkinds.

After the initiation of bathing in the water of the spirit, Garing requested me to sit next to him on a big boulder. He dictated certain incantations to me which I swiftly wrote down. Once we were finished, Garing and I, along with the rest of the troupe, took the boat and returned to the longhouse.

Monday, 23 July 2001. Conversation about the Water-Spirit Family. I had a very engaging conversation with Garing in the longhouse at 7:15 PM regarding the spirit family that I would be a part of through the initiation.

Garing: There are twenty of them. When it is bright, during the night of the full moon, there are about fifty to a hundred of them.
Jojo: What do they eat?
Garing [pointing in the direction of the forest]: They eat there.
Jojo: Can women be initiated?
Garing: No [Women like Jainap, the wife of Elap, could join us in the *na rio*; she took water home during the 4–10 May 2002 trip].
Jojo: Last night, did they come?
Garing: Yes, at midnight. I was about to fall asleep but I awoke and realized that [they had] come.

I then joined in a very enchanting conversation between Garing and the water-spirit.

Water-Spirit: Where is your friend?
Garing: He sleeps over there [By this, Garing indicated to the water-spirit that I was sleeping in Pulutan's house].
Water-Spirit: This is my name. Give it to him.
Garing [on behalf of the Water-Spirit]: When the rain is over, we will come.
Jojo: So you saw him?
Garing: I saw him. He came alone.

I then went back to the experience of the initiation the day before at the river to seek some clarification from Garing.

Jojo: Yesterday, I was sitting here. *Ama* was sitting there. Where was he?
Garing: In between us.

Jojo: Can you see him?
Garing: Sure!
Jojo: Does he have a name?

Garing just chuckled and turned his face away from me. He did not answer my question.

The yearnings in my heart to cross the threshold into the spirit world became a reality, thanks to the wisdom of my *Ama*-guru, Garing. God in God's *kairos* made it possible for me to be baptized in the Jordan of Murut Shamanism, in the oasis of the Longongon Murut of Sabah, my hometown, under the lush canopy of the equatorial forest and amidst the rich biodiversity of Borneo Island.

Conclusion

This sojourn in the land of the Murut led me to a significant epistemic shift toward freedom and gratitude, especially for the time and place that allowed me to savor the wisdom of the shamanic traditions of the Longongon Murut. More specifically, I have heartfelt gratitude for the understanding that led me to re-evaluate my own theology and value their local pneumatology from within. This theological valuation of indigenous pneumatology made me realize the indispensability of being accompanied by other-than-human beings which *Querida Amazonia* refers to as "various beings."[41] These beings are known as the Creator or Grandfather, spirits or *aru* or *jinx*, deities, and demons/evil spirits. Every aspect of the world is alive with spirits and communicates with each other. Unfortunately, modernity has intentionally relinquished these spiritualities to the realm of culture and systemically dismissed these beliefs as mere superstitions.

This sojourn was blessed with the grace-filled presence of God's Spirit guiding an Asian sojourner from Sabah to enter into a filial relationship with Garing bin Muntalan, the last of the renowned Murut

[41] Francis, *Querida Amazonia*, §42.

shamans. Garing, my shaman-*Ama* who passed on in 2004, taught me that life in the forestland of the Muruts is multidimensional, inclusive of both the seen and the unseen, just as we Catholics profess every Sunday in the Nicene Creed during the Mass: "We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is seen and unseen." Garing enabled me to experience the environment and the ancestral forestland as the sacred home of the water-spirits. These water-spirits entered a reciprocal communion with human beings for the self-protection of those initiated and the flourishing of communities in their homeland. The sacred, the dimension "beyond," imbues our human world with the notion that human existence is interconnected with nature, renowned shamanic ancestors, and with *Aki Kaulung*, the Creator of everything in this world.

The Asian sojourn continues with another enriching phase of learning and maturing, this time with the wisdom of the oasis of *Máoshān* Daoism.

Chapter 2

Wisdom-Oasis of *Máoshān* Daoism

Máoshān [茅山], best translated as grass or reeds mountain, is one of the greatest and most sacred mountains of Daoism in the Jurong County [句容市] of Jiangzu Province [江苏省], located approximately 75 kilometers southeast of Nanking City [南京市] in China.

For the Daoists, *Máoshān* was and remains the principal seat of the patriarchs of Shangqing [上清], which is recognized by Daoism as the name of a celestial palace. *Shangqing Dao* [上清道], the School of Highest Clarity or *Shangqing Pai* [上清派], also embraces the *Máoshān Pai* [茅山派] and the *Máoshān Zong* [茅山宗], ancient Daoist traditions that mushroomed with "the compilation of the *Shangqing Jing* [上清經]" or "Scripture(s) of Highest Clarity" during the mid-Eastern Jin Period [東晉] (317–420).[1]

[1] The *Máoshān* Daoism that originated from the *Shangqing* School (in Chinese, 上清 or Supreme Clarity) was a Daoist movement that itself originated from the aristocracy of the Western Jin dynasty. For more detail, see "*Shangqing pai* 上清派, the School of Highest Clarity, and *Máoshān zong* 茅山宗, the Line of Mt. Maoshan," http://www.chinaknowledge.de/Literature/Religion/schoolsshangqingpai.html (accessed 18 March 2020). Also see "Mao-Shan: Sacred Daoist Mountain of Eastern China," http://www.san-shin.org/China-Maoshan.html (accessed 3 March 2020).

Máoshān became popular historically through the active presence of one of its most towering erudite figures—Tao Hong Jing [陶弘景], who helped "compile the canon of the Supreme Clarity school of Daoism [while on] his retreat there in the 5th century."[2] At the same time, *Máoshān* was "closely identified with the 3rd and 4th century alchemist and writer Ge Hong [葛洪], who was born nearby."[3] *Máoshān* probably became most influential during the Tang Dynasty, "when emperor Taizong personally visited three temples there." The most impressive period of all was probably during the Yuan Dynasty, when "the temples had five thousand temple chambers (jian 間) which stretched over several of *Máoshān*'s hills."[4]

Máoshān was almost razed to the ground during the past one hundred and fifty years of turmoil,[5] particularly during the Qing-Taiping war (1850–1864). It experienced a second wave of destruction during the Sino-Japanese War (1894–1895) and another one during the Cultural Revolution (1966–1976).

From 1997 to 2009, temple construction and reconstruction were the topmost priorities. The number of Daoist temples in China increased during that period, from 1,500 to an estimated 5,000 temples.[6] In 1983, *Máoshān* entered the fray of commercialism when the State Council approved the opening of twenty-one temple complexes to public visitors.[7]

The Jurong [句容] side of the *Máoshān* became part of an ambitious tourism project. With financing from the local government, Jurong witnessed the rebuilding of the damaged Yuanfu Wanning Gong [元

---

[2] Ian Johnson, "Two Sides of a Mountain: The Modern Transformation of *Máoshān*," *Journal of Daoist Studies* 5:5 (2012): 89–116, here cited at 93.

[3] Johnson, "Two Sides of a Mountain," 93.

[4] Johnson, "Two Sides of a Mountain," 93.

[5] Johnson, "Two Sides of a Mountain," 90.

[6] Johnson, "Two Sides of a Mountain," 90.

[7] Johnson, "Two Sides of a Mountain," 96.

符萬寧] and the Jiuxiao Wanfu Gong [九霄萬福] in the first phase of reconstruction alone, from 1983 to 1990. Revenues from the first phase were then invested in the second phase to transform Jurong into a center for national tourism. The Jurong authorities levied "a steep admission fee (90 yuan in 2009) for entry into a newly created park, the *Máoshān* Scenic Area" or the *Máoshān Fengjing Qu* [茅山風景區], and charged separate fees for the temples.[8] In 1998, the Jurong Temple authority commissioned the construction of a monumental statue of Laozi next to Yuanfu Wanning Gong.[9]

On the Jintan [金壇] side of the *Máoshān*, reconstruction began in the 1990s with the Qianyuan guan [乾元觀], which was undertaken by the Abbess Chi Zhengyi. Later on, an additional three new *Máoshān* temples—namely, the Yuanyang Guan, Sanqing Guan (or Hongmiao), and Chongshou Guan—were built nearby under a commercial leasing system. Jintan's nunneries took a different approach to shunning entrance fees and mass tourism. In downplaying tourism, the Jintan nunneries did not sacrifice financial stability, as the inauguration of the 1.3 million Yuan Jade Emperor Hall in 2010 amply demonstrated. By valuing solitude and meditation over commercialism, the Jintan temple complexes earned the reputation of being *ling* or efficacious (靈).[10] More importantly, in the eyes of the country's urban public, the Jintan temples offer a "purer" form of Daoism.

In the Circle of Disciples

My journey as a member of the *Máoshān* school of disciples began with my acquaintance with Mr. Chong Ah Nam (or Nam Pak, as he is fondly known) whom I came to know through the flood relief efforts launched by Skudai Catholic Center (SCC) during the April

[8] Johnson, "Two Sides of a Mountain," 98.

[9] "Gong" is a term in Chinese that denotes a palace while "qu" denotes an area or a district. Johnson, "Two Sides of a Mountain," 98.

[10] Johnson, "Two Sides of a Mountain," 105.

monsoon period of 2004. Some of the students of SCC came with me to clean Ah Nam's house, which was located at Selar 3 Lane, a low-cost residential neighborhood behind Skudai Parade in Johor Bahru, the capital of Johor, Malaysia.

Ah Nam had many admirable skills, from giving body massage and using herbal oil and *qigong* (气功) to administering medicinal herbs to relieve the body of different ailments. This was the last skill Ah Nam learned from his late father who was a renowned medical healer. Ah Nam also demonstrated his skill in delivering those afflicted by evil spirits, and in astral travel at night during his meditation (or *ta cho* in Hakka[11]) at his "house-shrine." Most astonishing of his gifts were his *yin-yang* eyes which I was privileged to know about through my conversations with Master Lee and with Ah Nam whenever we travelled together.[12]

Gifted with the *yin-yang* eyes, Ah Nam could see those who had passed away in the world of the dead or the *yin*-world.[13] He addressed them as *kui tzai*, a term in Hakka which is literally translated as "small ghosts," indicating that they had died and were small in stature, about 3–4 feet in height or just 13 years old or younger. According to Ah Nam, some of them have feet while others were adults who had lost their feet, heads, arms, or other parts of their bodies because they

---

[11] Hakka is the language of the Hakka (in Chinese, 客家) which sometimes refers to the Hakka Han people—Han Chinese whose ancestral homes are found chiefly in the Hakka-speaking provinces of Guangdong, Fujian, Jiangxi, Guangxi, Sichuan, Hunan, Zhejiang, Hainan, and Guizhou. The Chinese characters for Hakka (客家) literally mean "guest families." The Hakka language has affinities with both Cantonese, the language of the people of the Guangdong province, and Mandarin, the language of much of northern and central China. Many of the initial linguistic sounds of the Hakka language are a bridge between the two languages. For more details, see "Origin and Migrations of the Hakkas," https://pages.ucsd.edu/~dkjordan/chin/HsiehHakkaHistory.html (accessed 20 May 2020).

[12] Master Lee disclosed to me the skills of Ah Nam when we were at the Catholic chapel in Kukup, Johore, on Friday, 9 May 2008.

[13] In the conversation with Master Lee on Friday, 9 May 2008, he confirmed that Ah Nam has the gift of the *yin-yang* eyes.

were rolled over by cars or trucks in horrendous accidents while still alive in the world of the living or the "yang-world." Ah Nam could see them as they entered or left the room and even converse with them whenever he saw them on the side of the road while traveling with me in the car.

As early as in the first year of our acquaintance, Ah Nam employed his gift and training on Tuesday, 24 August 2004, to ascertain the presence of ghosts in the residence of Paolo and Susanne, an Italian couple whose daughter, Virginia, also lived with them. Ah Nam instructed Paolo to conduct a test to see if any ghosts were inside his house. Paolo took a deep breath, walked seven steps from the porch to the interior of the house, just a little beyond the threshold where the main door/entrance was situated, and exhaled his breath as if he were angry or in an aggressive mood. Then he observed the movement of the vapor to see if it doubled back on himself. The vapor did not, showing that ghosts were not inhabiting his house.

An Unassuming Master

Master Lee shared with me that his father was a disciple of the 35th batch under a renowned Master known as *Kim Yin Tun Tze*.[14] Master Lee became a disciple of the same master in the 36th batch when he started training with his father at the age of six.[15] During the earliest stage, he was away in the jungle with his father for twelve weeks before returning to the house to be with his mother and live there for three months. In those twelve weeks, his father offered joss-sticks in reverence to the *Máoshān* ancestors. In the jungle, they would live on steamed white rice and salted eggs. His father taught him how to ritualize and be in communication with different spirits and deities

[14] Incidentally, Master Lee, Ah Nam, and I are Hakka Han Chinese, with ancestry that dates back to Meishan, Guangdong, China.

[15] I was most grateful to Master Lee for his sharing about his father during a very endearing conversation on Friday, 31 August 2007, when we were on a drive together.

to attain different purposes according to the needs and requests of devotees. Since he did not go to a normal school, his father taught him how to read and write, using the sand as his writing pad.

Master Lee added that his father, who owned a temple in Thailand, took him when he was fifteen years old to Thailand to continue his formation for three years under a Chinese monk who took in one hundred and thirty-six disciples at a monastery near a mountain cave. The monk lived to be a hundred years old. In Master Lee's batch, only three of them succeeded—a woman and two men, one of whom was Thai and the other Master Lee, a Chinese. The training consisted of morning chores where the disciples had to carry buckets of water from the foot of the mountain early in the morning and arrive at the mountain top where the monastery was located at about noontime. They cooked and had lunch upon arriving at the temple, and in the afternoon they had to collect firewood and prepare to cook dinner. At night, they had to chant prayers which they eventually memorized.[16]

Master Lee learned how to perform all the major feats of his Master, including transforming from a human being into other forms and walking through concrete walls. On the day of Master Lee's graduation, he was subjected to three gruesome tests: first, after offering a chant, he had to walk across the stones in a pool of water without slipping into the pool; second, he had to dip both his hands into a wok of hot boiling oil without being scorched; finally, he had to climb a ladder with sharp blades without being injured. He passed all three tests and was pronounced a master in his own right. He used the Hakka term *koi tze* to denote the attainment of the status of a master from having passed the final tests, and was certified henceforth to begin his own school and form his own disciples.

---

[16] Ah Nam provided me with the details of Master Lee's training in a conversation on 1 November 2006.

As Ah Nam massaged and blessed me at his house-shrine, he disclosed to me that the *Máoshān* grand masters were three brothers.[17] In the fiftieth *ta cho* on Saturday, 13 May 2006, Ah Nam disclosed to me that Master Lee had since trained nine disciples, with the first woman-disciple at the age of 58 and who had the ability to "walk through" any concrete wall. Master Lee often gathered his disciples for *ta cho* in the main shrine near his house in Kempas and sometimes at the beach where they would stay throughout the night until dawn.

Master Lee had a special relationship with Mother Mary. I came to know this when Master Lee, Ah Nam, and I drove to a Catholic chapel in Kukup, Johore, West Malaysia, on Friday, 9 May 2008. Upon arriving at the chapel, Master Lee narrated to me his previous experience of praying before Our Lady in another chapel and how that prayer helped realign his dislocated right hand. Then we entered the Kukup chapel and I explained to him the meaning of the crucifix, Blessed Sacrament, and statue of Our Lady. He then went in front of Our Lady and asked me whether he could sit in a chair placed against the wall to ensure that it would be firm enough for him. I sat down next to him and asked if I could offer a prayer for him. After the prayer, which I recited in the Hakka language, I exhorted him to pray silently before Our Lady.

When he emerged from the chapel after silent prayer in front of the statue of Our Lady, Master Lee reported to me that his body felt warm during the prayer and that he felt an itch "inside" the joints of his right hand. Nevertheless, Master Lee said that he felt better as a whole after experiencing the warmth in his body. Then he recounted, in the presence of Ah Nam and myself, how he was close to his mother who in turn was close to Our Lady. The legacy of his late mother would be his special relationship with Our Lady for which Master Lee was profoundly grateful.

This visit was significant for me as Master Lee disclosed his desire that I enter into the next phase of my *ta cho* by September of 2008,

[17] Ah Nam made this disclosure in our *ta cho* on Wednesday, 15 June 2005.

where I would be in communion with the renowned *Máoshān* ancestors (in Hakka, *Máoshān Juseng*). At the start of this phase, Master Lee explained, I would have to become a total vegetarian. In the later stage of the *ta cho* in honor of the *Máoshān* ancestors, I would be allowed to eat fish and eggs together with vegetables.

First Encounter

On Thursday, 23 September 2004, I drove Ah Nam to the low-cost residential neighborhood in Kempas along Skudai Road to meet up with Master Lee in his house. With the formal introduction, Master Lee directly posed two poignant questions for me: "Why are you interested in seeking me out? Are you seeking for personal wealth?" Ah Nam advocated on my behalf: "He came to enjoy the company of those who are good-hearted so that his enemies would be minimal in his life." My personal response to Master Lee was "Good health is what I am seeking for." Satisfied, Master Lee requested me to engage in *ta cho* which is an everyday practice of Master Lee's circle of disciples. I would have to engage in *ta cho* at the little Daoist shrine on the side of Ah Nam's house during the full moon from either 13–14 September or 30 September to 1 October 2004.

That same evening, Ah Nam further impressed upon me that he expected a personal decision to commit myself to complete *ta cho* at least forty-nine times at the shrine on the side of his house (or house-shrine) so I could graduate fully from the initial stage. While engaging in *ta cho*, I would have to refrain from eating beef, mutton, and star-fruits. After 11:00 PM later that evening, his *vun pak* (the human soul in the Hakka language) would take my *vun pak* on a visit to the world of the spirits/ghosts (or the *yin*-world). While sights of the dead—with parts of their bodies mutilated or with limbs and heads lost due to fatal road accidents—abound in this *yin*-world, Ah Nam advised me not to be afraid of them as he would accompany me as my guide. He also admonished me that on no account must I accept and consume any drink or food from those we would visit in

the *yin*-world, not even from my late grandparents or mother.[18] Failure to comply would incur precarious efforts on his part to bring my *vun pak* back and be united with my physical self. Moreover, while there would be occasions for me to ascend mountainous cliffs and traverse forests with thick undergrowth, we would have to engage in corporal works of mercy on other occasions, such as burying the dead.

First Ritual of *Hoi Kong*

Master Lee had deemed since our first encounter that my sojourn as his latest disciple had to begin with a ritual called *Hoi Tien Mun* in the Hakka language on Wednesday, 13 October 2004. The term literally translates into "open heaven door" and means letting the five senses—sight, taste, hearing, smell, and touch—be "opened" which would enable me to communicate with the spirits in the *yin*/spirit-world.[19] On Monday, 11 October 2004, Ah Nam informed me that the ritual required me to bring an offering comprised of a bottle of Chinese rice wine, five oranges, a slice of roasted pork, one or two small cooked fish, and one cooked piece of chicken, either a drumstick, chicken wing, or even half a chicken.

Master Lee arrived at 9:30 PM on the designated Wednesday night together with a disciple-brother by the name of Lee who was a novice to a Thai monk. They prepared the altar in the house-shrine and conducted the inaugural ritual that invited the presence of the gods designated by a Hakka term *cian sien*. When I arrived at 10:30 PM with the offering, Ah Nam asked me to stand in the middle of the doorway and bow three times with my hands folded in reverence before the altar. Then he instructed me to leave my shoes on the side.

---

[18] In a conversation on Thursday, 23 September 2004, Ah Nam used this term in the Hakka language which he distinguished from another Hakka term, *lin phun*, which refers to the human soul.

[19] Ah Nam clarified this in a conversation on 5 February 2006, when I did my forty-fourth *ta cho* at the house-shrine.

Then I addressed Master Lee with the reverence due to a master from a disciple.

Ah Nam offered me a cup of herbal tea. After I drank the tea, Ah Nam and Master Lee instructed me to sit on the mat with my back to the altar and close my palms and my eyes as though I were in a state of meditation. Then my palms were placed on the palms of disciple Lee. With Master Lee standing to my left and Ah Nam to my right, Master Lee began the ritual with chants, placed the wooden prayer stumps on the tabletop with a rather loud thud, and subsequently dripped some liquid on the top of my head. I felt successive waves of sensations at that point, experiencing, as it were, a mystical infusion of divine love with human love, and was able to visualize a divine sphere around me. Then Ah Nam sat behind disciple Lee and used his *qi* to extract all the toxins from my body.[20]

After the ritual, Master Lee instructed Ah Nam to bring me some food to eat. As I ate one of the two buns, Master Lee explained that he sensed there was a lot on my mind and heart.[21] He counselled me to conduct my everyday life with tranquillity of mind and heart, without yielding to anger, and finally exhorted me to be faithful to my *ta cho* in the house-shrine.[22]

As I ate an orange, Ah Nam mentioned to me that he could see two white water-spirits travelling with me. Each a foot tall and sitting on my shoulder, they were commissioned by my *Ama*-guru Garing bin Muntalan as my spirit-guides. Ah Nam informed me that he decided

---

[20] The Hakka term used is *low so*, denoting all that is toxic and evil or the destructive energies from evil spirits.

[21] Master Lee used the Hakka term *hau fun*, denoting a mental and affective state of anxiety and tension in my mind and heart.

[22] Master Lee used three Hakka phrases: *oi pin tzin*, which calls for the need to be tranquil; *mau fat fo*, which is an exhortation not to get angry; and *oi ta cho*, which exhorts me to engage regularly in *ta cho*. Master Lee opined that regular *ta cho* is transformative and thus brings about an affective state of tranquility.

to send them back to the longhouse in the Bantul village in Sabah, East Malaysia as their presence had caused my ill health.

After the ritual, I began my first *ta cho* on Thursday, 28 October 2004.

Second Ritual of *Hoi Kong*

For me to graduate to the next level in the *Máoshān* discipleship after completing the twenty-first *ta cho*, Ah Nam proceeded to ritualize the second *hoi kong* using lit red joss-sticks. He traced the Chinese word for "Buddha" on my forehead, cheeks, and chest. Then he requested me to stand on my left foot, after which he lifted my right foot and traced the word "Buddha" on its sole. Then we began to adopt the standing posture in this twenty-second *ta cho*. I was standing on my left foot while Ah Nam, who stood next to me, did the same. He told me that I was at liberty to sit down if ever I felt tired. After 15 minutes, Ah Nam and I sat down as this was my first attempt at a "standing" meditation. Ah Nam informed me that the standing position enabled him to practice his *qigong* in such a manner that all the energy entered his body while neutralizing the toxicity his body had absorbed from massaging other people. Before we ended, he reminded me that the nature of the *ta cho* would henceforth be composed of both standing and sitting positions.

Third Ritual of *Hoi Kong*

By Friday, 30 December 2005, I had accomplished *ta cho* forty-two times. Ah Nam thus realized that he had to conduct the third ritual of *hoi kong* for me. After giving me a full body massage, Ah Nam invited me to engage in *ta cho* at his house-shrine. Inside the shrine, Ah Nam requested me to kneel down while he lit the joss-sticks for the ritual of *hoi kong*. Using his right foot, he wrote the Chinese character for "Buddha" and continued his preparation by engaging in a few prayerful movements with his hands.

Ah Nam then instructed me to close the door of the shrine and remove my shirt. He brought the lit joss-sticks and traced the character for "Buddha" on my forehead, just above my eyes, then on my cheeks, neck, chest, abdomen, on four spots on my back, and, finally, on my lower spine. He then asked me to stand, along with him, on my left foot while my right foot was lifted off the ground. Ah Nam remarked that he felt the "weight" of carrying his right foot, stating that the weight he felt was traceable to an offence I had committed by consuming beef and monkey meat. He brought out a sharp needle and poked me in the cheeks and in four other spots on my back, and admonished me that he would have to pierce the very spots that he poked if I committed the offence again.

When we sat down for a short while for the *ta cho*, he repeated the admonition: "Do not eat beef, lamb, monkey, elephant, and honey starfruits." As we finished the *ta cho*, Ah Nam instructed me to learn how to nod my head nine times while, at the same time, holding my palms closed and moving them "up and down" three times. Then he asked me to offer a prayer to the ancestors of *Máoshān* who had been deified and revered as ancestors by the Daoist devotees.[23] Finally, as he locked up the room to the house-shrine, he apologized that I would not be able to bring the fishing nets home as these were made of elements that would neutralize the *hoi kong* ritual that very same evening.

First Upgrading

On Monday, 20 February 2006, I received news through Ah Nam that he met Master Lee the day before, on Sunday, 19 February, and that Master Lee announced his decision to have me upgraded to a higher level after having done a preliminary survey of my background. The upgrading meant that I would be seated in front of Ah Nam during the *ta cho*. Master Lee specially requested me to refrain from eating

[23] On Thursday, 30 December 2004, Ah Nam used the Hakka expression *tiam tu* for nodding the head and the term *Máoshān Juseng* for the *Máoshān* ancestors.

the meat of any hunted animal while visiting or staying overnight in the indigenous villages. Failure to comply, according to Master Lee, would demote me and it would take me another five years to get to the current grade.

Unfortunately, the offence was committed the week before Wednesday, 19 April 2006, when I visited an indigenous village and unintentionally ate three pieces of wild boar. I disclosed this offence to Ah Nam at the *ta cho* that Sunday evening. Ah Nam remarked that he felt the offence when his nail broke and his finger bled. Nevertheless, he explained that it was negligible since it was committed unintentionally.

On Thursday, 20 April 2006, I drove to Ah Nam's house to pass him some bread and fetch the fishing nets which needed to be replaced at a shop known as *Melaka Raya* in the town of Melaka. Ah Nam related to me that Master Lee met him on Tuesday, 18 April 2006 and disclosed to him that I would be promoted to the same grade as Ah Nam based on my corporal works of mercy and commendable behavior. Ah Nam thus asked for my date of birth so he could submit it to Master Lee on Saturday, 22 April 2006, when Master Lee would explain the details of the upgrading ritual in person.

Master Lee requested to meet me on Friday night, 12 May 2006, for the upgrading ritual. I brought an offering of four bottles of rice wine and five oranges. We conferred for a while and I informed him that I began the *ta cho* on Wednesday, 24 August, in the year 2005, and that it would be expedient to resume my *ta cho* after my trip to Sarawak, East Malaysia, from Sunday, 9 July to Tuesday, 11 July 2006.

We then entered the house-shrine and Ah Nam and I began our *ta cho*. This time I sat next to Ah Nam with my left palm facing the earth, signifying a *yin* posture, while my right palm faced upwards, a *yang* posture. Then Master Lee stood behind me and chanted in Thai while holding the red joss-sticks. He instructed me that the deity of the earth would admonish me henceforth should there be any imminent untoward incident over the course of my day or night. Master Lee asked me if I was aware of any communication of imminent danger

as a priest. I shared with Master Lee that I would normally recite a prayer of self-offering before I depart from my house and that my whole day would thus be under God's protection.

Second Upgrading

Over a cup of coffee on Friday, 18 August 2006, Master Lee informed me that I would be upgraded to another way of *ta cho* that would require me to engage for some time in corporal works of mercy in the world of the dead or the *yin*-world, particularly during those times when I am not pastorally engaged as a priest. During such visits to the *yin*-world, I would have to wear, according to Master Lee, three lemon leaves or *lalang* (*imperata cylindrica*) that would be folded seven times so that the spirits/souls of the *yin*-world would not harm me. Each trip would take about fifteen minutes. Ah Nam admonished me that I would be in an unusually dormant state during each visit to the *yin*-world and that members of my Jesuit community should not be alarmed to find me in such a state. In this same conversation, Master Lee offered to teach Ah Nam how to ritualize couples who were barren so that the infertile wife could conceive. However, Ah Nam declined the offer for the reason that demands from infertile couples would be endless. At the end of the conversation, Master Lee and Ah Nam fixed the time of the upgrading at 10:00 PM on Friday, 25 August 2006.

On the designated date of 25 August, Ah Nam and I were engaged in *ta cho* when Master Lee arrived at the house-shrine. He called us to discontinue our *ta cho* and informed me that I would be upgraded to be in communion with an ancestor by the name of Kim Yin (in Hakka, *Kim Yin Juseng*). Master Lee exhorted me to be committed to doing *ta cho*, especially on the 15th of each month of the lunar calendar. Then he called on the name of Kim Yin Juseng three times and prayed for him to bless me with good health. When I was not in Ah Nam's place, I could engage in the *ta cho* at any time; however, in Ah Nam's house-shrine, I may only do so after 10:00 PM.

At the end of the instruction, Master Lee enjoined Ah Nam and me to face outward at the entrance of the house-shrine when he began the chant to welcome the ancestors (in Hakka, *Juseng*). Then he prayed over a glass of boiled water and asked me to look for a word-formation in the two white dots inside the glass.[24] Then we sat down and waited. Shortly before 10:00 PM, Master Lee asked the three of us to sit in a row behind the red line marked with the Chinese character for "Buddha": Ah Nam on the far left, Ah Boy in the middle, taking the place of a disciple-sister (in Hakka, *tze mei*), and me at the far right. Ah Boy selected the red flag and held it with his left hand where his thumb was touching the second finger while the middle finger of his right hand pointed upward. Standing behind me and using both his hands, Master Lee pressed three points on the upper part of my back. Then he pressed two middle points downward and two more points on the lower part of my back.

Master Lee remarked, "Is it right that your psychological health as of late has not been up to the mark?" Immediately I responded, "Yes indeed, due to lack of sleep." Then he added that he would pierce me with a needle. As he did so, Master Lee asked me, "Is it painful?," to which I replied, "No." Master Lee exclaimed, "The needle's mark is so deep," and added that I was facing an imminent danger. He brushed aside the hair on my forehead and remarked how *yim* (in Hakka) my forehead was. This remark on *yim*-ness meant that the colour on my forehead was alarmingly dim and black. This disappeared when Master Lee shamanized me with a chant, but when he walked around and stood behind me, he exclaimed that the *yim*-ness had resurfaced as red dots on the back of my neck and that the grove was deep and long lasting.

Master Lee acted swiftly. He asked Ah Nam for the ritual cloth (*tai pu* in Hakka) which had protective power that would neutralize

---

[24] Ah Nam later clarified that Master Lee intended for me to find a number (rather than a word) that would allow for the ceremony of upgrading to proceed. I was mistaken as I was indeed thinking of a word.

any imminent danger for the person carrying it. Ah Nam stated that he used to have three pieces but had used all three of them. Master Lee turned to Kim to inquire if he was in possession of such a cloth. Kim responded, "Perhaps I have one. But I will have to check in my house." Master Lee replied, "We will all go over to your house after this!! Ah Seng, call your daughter and I will speak to her." On the phone, Master Lee spoke to the disciple-sister: "Are you at home or are you somewhere? Can you be home by 10:30 PM? We are coming over. I will bring a friend over. We need to help him."[25]

We all adjourned and drove to the house of our disciple-sister. As soon as we arrived, Master Lee asked me to give her my full Chinese name and date of birth. Then *tze mei* lit nine red joss-sticks and passed them to me. Ah Nam requested me to kneel down with my left knee on the kitchen floor. *Tze mei* stood in front of me and chanted a prayer. Master Lee then held a glass of water, chanted, burned the *fu* or talisman, mixed the ashes in the water, and offered me to drink it.[26] *Tze mei* chanted as I drank the water. As I stood up, Ah Nam informed me that the ritual cloth would be on loan to me and that I had to return it to *tze mei* after the second month along with a little gift of gratitude. After the ritual, *tze mei* served us supper and Master Lee exhorted her to pray for me over the next three days.

Third Upgrading

On Friday, 31 August 2007, Master Lee informed me that I would have to set a date for upgrading to a new way of *ta cho* where I would be in communion with *Kim Yin Tun Tze*, a saintly person who shared the same last name/surname "Fung" as myself and who hailed from

---

[25] According to Ah Nam, the disciple-sister was the ninth disciple of Master Lee while he was the eighth.

[26] A *fu* is usually a piece of red or yellow paper with a prayer written on it in black or red ink. For more details, see "Secret Magic Behind a FU Talisman," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nx-HK-4Xx2U&t=1568s (accessed 4 April 2020).

Moiyen/Meizhou City in Guangdong Province, China. After his death, *Kim Yin Tun Tze* was deified and revered by generations of disciples and devotees as an ancestor.[27] I was so delighted to learn that I would be in a succession of disciples just as Master Lee and his father, too, were disciples of *Kim Yin Tun Tze*.[28] Master Lee assured me that if the *ta cho* in the presence of *Kim Yin Tun Tze* were done well, he would impart to his disciples his personal skills and knowledge of martial arts. We fixed the date of the third upgrading on Tuesday, 18 September 2007.

On 18 September, I called Master Lee on the phone and informed him that I would come to fetch him. He reminded me to bring five oranges to the upgrading that evening as an offering. I drove to fetch Ah Nam and together we drove to meet Master Lee. Since we arrived early, the three of us decided to have our afternoon tea at the Gelang Patah coffee shop. Master Lee and Ah Nam warned me that when Master Lee invites my *vun pak* to journey with him in the night, I should never respond at all whenever I hear my name being called nor accept any food or drink offered to me, even if from my close relatives. Otherwise, it would be difficult for Master Lee to bring my *vun pak* back to my physical body.

At about 8:45 PM, we drove to Ah Nam's house. Once inside the house-shrine, Master Lee requested Ah Nam to offer a prayer of welcome (*cian sien* in Hakka) to the ancestors of *Máoshān* and Kim Yin. Master Lee then instructed Ah Nam to kneel down facing the entrance of the house-shrine. He clasped Ah Nam's hands, prayed the Daoist way, and held a chain from which hung two little porcelain cups. After the prayer, Master Lee threw the chain on the floor. Both cups faced upward. When Master Lee threw the chain a second time, one of the cups faced downward and the other upward. Then Master

---

[27] Moiyan is commonly known as Meizhou [梅县] or Meixian (or more correctly as Méixiàn). This is the standard Chinese (Mandarin) pinyin spelling for the same place in Guangdong Province that we Hakkas call *Moiyan*.

[28] Based on a personal conversation with Master Lee on Friday, 31 August 2007.

Lee asked Ah Nam to chant the prayer to invite Kim Yin Juseng. He prayed and threw the chain on the floor a third time; one cup ended up facing upward and the other downward. Nam Pak stood up and uttered sheepishly that the quality of the foundation of his *ta cho* sessions was weak. Master Lee asked me to step forward to pull Ah Nam Pak up to a standing position.

Master Lee then sat on a chair in front of the altar and, using a brush, wrote my date of birth on a piece of yellow paper which he stamped earlier with a wooden stub. He colored the paper red and then stamped on it again. Then he proceeded to burn the paper and let the ashes fall in the middle of the altar before asking me to take off my shirt and sit in a lotus position in front of the altar.

Master Lee went behind me, wrote a word on the back of my neck with the brush, and wiped off the ink. Then he placed his palms on my back, on top of my upper spine, prayed, and asked me, "Are you feeling cold?" I replied, "I can feel the warmth of the palms of your hand." Then he patted the same spot with the back and then the palm of his hands before asking Ah Nam to cover the spot with both his hands. Master Lee then went behind Ah Nam.

Nam Pak reported to Master Lee that I was feeling cold, which, to the approval of Master Lee, was a good sign that the ritual was effective.

During the time I was being upgraded by Master Lee, I felt a surge of energy as though I had been overshadowed by the power of God's Spirit. I experienced it as though I was undergoing a "spirit-baptism." Arising from the depth of my heart was a sense of gratitude to God for the new position of *ta cho* which resembled Zen meditation. I felt myself enveloped in the silence of the new position and was aware that I would use the same position in my night examen and morning prayer.[29]

---

[29] Examen is a daily exercise for Jesuits and members of the Ignatian CLC (Christian Life Communities). It is done at noon and before we retire at night so that we may offer gratitude to God as we look back on the day to see where we collaborated with God, recognize where we failed to respond to God's graces, and make a resolution to be more open and freer to respond to God.

With the third upgrading, I was able to engage in the *ta cho* with both palms facing upwards and my hands resting on my knees as I sat in the lotus position, and with my back and neck upright. I sat like so until the joss-sticks burnt out. Ah Nam gave me a cup of water to drink and asked me whether this new method was easier. I replied that there was a master who taught me this position before. Ah Nam assured me that I would take to this new method with ease because of the many commendable deeds I had engaged in as a priest. When the joss-sticks finally burned out, Ah Nam came and lifted me up from my lotus position.

On Friday, 21 September 2007, I took to the new position at the sixty-seventh *ta cho* with delight after Ah Nam served me dinner. He was seated on my left and we had a great meditation together. Ah Nam disclosed to me at this *ta cho* that he had requested a spirit-guide who was only twelve years old to accompany me. He was once harnessed to engage in wicked activities but was now redeemed and assigned to Ah Nam. This spirit-guide, Ah Nam added, would inform me of any imminent danger with a gentle tap on my shoulder, alerting me that I would have to abort my activity or change the course of my travel. This spirit-guide would also cause whatever food I was consuming to drop accidentally from my plate. Ah Nam exhorted me to allow the spirit-guide to consume part of my food.

The following day, Saturday, 22 September 2007, Ah Nam invited me to the house-shrine for a blessing after he served me some black chicken herbal soup and curry fish. I knelt in front of the shrine and Ah Nam lit the joss-sticks and asked me to mention my name, date, and place of birth. He blessed me on my forehead and on the back of my neck, and reminded me that the spirit-guide would be leading ahead of me as I made my journey home to the Jesuit residence, which was a thirty-five minute drive from Ah Nam's house.

Vun Pak in Astral Travels

In the *Máoshān* school, the travel of the soul or *vun pak* normally takes place at night or during the early hours of dawn. I first learned about this from Ah Nam during the first upgrading ritual on Thursday, 23 September 2004, after he brought me to meet up with Master Lee for the first time. Over the course of the *Máoshān* discipleship, Ah Nam recounted three incidences of *vun pak* astral travel from one place to the next "in the cloud."[30] He clarified that my *vun pak* did not yet have the power to communicate except to nod or shake my head (indicating a "yes" or "no") as the speech of my *vun pak* was "locked" when I was "adopted" by Goddess *Guan Ying* in a ritual at a Daoist shrine located along Likas Road, en route to Mount Kinabalu in Sabah. However, my *vun pak* would be released from the maternal care of Goddess *Guan Ying* and be able to communicate with Ah Nam's *vun pak* during astral travel after the seventy-ninth *ta cho*.[31]

My Father's Visit. The first account was about my father who visited Ah Nam at 3:20 AM in front of his house in Johore, West Malaysia. At the twenty-sixth *ta cho*, Ah Nam himself mentioned that he was fully awake when he realized that he had a few visitors at about 3:20 AM. The visitors travelled across Thailand and were late in reaching Ah Nam's home. When Ah Nam went out to meet them, his wife saw no one, only clouds, in the compound of the house.

Ah Nam then narrated the encounter to me: "Your dad introduced himself as the father of Jojo who is his second son. I recognized him straight away." According to Ah Nam, my father came in his white *vun pak*. His driver, an Indian woman who appeared to be all white and about 70 years old, just nodded in agreement whenever my father spoke. They came in a white Mercedes-Benz. After the preliminary

---

[30] Ah Nam disclosed this when we had our *ta cho* on Friday, 14 July 2006.

[31] Ah Nam used two terms in Hakka—*soh hoi*, which means "it is locked," and *fon hoi*, which means release—to denote that I have attained the maturity to be independent of the maternal care of the Goddess *Guan Ying*.

introduction, my father said, "I have to get back by 4:30 AM."[32] Ah Nam added that my father appeared in white because he lived with righteousness in his heart and walked the path of loving kindness.

My father disclosed to Ah Nam that he stepped on something "dirty" and that his left leg was all swollen. Indeed, the three wild pigeons Ah Nam had caught and kept in cages died from the "bad" energies these birds absorbed from his body.[33]

Ah Nam's Astral Travel. The second account was about the astral travel of Ah Nam's *vun pak* to meet up with my father in his bedroom at his house located at Likas Park, near Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, East Malaysia. Ah Nam narrated his astral travel at our thirty-second *ta cho* on Friday, 11 November 2005. His *vun pak*'s astral travel took place on Monday, 7 November 2005, after he began his *ta cho* at the house-shrine at 10:00 PM. After he fell asleep, his *vun pak* left his body and traveled to Kota Kinabalu to meet up with my father. Ah Nam found out that *Ti-Guan-Tai-Wong*, one of the deities in charge of land in the Daoist pantheon, would not allow my father's *vun pak* to travel and see Ah Nam for fear that my father's *vun pak* would fall, get injured, and subsequently fail to reunite with his physical body that was asleep in his bedroom.[34] Failure to reunite would result in my father's untimely demise.

Ah Nam proceeded on his journey and arrived at my father's house without wearing a shirt, only his shorts. His intention was to give my father a full body massage although he failed to convince my father who he was. I inquired as to why my father failed to recognize him. Ah Nam explained that in the first encounter, my father came

---

[32] When I told Grace Fung about this account, she concurred, stating that Dad normally woke up at about 4:30 AM and then took his breakfast before leaving the house for his morning walk and jog.

[33] "Dirty" here is understood not in terms of hygiene but in terms of a location that is being occupied by "bad spirits" (as opposed to a sacred place of the good spirits/deities).

[34] Ah Nam used the Hakka term *chook kin* which denotes the action of applying pressure with his hand to pinch the nerve in his scrotum.

to him in his *vun pak* in the *yin*-world (the world of souls/ghosts) but met him with his shirt and long pants on in the *yang*-world (the world of the living). In the end, to get through to my father, he had to resort to pressing one of the nerves in the ligament of his scrotum that controlled the flow of urine and one of his pressure points on his forehead. Ah Nam said that my father would be "down for two days" and then, once fully recovered, would be able to go to the market to buy vegetables with my second mom. Ah Nam also remarked that he saw my younger sister Grace and perceived that she suffered from migraines, which, he explained, were caused by the medicine from her injection that had become concentrated in her brain. Ah Nam had to depart before 4:30 AM as my mom woke up at 2:30 AM. She thought my father was dead as his body was ice cold and his heartbeat had slowed down. However, upon touching his chest, she was consoled to learn that my father still had his heartbeat.

Wounded in Astral Travel. In the fifty-fourth *ta cho* in Ah Nam's house-shrine on Saturday, 14 July 2007, I mentioned to him about the pain I felt in my right ankle after my jog earlier that afternoon. However, Ah Nam disclosed to me that the actual cause of the pain was an accident on an astral journey. He narrated that my *vun pak* drove to his house and implored him to go out. Our *vun pak* took a short cut, about fifteen minutes long, as we walked on foot to an indigenous village of about ten mostly Muslim households in Kota Tinggi, in the state of Johore. Ah Nam said he decided to bring a sharp long knife, or *parang* in Malay, in case of any conflict. As we walked on the untarred road into the village, a middle-aged man in his car rushed out and, to avoid another oncoming car, veered off the road toward me. I jumped off the road in the nick of time and landed on the grass about two feet away. However, when I landed, my right foot got caught in a trap set for wild boar. By the time Ah Nam saw it, I was hung up some five feet above the ground. Ah Nam swung his *parang* and chopped off the branch and the thin wire from which I hung. The owner of the trap rushed to the scene on a motorbike, pleading in tears. He personally lifted me up from the ground and onto

his bike and rushed me to his house. Then he came back to fetch Ah Nam and pleaded with him not to report the incident to the police. Upon reaching his house, the owner provided some medicine—a combination of sea turtle, python, and iguana boiled together. The medication was effective for burns but not for my wounded ankle. Anyway, Ah Nam massaged the wound on my foot so that I could at least walk home with him.

At the end of the *ta cho*, Ah Nam massaged my foot and showed me the mark of the wire that pierced my ankle. The more he massaged the wound, the more the greenish blue-black patch became pinkish and "white," suggesting that my wound was healing gradually.

Ritualizing Healing for Affliction

On Sunday, 15 July 2007, I came from Melaka and arrived at Ah Nam's house at 9:05 PM, only to find him waiting for me. He looked downcast and I soon found out that he was afflicted by *La Tok Kung*, a Taoist deity called Datuk whom Ah Nam said was Chinese. Based on the pain, Ah Nam concluded that the affliction in his leg and back was related to an oracle that he received from the Daoist temple of the "Elderly Woman" or *Ah Po Miao* in Hakka which foretold that he would offend a deity.

Ah Nam beseeched me to bring him to see Master Lee, to which I agreed. I took a quick shower and then we left for Master Lee's house after I received confirmation from a member of Ah Nam's family that Master Lee had just arrived home from his errand. During the drive over to Master Lee's house, Ah Nam expressed his hope that he had not offended a *la tok* or deity of the mountain (in Hakka, *san sien*) which amounted to a far more serious offense than offending a deity or *la tok* of the house.

Talking of *san sien*, Ah Nam said that each of the mountain deities would be as tall as 50 feet (15.24 meters) and were green in colour, with teeth protruding from both sides of the jaws. Then he mentioned

to me that there was a whitish stone that represented the abode of the *san sien* in the indigenous village of Tanah Gembor. In response to my questions as to why the *san sien* lived there in Tanah Gembor, Ah Nam explained that this particular *san sien* had been there since time immemorial, even before the villagers cleared the jungle and inhabited the current location.

When we arrived and met with Master Lee, Ah Nam mentioned the "offence" to him. Master Lee immediately acted upon his request, saying, "Let's go to the shrine at the back of Ah Nam's house." Then he placed a call to Ah Seng and requested him to purchase five lemon fruits and a few white candles. Sensing the urgency in Master Lee's voice, we all got into the car and drove to Ah Nam's house-shrine.

On the way to the house-shrine, I checked with Master Lee to ascertain if the numbness in my hand was occasioned by an offence committed against a deity and affected by transgressing its home.[35] He immediately responded in the negative and interjected that the numbness was quite common. He shared with me how a Chinese doctor, after examining the numbness of his hand after his stroke, instructed him to immerse his left hand into warm water mixed with fine salt. Over the course of the immersion, his left arm was gradually healed.

As we passed Ah Nam's house where the deity's shrine was located, Master Lee sensed and concluded that Ah Nam had offended the deity in his own house. When we reached the house-shrine, Master Lee instructed Ah Seng to assist Ah Nam in lighting up the joss-sticks and candles. Then Master Lee told me about the presence of three deities as we stood near the altar: on the right was *Guan Kung* or *Guan Ti*, the deity for administrative matters; *Guan Ying*, the goddess of mercy, was in the middle; and *La Tok*/deity was on the left. Master Lee, tongue in cheek, added that he was hapless in transferring *Guan Kung* to the middle position as *Guan Ying* insisted on being placed in the middle between *Guan Kung* and *La Tok*.

---

[35] The expression *kau tau lo so* in Hakka conveys the meaning that Ah Nam might have committed an offence by trespassing a place guarded by a deity.

Ah Nam then knelt in prayer before the altar. Master Lee conferred with Ah Seng and me regarding the date and time of Nam Pak's birth and then proceeded to write, with three converging fingers of his right hand, the word "Buddha" on the back of Ah Nam's neck, on his right and left shoulder blade, and in the middle of his shoulder blades, with the ending of the word right down his spine. Before beginning the ceremony, Master Lee asked Ah Seng, his girlfriend, and me to turn our backs to him as we faced the entrance. Master Lee used a ritual cloth, called *tai fu* in Hakka, which had the date and time of Ah Nam's birth ritually embedded on it in red Chinese characters.[36] At one point, he paused, asked me to take a look at the crossing of two lines on the back of Ah Nam's neck, and then continued the ritual with our backs to him. He instructed Ah Nam to lie down while stripped to the waist and then bit each of the lemons before passing each of them to Ah Seng, who split each one into two halves. Ah Seng then rubbed one halve on Ah Nam's left shoulder, going down to his side, to his left thigh, leg, and out through each of his toes, and the second halve on the inside part of Ah Nam's thigh. He did this using all five lemons.

When this ritual was completed, Master Lee requested Ah Nam to kneel with his back to the shrine and instructed Ah Seng to drink a mouthful of water from a glass on the altar. He then spread the water with his mouth unto Ah Nam. Then Master Lee requested Ah Seng to drink another mouthful of water from the same glass placed on the altar. Ah Nam then sat up and did his *ta cho* in front of the altar. Master Lee asked me to sit next to Ah Nam on his right side and do the same, and said that a five-minute meditation would suffice for both of us.

Master Lee then called me to his side, and we observed the white patch on the back of Ah Nam's neck. He disclosed to me that Ah Nam also offended the spirit of the white lion (*pak fu* in Hakka) who watched over herbs because Ah Nam went in search of herbs near the

[36] In Hakka, the term *tai* means "big" while *fu* denotes a thin cloth with red Chinese characters.

new bridge at the crossroads that led to the University of Technology of Malaysia or UTM. Master Lee immediately reminded Ah Nam that he would have to stomp his left foot on the ground three times and plead for forgiveness for coming into the territory of the white lion and procuring the herbs he needed.

On the way home to Master Lee's house, we stopped at a coffee shop for a chat. I came to know from Master Lee that Ah Nam earned a little over 1000 MYR (approx. 231.41 USD or 186.01 GBP) per month and that he always advanced Ah Nam's salary in the middle of each month so that Ah Nam could finance the education of his three daughters and only son and the needs of his family. He disclosed to me that Ah Nam exemplified a husband who gave all his earnings to his wife for her to manage. Unfortunately, Master Lee admitted that Ah Nam's wife was a gambler. Ah Nam promptly interjected, but she was addicted to buying lottery tickets and 4 Ds. Master Lee also concluded that Ah Nam did not deserve the cold shoulder from his three daughters and only son as none of them gave him any money for expenses even as he labored hard to put them through school. I was appalled to learn about the ingratitude of the youngest daughter who had quite a gentle personality. She gave 200–300 MYR (approx. 45.83–68.75 USD or 37.20–55.80 GBP) to her mother but not a single dime to her father. I was glad to have stood by Nam Pak in soliciting funds for him so that he could continue his practice as an herbalist and masseuse.

Shortly before reaching his house, Master Lee once again reminded Ah Nam of his instruction that he must remove his shoes/sandals if he needed to clean up the surrounding areas near the shrine of the local deity or *la tok*, lest a future offence incur another penalty. He also commented that Ah Nam's *ta cho* was incorrect or insufficient. According to Master Lee, both his hands should be closed and held close to his heart, instead of resting on his lap, during the *ta cho*.

Nam Pak, on the way home from Gelang Patah after dropping off Master Lee, admitted to me that the *pak fu* (spirit of the white lion) was a human and reiterated that the *la tok* was not a Malay but a Chinese.

Ritual for Capturing Ghosts

I arrived at Nam Pak's place at about 8:02 PM on Tuesday, 17 July 2007. He looked downhearted as he had been suffering from pain on both sides of his thighs after the healing episode Master Lee conducted on Sunday, 15 July 2007. Nevertheless, we decided to do the *ta cho* after dinner, during which Ah Nam decided that we would call on Master Lee at Gelang Patah. I called Master Lee after our *ta cho* and was delighted to know that he was at home, so Ah Nam and I drove over to see him.

At the *yim cha* ("having a drink" in Hakka) in a restaurant in Gelang Patah, Master Lee affirmed that he had shamanized Ah Nam as he was suffering from *foon* ("wind" in Hakka).[37] Master Lee advised him to see a Western doctor.

As we proceeded with the *yim cha*, Master Lee firmed up his decision to go to a sister-disciple (*tze mei* in Hakka) to "hunt down" and "round up" the ghosts who were dwelling in one of the rooms at the back of her house which she and her newly-wed husband rented for 50 MYR (11.47 USD; 9.3 GBP) per month.[38] We left for the house of a fellow disciple-brother (*tze ti* in Hakka), Ah Seng, whom Master Lee instructed to gather the necessary accessories. Ah Nam, Ah Seng, Wong Kim (who was also a disciple-brother; in Hakka, *kim* means gold), Master Lee, and I began the ritual at the shrine located on the right side of the kitchen space in Ah Seng's house. Master Lee requested that I consume a green *fu* or talisman to protect and strengthen me

[37] What is *foon* or wind in Hakka is often construed as the flow of energy in the body or *qi* in Mandarin. *Foon* connotates bad energy that causes bodily discomfort or even sickness.

[38] This was my first exposure to such a ritual when the other disciples of Master Lee assembled in a disciple-sister's house for a "ghost-busting" activity. I have heard about this while growing up in my grandfather's house, in tales from relatives like my maternal and paternal aunts and uncles.

for the paranormal activities associated with "rounding up" spirits in the house.[39]

Upon completing the preparatory ritual, we left for a residential area known as Harmony Garden (in Malay, *Taman Harmoni*). When we arrived at the disciple-sister's house, Master Lee instructed her to prepare the contents of the ritual in a red pail. To begin the ritual, the disciple-sister, her husband, Wong Kim, and I remained in the main sitting room downstairs. Master Lee instructed Ah Nam to walk backward up the staircase with Ah Seng following right after him and carrying the red plastic pail. Master Lee himself was last in the line.

All the lights in the house were switched off. Master Lee motioned for Ah Nam to "catch" the ghost/spirit in the middle of the stairway. I saw Ah Nam's movements—it was as though he was uprooting a shrub, holding it by the stem, and stacking it away in the pail. At the top of the stairs, the trio went into the back room, after which I heard loud noises from upstairs. Ah Nam would explain later that five of the ghosts put up a fight with him when he clasped one of them by the waist. The sixth one was a benevolent spirit who put up both hands as a sign of yielding himself to the trio who entered the room.

The activity concluded within five minutes. Master Lee instructed Ah Nam to empty the pail at the nearby stream. Then he sent three teams to visit the room that the trio had just been in with the purpose of "sensing" whether there were any more ghosts/spirits left undetected. The last team of Ah Seng and the disciple-sister felt that their hairs stood on ends when they were in the bathroom of the back room. Master Lee surmised that the former tenant must have had an altar[40] installed in the bathroom that was dedicated to the *yin* deities such as *tai pak ya* ("the most senior deity" in Hakka) and *nge pak ya* ("the second deity" in Hakka) to help in shady businesses such as drug and

---

[39] *Fu* or talisman is a piece of paper with Chinese characters written on it and which has been ritualized. It is then burnt and mixed with potable water.

[40] Master Lee used the Hakka term *yim toi* where *yim* refers to the world of the dead and *toi* refers to the Daoist altar in the house.

human trafficking, etc. Ah Nam also mentioned that the *kui tzai* (in Hakka, "little ghost/spirit") were the ghosts of deceased humans and were dark in complexion whereas the *sein* (in Hakka, "the deity") were bright in colour, with a glow that was either red, yellow, or blue.

Representing Ah Nam in a Ritual

Knowing that I would be in my home state of Sabah, Ah Nam requested my assistance to represent him in a ritual to negotiate with a girl-spirit who was thirteen years old when she was murdered and her body decimated.

Ah Nam recounted how this girl-spirit spoke to him in Mandarin, alerting him that her father hailed from Sarawak and her mother from Sabah. This girl-spirit intended to reincarnate in another woman's body, Yolanda, by inflicting her with uncontrollable diarrhea to exterminate her. Yolanda became susceptible to the infliction of this girl-spirit when her pyscho-emotional state was at its lowest ebb (*yun hii* in Hakka). Ah Nam said that while the girl-spirit was defiant during the ritual negotiation, he managed to silence her. Tears rolled down her cheek after she succumbed to Ah Nam.

The ritual was conducted in consultation with Ah Nam on Tuesday, 15 August 2006. That evening, I drove to the shops in a residential area called *Foh San Yan* to buy the necessary accessories: a bag of Roti Fa branded tea, red joss-sticks, and two joss-sticks that each had a supportive base. I prepared a white T-shirt for Yolanda as I needed to call her name seven times and was prohibited from looking back once I completed the ritual, a *lalang* (*imperata cylindrica*) plant with its root and which had to be folded nine times, and three rice balls. Ah Nam further instructed me about the plan, which was to set up a makeshift altar at the T-junction next to the Shell gas station along Kolam Road. The altar would be comprised of three joss-sticks placed in between the other two bigger joss-sticks that had a supportive base, one on each side, with each of the bigger joss-sticks about a foot away

from the three middle joss-sticks. Finally, the three rice balls were to be placed in front of the three middle joss-sticks.

As I was about to begin the ritual, I felt a surge of excitement at the designated site where I had lit the joss-sticks and put up the makeshift altar. The excitement was related to crossing an interreligious threshold as a Jesuit priest of the Catholic Church, one who represented Ah Nam of the *Máoshān* Daoist tradition and engaged in a Daoist ritual with the addition of Christian prayers. I took the white T-shirt in both hands, called out Yolanda's name seven times, and pleaded with the girl-spirit to have compassion on Yolanda, to set her free by coming out of her body. Then I went back to the car with the white T-shirt.

I returned to the site and prayed to Mother Mary as I consecrated this girl-spirit to God. I also prayed to Jesus to offer this girl-spirit the grace of eternal bliss with God. After the second round of prayer, I returned to the car and drove away, but after a while decided to turn the car around and pass by the site one last time. I put the *lalang* into the T-shirt with my cross, blessed the T-shirt, and folded it and put it into a plastic bag with some pictures.

The next day, Lucia, the mother of Yolanda, met me at the ground floor of where they lived and brought me up to see Yolanda. I mentioned to Lucia and Yolanda that the T-shirt is a reminder that I am always with them. The cross was mine, to be left behind with her, and I explained that the *lalang* was a plant which, according to Chinese customary practice, would absorb all harms. I requested Lucia to boil the roots of the *lalang* to "cool" down Yolanda's body which was too "heaty." Then I prayed with Yolanda, gave her and Lucia Holy Communion, blessed Yolanda, and stayed on to converse with her and her mother. Although Yolanda expressed her wish to recover in a week's time, I could not promise her anything as I did not know if the ritual was efficacious.

At the fifty-fifth *ta cho* with Ah Nam on Thursday, 17 August 2006, I was verifying the ritual's efficacy with Ah Nam, who disclosed to me that he accompanied me by praying 108 chants from 8:30 PM

onwards on 15 August 2006, the actual date when I conducted the ritual. Ah Nam clarified for me that it mattered little if the ritual was carried out according to the exact prescription for the reason that he was the main negotiator and I a mere assistant.

The conversation we had on the girl-spirit in relation to Yolanda during the *ta cho* was as follows:

> Jojo: Where was the girl-spirit?
> Ah Nam: At the junction where the ritual was carried out.
> Jojo: Where was the *vun pak* of Yolanda after she was set free by the girl-spirit?
> Ah Nam: With the T-shirt; she went with you and when you placed it on the bed, it re-entered her body. And the color of the skin of her face changed from what was so pale, a facial change that signified that her *vun pak* had been united with her body.

After the *ta cho*, I felt that my discipleship with Ah Nam had offered me a window of opportunity to represent him at a ritual activity that restored the health of Yolanda.

Special Affiliation with the Goddess *Guan Ying*

It was Ah Nam who, on Sunday, 19 June 2005, enabled me to recall the ritual by which my late mother Chong Su Jin dedicated me to the Goddess *Guan Ying*. According to Benedict Agnes Fung, my aunt and late father's youngest sister, I was very sickly as a teen. Her grandmother who lived near the Daoist shrine at mile 3.5 on Tuaran Road consulted the elderly woman trance-leader and communicated to my mother that I would not be able to survive my eleventh birthday due to a life-threatening crisis.[41] I remembered almost nothing of the temple ritual that followed, but I had a vivid memory of the adoption ritual initiated by my aunt who lived with her family in a town called

[41] Personal communication with my aunt, Benedict Agnes Fung, on Friday, 21 August 2020.

Telipok, also along Tuaran Road. The adoption by my paternal aunt was part of the temple's counsel.

My aunt had to buy me gifts comprised of a golden ring, a pair of red chopsticks, a red bowl, and a pair of red wooden clogs. Having been presented with these gifts, I left my grandfather's house where my parents lived and stayed with my aunt every annual school holiday, beginning in the month of November until December, and returned to my parents after Christmas. I first lived with my aunt's family in a house at the edge of paddy fields that were five minutes' walk from Tuaran Road. Then we moved to a house in the rubber estates where we had to plant and harvest the paddies, tend to buffaloes, and prepare the ground for planting vegetables. After Christmas services in the Telipok Basel Church, I would return to my parents who lived with my grandfather on a hill not too far from the Gaya Teachers' Training College.

Ah Nam instructed me to revisit the Daoist shrine at mile 3.5 on Tuaran Road. I went home for the Lunar New Year which began with the celebration of a reunion dinner on the eve, Sunday, 18 February 2007. Accompanied by my younger sister, Grace Fung, we went to the temple of Goddess *Guan Ying* on Tuesday, 20 February 2007, with gifts of apples and bananas. Upon entering the temple precinct, I noticed how small it was compared to my childhood impression during my early visit when I was eleven. We went into the inner sanctuary, offered incense, and prayed in gratitude for *Guan Ying*'s protection which ensured my safe passage from the ages of eleven to twelve. I apologized for my ingratitude and lack of recollection of my dedication to Her at this temple. I prayed for Her continuous blessings on my life and ministry, and especially my discipleship with Master Lee in the *Máoshān* school.

Conclusion

An acquaintance with Ah Nam turned out to be a four-year sojourn with Master Lee in the *Máoshān* school of very renowned Masters comprised of three brothers and one of my super-grand ancestors who shared the same last name/surname, Fung, as myself, and whom I came to know in the third upgrading during the pilgrimage. Under the unassuming mentorship of Master Lee, I attained another epistemic shift that allowed me to integrate my Christian identity with my alienated and truncated Hakka Han Chinese identity and ancestry that was steeped in Daoism through a process of decolonialization from the coloniality of philosophical and theological knowledge. Resonating with St. John Paul II, I "do not have to be [someone] divided into two parts"; I can be integrated.[42] This shift in adjoining my identity was facilitated by a noticeable affective shift away from dissonance and toward resonance with beliefs in local deities, the drinking of the *fu* or talisman, upgrading rituals that involved the inscription of the word "Buddha" on my body, the astral journey of the human spirit or *vun pak* at night, and the ghosts/spirits of the dead in the *yin*-world who are active in the *yang*-world of the living, which should not be too hastily conflated with necromancy so as to respect and value Asian religious sensibilities on their terms with regard to communion with the dead and the unseen in our midst. In other words, the reciprocity between the epistemic and affective shifts has enabled me to attain greater familiarity with the Daoist pneumatology and theology of the pantheon of deities that, in many ways, constituted the bedrock of my childhood memory given that I grew up in a Christian-Daoist milieu.

Accompanied by my disciple brother, Ah Nam, I had attained a total of eighty-one *ta cho* starting from the Chinese feast of the hungry ghosts on 24 August 2004 until my last recorded conversation with Master Lee on Friday, 9 May 2008. Through Master Lee, *Máoshān* evoked a

---

[42] John Paul II, "Pope Saint John Paul II's 1986 Message to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders," https://catholicoutlook.org/pope-saint-john-paul-iis-1986-message-to-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islanders/ (accessed 12 December 2019), no. 12.

sense of "home" as I "came home" to a cherished relationship with my ancestor known as *Kim Yin Tung Tze*, a renewed filial devotion to the Goddess *Guan Ying* who carried me through a critical encumbrance of my childhood, and an enkindled relationship with *Máoshān,* the sacred site of innumerable renowned Daoist Masters revered by all generations of Daoists both in China and in the global community.

This phase of my Asian sojourn has deepened my communion with my ancestry in China and with the Daoist wisdom of the Hakka people in Malaysia, China, and overseas. This sacred pilgrimage continues with the Decaloris school in Manila which will be explained in the next chapter.

Chapter 3

Wisdom-Oasis of the *Decaloris*

Indonesia abounds in local mystical traditions. Known to many generations of the populous island of Java,[1] *Kejawèn* or Javanism, which dates back to the 15th century, is a mystical spirituality akin to a layered cake (*kuih labis* in Malay) with traditional Javanese religiosity as its bedrock under multiple layers of Buddhist, Hindu, and Islamic beliefs and practices. It is a mystagogy that enables local practitioners to cultivate an interiority (*kebatinan*) expressed in everyday living and guided by five principle beliefs (*kepercayaan*): 1) *tan kinoyo ngopo,* which signifies that God is "unlike others" and utterly beyond human comprehension; 2) *titah*, a verse in the Creator's *tan kinoyo ngopo* conveying a sense that humans are a small part of a large bio-ecosystem; 3) striving to be knowledgeable about oneself in relationship

[1] Java, one of the most inhabited landmasses among the 17,500 islands that make up the nation-state of Indonesia, is the world's most populous island. It has a dense population of over 141 million that goes up to 145 million if the inhabitants of surrounding islands are included, making up approximately 56.7 percent of the Indonesian population. The Indonesian capital city of Jakarta is located on its northwestern coast. Much of the well-known part of Indonesian history took place on Java—it was the center of powerful Hindu-Buddhist empires, the Islamic sultanates, and was the core of the colonial Dutch East Indies. As the center of the Indonesian struggle for independence during the 1930s and 1940s, Java dominates Indonesia politically, economically, and culturally.

with others, the natural world, and the cosmos; 4) becoming mindful of cognitive processes such as bad thoughts (mind) and inner affective movements such as egoistic tendencies (heart); and 5) *slamet,* a sense of composure and security so that one lives in a state of *slametan* over the course of life's journey.[2]

The Catholic members of the Decaloris movement practice a morphed form of *Kejawèn*. In its hybridity, the Decaloris movement values the primacy of the Trinity. In addition, the Decaloris's Trinitarian spirituality cherishes the presence and intercessory role of lifegiving ancestral, familial, and nature spirits. This Trinitarian spirituality enjoins the Decaloris members to punctuate their daily meditation and practices with the recitation of the "Glory Be" which offers glory to the Trinity.

Early Acquaintance

My acquaintance with the Decaloris school began in 2015 in Manila when I met with Romo Sintus, a Claretian priest who hailed from the town of Palangka Raya in West Papua, Indonesia. Sintus joined the Pastoral Renewal and Updating for Leadership and Mission (PRULM) course at the East Asian Pastoral Institute (EAPI) from 3 August to 27 November 2015. He extended his stay to enroll in the Pastoral Leadership and Management for Mission (PLMM) Program from 4 January until 25 June 2016, also at EAPI, when I was the course coordinator.

From early August to September of 2015, Sintus demonstrated his therapeutic skills by massaging a few of the participants at EAPI who were consequently relieved of their bodily aches and pains. I, too,

---

[2] "What is *Kejawen*?," https://www.indoindians.com/what-is-kejawen/ (accessed 27 February 2020) and "Javanese Culture-Religion and Beliefs," http://thespicerouteend.com/javanese-culture-religion/ (accessed 27 February 2020). See also Sahid Teguh Widodo & Kundharu Saddhono, "Petangan Tradition in Javanese Personal Naming Practice: An Ethnolinguistic Study," *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies* 12:4 (2012): 1165–1177.

resorted to his skills.[3] He massaged my injured right ankle three times and relieved me of the pain, after which I could jog daily with ease.

Early Practice

From 28 September to 3 October 2015, Sintus introduced me to the Decaloris's practice of gathering the cosmic energy of the sun, wind, rain/water, and earth and directing it toward the healing of those who have asked me for prayers of healing. Jesera was one of those to whom I regularly directed this cosmic energy for the healing of his blood infection. I also invited all the 22,000 generations of humankind's ancestors to be present with me during every session as I directed the cosmic energy for the healing of Jesera. At the same time, I was able to visualize the presence of Jesus, Mary, and St. Teresa of the Child Jesus as I prayed for God's healing of Jesera. These days, I visualize those who ask me for prayers of healing as I enter the sacred circle of the Trinity and allow their spirit-power to pervade every cell in their body, thereby dissolving the negative and toxic energies found therein.[4]

As I became more acquainted with Sintus, I sought his kind counsel on the plight of Olive who was mired in a bureaucratic ruckus with the local district office and geology department regarding a threat of eviction from his residence. The wife of Olive's assistant Harris also had a dream which I mentioned to Sintus. It was of a "white ancestral spirit" who appeared to encourage Olive in his conundrum.[5]

---

[3] The communication between Sintus and myself was always in *Bahasa Indonesia*, the Indonesian language.

[4] This was my visualization prayer with Jesera in the afternoon of 3 March 2020, at 2:10 PM, in my room (Room 30) in Campion Hall on Brewer Street, Oxford, UK. Jesera, who was in his apartment in Manila, and I used Messenger, a social media platform.

[5] On 6 November 2015, I stayed the night with Olive at his Kinabalu Holiday Residence where we did the meditation and the gathering of the cosmic energies together that evening in the memorial hall, which was built in honor of our late mother, Chong Tzu Ching.

Over our everyday interaction at EAPI, Sintus intuited that I had undergone certain initiations before I came to Manila. Sensing that he had undergone formation in the mystical tradition of *Kejawèn*, I decided to meet up with him in early March 2016 and told him about my initiation ceremony in the heartland of Sabah, in a remote indigenous village of the Murut called Bantul in 2001, and with Master Lee in 2004, whose ancestry dates back to *Máoshān* Daoism as practiced in the Daoist monasteries of the sacred Daoist mountain of Eastern China.[6]

A Journey Within a Pilgrimage

My initiation under the guidance of Sintus took place at a juncture in my sojourn whence I experienced God as the "*allness* of life" and as the "God-in-allness" as in *theo-en-passim* (God in all things), "allness in God" as in *pan-en-theism* (all things subsist in God), and, furthermore, God as "boundlessness" and "vastness" within and around me in the Cosmos-Earth.[7] This experience of "allness" constituted an emerging state of "cosmiciousness."[8] Subsequently, I experienced the "*allness*" of God in living a life filled with God, or a life of "God-fullness" in the whole of the cosmos.[9] This state of "allness" parallels the Chinese articulation of "fill/fulness" or *yu*-ness,

[6] The sharing of my initiation by a renowned shaman, Garing bin Muntalan, from 19–21 July 2001, and by Master Lee on 11 October 2004, along with three upgrading rituals on 20 February 2006, 25 August 2006, and 18 September 2007, evoked in me a deep sense of filial gratitude toward Garing and the *Máoshān* ancestors.

[7] See personal journal entries since 5 January 2020 about my experience of what I termed "bodisciousness" in Jojo M. Fung & Michael Amaladoss, *Creation is Spirited and Sacred: An Asian Indigenous Mysticism of Sacred Sustainability* (Manila: Claretian Communications Foundation, Inc., Jesuit Communications Foundation, Inc., & Institute of Spirituality in Asia, 2017).

[8] Journal entry, 3 March 2016.

[9] Journal entry, 2 April 2016.

in contrast with the state of "emptiness" or *gong*-ness, of life.[10] This experiential stage of my Asian sojourn made me more inwardly aware that *Rûah Elohim* is transforming this Asian sojourner into a mystical cosmic spirit of sacred sustainability (MCSS) whose life is "bigger" than the "earthling-Jojo."[11]

An Initiatory Journey

The initiatory journey took about one month and twenty days. At each session, Sintus and I engaged in conversation until 10:00 PM when we would both take our respective seats and engage in meditation (*meditasi* in Malay) that began by gathering the cosmic energies. During the *meditasi*, Sintus would communicate with me and I would respond to him. I would enter different contemplative experiences and hear the whispers of different figures who appeared in my consciousness. After each *meditasi*, we would share what transpired during the session. Then we would engage in a second *meditasi* or just agree on the date of our next encounter and prayer.

At about 8:15 PM on Thursday, 28 April 2016, Sintus came to my office in Room 311. We chatted until the clock struck 10:00 PM, at which time Sintus sat on the floor and I on the black sofa to begin the prayerful meditation. Sintus alerted me that our *meditasi* began with the gathering of energy from the earth, water, and thunder so we could enter into communion with the nature and ancestral spirits in the presence of the Holy Trinity.

Sintus then alerted me that my Guru Ama Garing had arrived and requested that I yield my place to him.[12] I moved over to the executive

---

[10] *Gong* is a term in Mandarin that translates into "empty" while *yu* is the antonym that denotes "fill" or "full." Personal journal entry, 3 March 2016.

[11] See the section entitled "Cosmic Stage of *Allness*" in Chapter Four.

[12] *Ama* is a term in the Murut language of the southwestern part of Sabah which means "father."

chair. Sintus asked me to be attentive to the whispers (*bisik* in Malay) of my two gurus, Garing bin Muntalan and the late Master Lee. I first heard the voice of Master Lee who spoke to me in the Hakka language, "*Oi siao sim!*" ("Please be on the alert!"), while Ama Garing said in Malay, "*Jangan takut!*" ("Don't be afraid.").[13]

Subsequently, a pool of water shaped like a star appeared in my visualization, and I saw myself immersed in it. Sintus mentioned to me that the water signified the water-energy that my guru Ama Garing had bequeathed to me. He further remarked that those friends who are allied with me numbered about 100 while my foes numbered about 15. Sintus hustled them away with the power he gathered at the beginning of the meditation.

After we finished the *meditasi*, Sintus alerted me, "Your late mum and dad stood far away and it would be up to you to invite them," to which I replied, with delight, "Of course I want them to be with me!"

During the second *meditasi* on that same night, Sintus remarked, "Your two gurus are now with us. Your spirit-guides are with us too. They are both twelve years old, a boy and a girl. They are awesome (*paling dashat* in Malay) because they are original." Sintus disclosed their might as they pushed his right arm which hit the back of the chair near the sink.

At the end of the *meditasi*, Sintus mentioned that my late mother and father would be invited to the next meeting to witness the "opening" of the *chakra* at the top of my head. He taught me a practice that required me to join both my hands and place both my thumbs on my navel. When Sintus counselled me that my late gurus, parents, and spirit guides would show themselves to me when I call out to them with a deep conviction (in Malay, *sungguh-sungguh yakin*), I felt a readiness in my heart to cross this "threshold" into the spirit world of my late gurus, parents, and spirit guides.

---

[13] It came as a pleasant surprise, for which I felt grateful, that our *meditasi* on 28 April 2016 put both Ama Garing and Master Lee in touch with me.

The initiation of "opening" the *chakra* took place on Monday, 2 May 2016.[14] Sintus came to my office and invited my late mother and father to be present. He used the energy he gathered at the start of the session to lift open the "lid" which had been perched atop my head and resembled a crimson hat. When Sintus lifted it open, I saw a bright light emitting from within my head and shining upwards. The Goddess *Guan Ying* appeared in the brilliance of the light, the goddess of mercy under whose patronage I was adopted in a ritual at the *Guan Ying* Temple, located along mile 3.5 of Tuaran Road, near the Kian Kok Secondary School in Kota Kinabalu, the state capital of Sabah. At the end of the *meditasi*, Sintus informed me that my foes had now been reduced from fifteen to two.

The initiation proceeded on Wednesday, 18 May 2016. When Sintus arrived at my office, I shared with him how I have been able to transmit energy into water and bless it, and how I have been discovering that the water has a distinctive and unique taste, since 4 May 2016, when I was in St. Ignatius College (otherwise called Kolese Santo Ignatius or KOLSANI) in Yogyakarta. Sintus affirmed this and encouraged me to continue with the practice. He reiterated that the water could be used for the healing of diseases that impacted the circulation of blood in the body. I further shared with Sintus how I was led, in my prayer, into a world of creatures but was not fearful. He checked with me if I had been subjected to any "tests" by my previous masters and I responded that I had not undergone any. He therefore recommended that he would lead me through a series of tests in the next stage of our initiatory journey that would expose me to venomous snakes and decaying corpses. Sintus advised me to stay composed. Finally, he averred that he would have to accompany me to the Lilok Farm toward the end of this initiation

[14] My first opening of the *Tien Mun* took place on 14 October 2004 under the guruship of Master Lee in the *Máoshān* school. Twelve years, five months, and twelve days later, I had a new experience under Sintus in the Decaloris School.

so that he could immerse me in the river and "open" my inner eyes, allowing me to "see" what remained latent up to that point in my life.[15]

Our conversation ended and we began the second *meditasi*. Sintus requested me to receive the "bright shiny" energy offered by two persons who appeared in white and whom I saw at the two opposite ends of my mind. Sintus also mentioned that there were other persons there who were offering their presence and support. I found myself in a world of light and beauty. When the *meditasi* ended, I asked Sintus if he could see the persons present in our *meditasi* with his naked eyes, to which he replied, "Yes." To emphasize his ability to "see" them, he recounted how he saw two women carrying him away from the site of a terrible accident in which his motorbike plunged into a ravine while he was praying the "Glory Be." Before parting company, Sintus advised me to have a conversation with all those who were present at our meditation, to find out from them who had appeared to me as the two "bright shiny" presences and offered me energy.

During the prayer on the following day, Thursday, 19 May 2016, I entered into communion with Garing bin Muntalan, Master Lee, and with my mother and father. I remembered with gratitude Mahatma Gandhi, the Benedictine monk Swami Abhishiktananda, and the primordial shaman Yaperi Kuli. Upon entering into communion with Antanum and Korom, the two renowned shamans among the Muruts, and with Garing bin Muntalan as the third member of the "reputable trio," my heart/spirit experienced a surge of energy. This surge confirmed my intuition that Antanum and Korom were the two "shiny-energies" which I fully ascertained in my prayer on the following day, Friday, 20 May 2016. I was delightfully grateful to both these reputable ancestors and shamans of the Murut communities of Sabah. Also, I further realized in this meditation that I enjoyed an

[15] The ritual of water initiation was scheduled to take place on 17 July 2016 at a nearby river in Lilok Farm in Baras, Tanay, Rizal, about a 1.5-hour drive from Ateneo de Manila University in Quezon City.

intimate relationship with Swami Abhishiktananda, St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, and Blessed Pedro Arrupe in my life as a Jesuit priest.

As the meditation continued over the two succeeding days (Saturday and Sunday, 21–22 May 2016), I expressed my gratitude to Ama Garing for introducing me to the wisdom of Murut shamanism symbolized by Antanum and Korom, masters of white magic (in Malay, *ilmu putih*), and to Master Lee for having introduced me to the wisdom of *Máoshān* Daoism in his oasis in Johor Baru, in the state of Johor, West Malaysia. The late Master Lee informed me that there were many renowned masters in the *Máoshān* heritage. More interestingly, five other primordial shamans—Kuai, Sinaa, Moatchi, Tsungi, and Sadashe—encountered me in *meditasi* and consoled me in my mother-tongue, "We will come to your assistance."[16] This prayerful communion with the ancestors made me understand more about the Spirit World of God where the life-giving and death-dealing spirits coexist as sources of power to be harnessed by the just and the wicked for different ends. I further realized that the Spirit World of God was where I was during all the *meditasi* and that it would be the *ad terminus* of my sacred pilgrimage whence eternal bliss awaits all sojourners who have run the race to the finish (2 Tim 4:7).

The initiation continued on Tuesday, 24 May 2016, when Sintus and I prayed to the Trinity during *meditasi* to purify-sanctify me (*menyucikan* in Malay). During the prayerful communion, I experienced an "oval-shaped light" surrounding my enfolded palms. This light expanded in the second *meditasi* to enfold me and later became as expansive as creation, with me in its midst.

After Sintus left my office, I went up to my room[17] and decided to repeat the *meditasi* before retiring. I saw a key so vividly, which I took delightfully and used to open a tabernacle. Flowing out from the tabernacle were flower-petals with a stream of bright light shining

---

[16] Journal entry, 21 May 2016.

[17] In EAPI, the Jesuits live on the fifth floor and my room is no. 501.

forth and upward, spreading out like white clouds that eventually formed a huge canopy over me. I then saw water cascading downward and remembered the phrase, "I am the living water" (Jer 17:13; Zech 14:8–9; Jn 4:14; 7:38; Rev 21:6–8; 22:1–2). I was elated.

In the repetition of this *meditasi* the next day, Wednesday, 25 May 2016, I saw the key vividly once again. I took it, opened the tabernacle, and once again the light shone forth and formed a canopy over me. Then I saw God the Father, the Son, myself, and a bright light over us. This beam of light was streaming from above me and downward through my head, my heart, and my body, as if the light was cleansing me, filling me up, and aligning me within itself. Personally, it was a very powerful experience of being purified and aligned by the light.

On Thursday, 26 May 2016, Sintus explained to me that I needed a schedule to harmonize what he termed the vertical communion with the Trinity with the horizontal bonding with the ancestral-nature spirits. He proposed that on Mondays I pray for communication/bonding with the ancestors/ancestral and nature spirits who assist me; on Tuesdays, I concentrate on the gathering and storing of energy from the earth, from the spirit of the forest, land, mountain, and water, and from creation itself; and on Wednesday, I focus on the Holy Trinity. Sintus explained to me that the Holy Spirit comes to me in the form of a cloud, light, and water.[18]

Sintus added that I would need to undergo some tests. Then he guided me into two meditations. In the first, I came face-to-face with a cliff. I saw a key, which I took, inserted into a keyhole, and turned. A pair of huge doors opened on their own. I stepped through them and found myself in pitch black darkness. The air was moist, and for a minute I thought I was in a cave with bats. Suddenly, an aperture in the ceiling opened and lights came streaming through it. I realized that I was in a very old temple, as though I was in the Holy of Holies. Then a light shone from the top and formed a luminous column. I

[18] Journal entry, 26 May 2016.

stepped into this luminous column and sat in a lotus-position to meditate within it, with the radiance of light all around me.

In the second meditation, I entered the temple and encountered a dragon with triple heads. I remained calm and it disappeared. Next, a malicious snake with its flickering tongue, akin to the snake in the movie *The Jungle Book*, appeared. I remained unperturbed and it vanished from sight. Satan then appeared, with a giant black hairy torso supported on two legs with hoofed feet, the upper part of his body emitting tongues of fire, and a hideous-looking head with horns. I endured this prolonged encounter with tranquility, and Satan disappeared from sight. Then I approached a cross and a candle in the distance. As I stood at the foot of the cross, the Crucified Jesus descended from it and hugged and affirmed me: "You have passed the test!" His embrace was really consoling for me. Then Jesus and I were in the light. We both ascended to the middle of the column of light and were hurled out of the stone temple.

I came out of the meditation. Sintus instructed me on how to perform a rite using a lit candle and a crucifix. He wanted me to focus on the candle and gradually close my eyes until the glow disappeared so that I could focus on the cross and pray for those I have in mind. Sintus also instructed me to send energy to the water in a bottle which would be used for the healing of a designated recipient. I thus began the exercise. As I focused on the lit candle, I saw the column of light, lit up as it were by fireworks. As I gradually closed my eyes, the candle gradually disappeared. Then I saw light emitting from the base of the candle, and then that totally disappeared. Then I focused on Jesus and prayed for the sick. Lastly, I transmitted energy into a bottle of water.[19]

A week passed. I began the day on Wednesday, 1 June 2016, with my daily Ignatian contemplation in my office. I saw again the scene from last night; it gradually brightened up, like the breaking of dawn. I saw the cross before me and I prayed for all, especially for the healing

[19] Journal entry, 26 May 2016.

of John's liver and for Jonathan who got laid off from work. I sent both of them energy for healing.

That evening, Sintus and I resumed the *meditasi*. I saw a whitish limestone hill against a dusk-like sky and a ray of light shining upward, illuminating a human figure which turned out to be me. Then the whole scene was replaced by the cross in silhouette, and I was kneeling in front of the cross, bathed in light. In the second meditation, I saw the same silhouetted cross but this time the whole hill was brightly lit up.[20]

The next day, Thursday, 2 June 2016, I underwent further tests. These were interspersed fleeting encounters with 1) airborne snakes bent on biting me, 2) a valley of black venomous snakes, 3) decaying corpses, 4) a cemetery, and, finally, 5) a long, dark tunnel with an exit into the light.

After passing these tests, I found myself communicating with the renowned masters of *Máoshān*, enchanted by their milieu of misty highlands, and the six primordial shamans who made me realize their omnipresence. Instead of hierarchizing the masters of the two religiocultural traditions, Sintus told me to respect their distinctiveness and differences. The concluding rite of praying with the candle and the cross led me to behold with delight the rays of light directed toward me and beaming upwards. These became a bright ambience of light around me, so much so that I could not see the cross, which was placed on the side of the candle on the floor of my office.

Sintus then led me into two meditations. In the first, I entered a world of blue lights with Mother Mary seated on the celestial throne with God, Jesus, and myself. I heard her voice: "Listen to my Son. Be like my Son." In the second meditation, I once again savored the presence of Mother Mary and prayed for all those in need of prayers.

After the *meditasi*, Sintus informed me that I had not been subjected to intensive tests. I disclosed to him that I was drawn more to the

[20] Journal entry, 1 June 2016.

gentle ways of the primordial and Murut shamans—Garing, Korom, and Antanum—who spoke of warding off evil forces known as black magic and charms. The ways of Master Lee and the *Máoshān*, in contrast, were more aggressive (*ganas* in Malay). To elucidate these differences, Sintus narrated his experience with two ruffians who threw stones at the roof of his parish church and broke the windowpanes. He piled up the stones in front of a candle and the cross and prayed to find out who the culprits of such a hideous activity were. His spirit-guide, who was the spirit of his sister who died during a miscarriage, requested him to engage in three days of meditation. On the third day, news reached him that the ruffians burned to death when the two containers of petrol they carried on their motorbike burst into flames.

Sintus's narrative was a response to my sharing with him about Dave and his use of dark forces/evil power (*ilmu hitam* in Malay). I became inwardly aware that my fellowship with Master Lee, Ama Garing, and the primordial shamans had made me stronger than Dave's evil forces. Then Sintus led me into two meditations. In the first, I renounced the aggressive ways of Master Lee; in the second, I saw Jesus carrying his cross and found myself in the fellowship of God, Jesus, and Mary, and they said to me, "We will take care of Dave."[21]

I continued with two days of *meditasi* on the Holy Trinity. On Friday, 3 June 2016, while meditating on the Holy Trinity, I saw myself as a monk in scorching steam meant to remove the toxin of concupiscence from my body. This led me to hear an inner voice: "It is not about pleasure. It is about God." I also heard my inner voice beseeching me, "Make me holy as You are Holy." In the meditation on the Holy Trinity on Sunday, 5 June 2016, I saw the light of the Trinity shining onto me, lighting up my heart, mind, and body, and then I heard a voice: "Be Holy as I am Holy."[22]

---

[21] Journal entry, 1 June 2016.

[22] Journal entry, 3 and 5 June 2016.

Sintus then led me into two meditations. In the first meditation, I saw a white dragon and a green meadow with black strips. I saw Dave and he called out to me to "save" him. Tears welled up in my eyes. Then I saw Dave when he was nine years old, and he made me realize that he had no one to look up to at his tender age. This led him to go astray as he was growing up. Sintus, on the other hand, saw Dave lying in a green field with worms all over him, and stated that Dave, in his wickedness, was beyond any hope of redemption.[23] Then Sintus related an incident during the Dutch era in Indonesia where an old man (*bapak* in Malay) stole a golden tabernacle from a church and another man carried it to be sold in the market. The man sold the tabernacle for money but then resisted a thief who killed him on the spot. Sintus added that he himself was too busy to caution his aggressive friends not to take matters of killing into their own hands.

In the second meditation, Sintus instructed me to focus on the candlelight and the cross. I saw a person in silhouette and wearing a black sackcloth, whom I later understood to be Jesus before Pontius Pilate. Then I gazed at the cross. I saw Dave all wounded, lying in a mosquito net, and then I heard the voice of Jesus: "He has to be wounded to be saved." Then I saw the crucified body of Jesus on the cross. I understood that Jesus would save Dave through his suffering. I also realized that I had the power of the Trinity to save Dave, and so I decided to choose the way of Jesus. I turned to my friends in spirit and ordered them to stop ending Dave's life with their aggressive ways. I had chosen the way of Jesus. Toward the end, I saw the glorious Risen Lord in dazzling white above the cross. Dave, too, also in white, had risen from his bed.[24]

We resumed our *meditasi* a week later. Sintus came to my office on Friday, 10 June 2016. In the first meditation, I saw the father of Jono. He looked emaciated, weak, and dead. In the second meditation,

---

[23] Journal entry, 5 June 2016. Sintus expressed it in Malay: "Ini memang dia tidak ada harapan lagi."

[24] Journal entry, 5 June 2016.

I saw a cadaver swirling in a tornado and heard the song "I Will Raise Him Up." I saw Jono's father by the side of Jesus. Sintus opined that Jono's father had only six months to live.[25]

Another week passed, and we continued our *meditasi* on Saturday, 18 June 2016.[26] Sintus instructed me that the cross could be used for the purposes of "locking" (*kunci* in Malay) or "opening" (*buka* in Malay). In the first meditation, I "opened" the possibilities for Jono and for Olive's application for his land title. At the same time, I "locked" Dave's accumulative greed. Then I visualized the power of the cross radiating upon the gate located on the way to Olive's place and its destruction, along with Olive's face in sheer delight. After the meditation, Sintus remarked that Olive needed to level a patch of ground and plant a cross on it for believers of the many faiths to gather around for prayer/meditation.[27] In the second meditation, I saw Olive's camp but was soon taken up into the Trinitarian presence, and then I heard a voice: "This is my mission in the sacred space and I will send you." I realized that this voice was related to my desire to organize a retreat at Olive's place. In the third meditation, I prayed for the resolution of a conflict between a priest and Bahay Ko, the name of an Aeta Mag-Antsi organization in Tarlac, Luzon Province, Philippines.

At this juncture of our initiatory journey, Sintus told me that he needed to do a ritual in a nearby river. I suggested the Lilok Farm. But he informed me on Wednesday, 29 June 2016, that we would have to postpone our trip. The final ritual began in my office on Sunday, 17 July 2016. Sintus requested me to bring a tub of water which I did, and placed it on the table. To begin the ritual, Sintus requested me to invite all my ancestors and friends to be present. I invited Garing, my Ama-guru, Korom and Antanum, two renowned Murut shamans before Garing, Master Lee and the *Máoshān* community in China,

---

[25] Journal entry, 10 June 2016.

[26] Journal entry, 18 June 2016.

[27] Sintus's remark in Malay: "Buat tugu salib untuk taman doa."

the Tibetan monk-mystics, the seven primordial shamans of South America, the 22,000 generations of humankind, and my late parents. As session two had to be in darkness, Sintus requested me to switch off all the lights and be attentive. Ama Garing asked me to continue with the *na rio* (bathing in the river) and Master Lee specifically averred, "Now you are your own master. Do not be afraid. I will help you."[28]

I looked up and saw Sintus gather energy, take two steps toward the tub of water, and touch the water with the palms of his hands as he transferred the energy to the water. Then Sintus instructed me to dip my face in the tub of water and asked me to share it with him, which I did. Then he asked me to dip my face three times in the mini tub of water. I did everything as instructed. Upon completion of the ritual, Sintus exhorted me to continue practicing it over the next three days (until Wednesday, 20 July 2016). I thus kept the mini tub of water and, over the course of the following three days, gathered the cosmic energy, transferred it to the water, and washed my face and bathed with it. Upon realizing the importance of full concentration based on Sintus's example, I, too, gathered the energy of lightning and thunder and experienced the surge of energy from within.[29]

On Wednesday, 20 July 2016, the last day of the ritual, I sat and prayed. I gathered the cosmic energy and felt a surge of energy as I continued to gather it from above. I also experienced a deep conviction that Olive's case would be resolved and that a particular request of funds from the Henry Sy Foundation would be successful.

---

[28] Journal entry, 29 June 2016.

[29] Journal entry, 29 June 2016.

Conclusion

This initiatory journey in the oasis of the *Kejawèn*-Decaloris with Sintus at the East Asian Pastoral Institute had enabled me to imbibe the wisdom and practices of the Decaloris that unite me more intimately with the gurus of the Longongon Murut and *Máoshān* oases, the cosmos, and God's creation. The epistemic shift I experienced in this oasis of the Decaloris was an integration of the renowned ancestors of the Muruts and of the *Máoshān* with the Trinity. The onward journey would now be mentored by *Rûah Elohim* and the renowned ancestors, as affirmed by Master Lee who came to me in the second prayer session with Sintus on 17 July 2016 and remarked in Hakka, "Now you are your own master. Do not be afraid. I will help you."[30] Moreover, my first Ama-shaman, Garing, also encountered me during my 2018 annual retreat and encouraged me: "You are your own master now. You have learned how to harness the Spirit Power of God through the ancestral spirits and the zillions of cosmic particles."[31]At the same time, it was most consoling when, while in prayer on the third day of my annual retreat at the Loyola House of Studies in Manila, I saw myself at the stream where Ama Garing initiated me. There I saw and heard God's voice: "There too, I send my Spirit upon you." Then I saw myself at the altar of the shrine in Ah Nam's house, and in my office in EAPI, Room 311, with Sintus, and heard God's voice: "There too, I send my Spirit upon you."[32]

The onward sojourn imbibing God's *Sophia* in the school of *Rûah* will be described in the following chapter.

---

[30] Journal entry, 17 July 2016.

[31] Journal entry for my third Prayer Period from 3:55–4:55 PM on Saturday, 14 July 2018, at the Chang Saen Jesuit house in which I had my spiritual conversation with Po Vinai Boonlue, the first indigenous Karen Jesuit priest in Thailand.

[32] Journal entry, 24 July 2017, Day 3 of my annual retreat.

Chapter 4

Wisdom *par excellence* of *Rûah Elohim*

The three important initiatory phases related to the three different oases of the Longongon, *Máoshān,* and Decaloris have intensified my capacity for experiencing the union of mind and heart with *Rûah Elohim*. With the assistance of God's Spirit (*sentire cum spiritus*), this is the stage of savoring whence *Rûah Elohim* becomes the *guru par excellence* in an onward pilgrimage. Under such mentorship, I have learned to imbibe and enflesh the wisdom of *Rûah Elohim* through the encouragement of the ancestral spirits and to become a sacred cosmic spirit who is the self-reflexivity of the Sacred Cosmos and Mother Earth. This cosmic pilgrimage begins with the experience of divine *Allness* in creation.

Cosmic Stage of *Allness*

The closure at the end of the Decaloris school opened me to an ongoing sojourn in the *allness* of *Rûah Elohim*, in the cosmic stage where I experienced myself as a *homo shamanicus/spiritus* (see Chapter 3: A Journey Within a Pilgrimage). This state of *allness* is a borderless/boundary-less state which, I realized, is where believers

claim to "be in heaven" with all the ancestors, the angels, and the saints.[1] I realized that this is the stage where *Rûah Elohim* brought me from the global to the cosmic state of consciousness.

For the last two days, I have experienced being in the cosmic spirit world whence I am one with *all* who are in the *allness* of life. But I am also in this mystic state where *all* is through all. I am truly a spirit who is enmeshed with all and in all, in a constant, timeless state of flowing and crisscrossing through all, freely, in and out of each other, be they God, the angels, the saints, the ancestors, the mystics, the sages, or our loved ones, in this immense cosmic vastness. There is both a glowing and growing realization that this is the cosmic spirit world of all that is divine and sacred, and that it is truly different and differentiated from the dark cosmic spirit world. Yet the two worlds of light and darkness are not two but one. The dark world is part of me when I sin and turn in on myself, consumed only in self-indulgence/pleasure. This is a cosmic spirit web of interrelations. The mystic state experienced is at the level of the spirit yet embodied, earthbound to space and time.[2]

Rûah Elohim has enabled me to experience that I belong to a cosmic sacred-power network that unites countless sojourners in countervailing the dark spirit power that has enchained persons and systems to the pandemic spirits of greed, corruption, anger, and hatred. I became aware that the cosmic sacred-power network was also connected with the ancestors of all faiths and traditions who work to avert the eco-crises of our world. Hence, I realized the need for collaborating with other institutions to globalize the spirituality of sacred sustainability for the full flourishing of humankind, otherkinds, and Mother Earth.[3]

---

[1] I find myself desirous of entering this state more fully so that I may experience the fullness of heaven. Journal entry, 4 July 2016.

[2] Journal entry, 22 and 23 July 2016.

[3] Journal entry, 25 July 2016.

However, I was fully conscious that I still exist in time and space, in a bodily state of awareness that I call "bodisciousness" in which *Rûah Elohim* enables sojourners to experience more intimately the life of the resurrection here and now as an embodied spirit, a *homo spiritus*. *Rûah Elohim* oftentimes leads a *homo spiritus* on earth to experience an eternal state of "with all, in all, through all, all in all" (Eph 4:6; 1 Cor 15:27f; cf. Rom 11:32) whence God, the *all*ness of life, lives in me/us and through me/us. As a *homo spiritus*, I, too, am in all and through all. In this resurrectional state, there is no dualism—they and us, black or white, friend or foe, all are one. In this state, I am and we all are one with and in the *I Am* (Ex 3:14; Jn 8:58), in the *all*. We all are one with *all*, thoroughly enmeshed and truly one, in the panentheistic sense, with the *Allness* of life in God's creation. It is a state of total oneness in eternal bliss. This experience impacts the celebration of the Eucharist, in which *Rûah Elohim* enables sojourners to be in a wakeful state of being in space and time and yet while also in the cosmic sacred-power network, with the celestial host, in praise of the Triune God.[4]

A Cosmos of God Particles

Most intriguing of this phase of the sojourn under the mentorship of *Rûah Elohim* was being given to understand the interconnectivity of energy, heat, light, particles, and spirit in the cosmos through Teilhard de Chardin's insights on matter-spirit. Chardin envisioned that "God is all in all: there is a total suffusion of God in creation with a final summation of all things in God."[5] This suffusion is cosmic to the point that "the stuff of the universe," its "matter-spirit"—the "barren soil, stubborn rock," "violent sea," "brute forces," and even "base appetites" of matter, the "boundless ethers, triple abyss of stars

[4] Journal entry, 26 July 2016.

[5] Jojo M. Fung, "Cosmicism: An Emerging Pneumatic Mystagogy," *The Way* 59:2 (2020): 59–72, here cited at 69.

and atoms, universe in creation"[6] that "exude the sacred sustaining presence of *Rûah Elohim* [and which are] constitutive of all life on Earth—is characterized by sacramentality."[7] For me, this suffusion of the "matter-spirit" sacramentalizes the pervasive presence of *Rûah Elohim* in the Higgs boson or God Particles which are the constitutive elements of energy, heat, and light in the universe.[8]

This initial understanding disposed me to be tutored further by *Rûah Elohim* on how to take into prayer what I have understood through my own research and daily practices such that I have learned how to relate to the zillions of particles in God's creation from a pneumatic-mystagogical perspective.[9]

The scientific field of physics posits that the Higgs boson is "the missing piece of the so-called Standard Model or the theory of general relativity and quantum theory of (particle) physics."[10] However, "if any particle were to be called the 'God particle,' the photon, the particle of light, would probably be a far stronger candidate."[11] The Higgs boson is the particle that gives other particles in the Higgs field their "particle mass" with a certain "stickiness/treacle" if their velocity has to change or come to a halt.[12] Locating the Higgs boson in the Higgs field will

---

[6] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Hymn of the Universe* (London: Collins, 1965), 68–70, here cited at 70.

[7] Donald P. Gray, *The One and the Many: Teilhard de Chardin's Vision of Unity* (London: Burns and Oates, 1969), 158. For Chardin, this sacramentality of creation is "an expression of God's love for the world" which God creates, suffuses, sustains, and unifies through the creative Spirit power of *Rûah Elohim*. See Gray, *The One and the Many*, 20.

[8] The pervasive presence of *Rûah Elohim* offers me a pneumatological perspective of the God Particles in the universe. See journal entry, 5 August 2016.

[9] Journal entry, 19 August 2016.

[10] Andrew Pinsent, "Jesuits and the 'God Particle'," Thinking Faith, http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20120803_1.htm (accessed 17 August 2016).

[11] Pinsent, "Jesuits and the 'God Particle'."

[12] Ian J. Thompson, "Are Quantum Physics and Spirituality Related?," *New Philosophy* 107 (2002): 333–355.

"provide a much clearer picture of the origin of the universe, of that great cosmic banger that set it all off," for we know that "in the first second or so after the touch-paper of the universe was lit, fundamental particles began to react to produce the building blocks of the universe: particles such as neutrons, photons, protons and others, then hydrogen and some helium, and eventually the atoms and molecules which make up the stars and planets we see around us today."[13]

Ian Thompson believes that in this universe there are "virtual processes" related to virtual particles that are *actually* happening but also sort of "virtually" happening; this enables us to correspond these virtual processes with the human processes of intention, understanding, and effect. The human processes "are the means by which plans are produced" by humans in the natural world.[14] Moreover, there is correspondence between *Rûah Elohim* and energy, as Thompson posits that

> the role of energy in the body corresponds to the role of love in the spirit. We can call it heat, or generative energy, but whatever it is, it is something at the beginning which corresponds to the love side. The role of waves in the world corresponds to wisdom in the spirit. Waves in the world can be light waves, and we say that wisdom corresponds to light. The role of action events corresponds to decisions in the spirit, which are the effects at the end of the physical.[15]

Rûah Elohim influences the sensorimotor mind; Thompson firmly believes "that the final or ultimate acts *of the spirit* are in the sensual mind,"[16] for the spiritual life is externalized in producing the natural world. Hence Thompson remarks:

> There is something about the sensorimotor mind, the outermost layer of the external mind, according to which its operations must

---

[13] Michael Smith, "The 'Ultimate' Grand Theory of Everything," Thinking Faith, http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20110727_1.htm (accessed 19 August 2016).

[14] Thompson, "Are Quantum Physics and Spirituality Related?," 345–346.

[15] Thompson, "Are Quantum Physics and Spirituality Related?," 351.

[16] Thompson, "Are Quantum Physics and Spirituality Related?," 352.

> in some way be connected to the selection of a particular physical outcome. This explains in part how the natural world terminates the spiritual world. It is in the natural world that we really build up a fixed foundation, because these actual events which are the bottom line are the definite choices for one way or the other.[17]

Thompson concludes that, according to Swedenborg, "the natural world terminates and contains: that it is a containant for spiritual life and action. The loves which remain with us must be the loves which produce the actual events in our lives."[18] Based on what Thompson calls Theistic Science, we have been enabled to "learn more about nature, as well as learning more about spirit."[19]

Dwelling on Thompson's dictum on nature and spirit, I learned, albeit limitedly, of the correspondence between the sensorimotor mind of the observer and the selection of a particular physical outcome in the natural world. Thompson further explains:

> When humans think, we have an intention which thinks about many different possibilities, and then acts on one of them. That is what life is, and what we are seeing is that physical nature is no different. It is not conscious of itself in the same way, but it contains the same kinds of processes, the same functions.[20]

This correspondence emphasizes that both nature and the spirit are integral to God's creation. I am more and more convinced, though I stand corrected, that this Spirit acting through the sensual mind is the *Rûah Elohim* of sacred sustainability who is behind the processes

---

[17] Thompson, "Are Quantum Physics and Spirituality Related?," 351.

[18] Emanuel Swedenborg (1688–29 March 1772) was a Swedish pluralistic-Christian theologian, scientist, inventor, philosopher, and mystic. He was best known for his book on the afterlife, *Heaven and Hell* (1758). See Thompson, "Are Quantum Physics and Spirituality Related?," 352.

[19] Ian Thompson notes, "This is part of what Leon James and I call 'Theistic Science'"; see http://www.soc.hawaii.edu/leonj/leonj/leonpsy/instructor/gloss.html, fn no. 17; see also www.TheisticScience.org and Thompson, "Are Quantum Physics and Spirituality Related?," 355.

[20] Thompson, "Are Quantum Physics and Spirituality Related?," 354.

of complexification and self-organization, operating, opines Andrew Pinsent, within these astonishing "underlying symmetries, a principle guided ultimately by a belief in the order of the cosmos."[21]

Furthermore, I realized that I am just a dot/speck of dust suspended in the vast, expansive, and sacred web of interdependent interrelations and united with the zillions of God Particles that constitute myself and creation. I became aware that I could be in communication with these zillions of God Particles in a universe that had a shared sense of direction and purpose.[22] At other times, I was in the midst of the zillions of God Particles in cosmic communion, feeling a strong sense of "at-homeness" with them in creation. I sensed a certain interrelated interdependent bondedness, a certain intelligence, a certain cosmiciousness, wisdom, a certain energetic-ness, restlessness, creativeness, playfulness and resourcefulness, a preferred sense of direction, in each and all of them.[23]

From this cosmic vantage point, I was looking at our planetary Earth, and I communicated this one message to all the cosmic zillions of God Particles: "Let's help the Earth to regenerate Earth-self, to sustain the earth communities now and in the future. Let's come up with a new theory of sustainable development that is grounded on fostering sustainable communities-enterprises for all humankind and otherkinds."[24] At the same time, I reached out and related to the God Particles in my heart, kidney, liver, spleen, and even in the drinks to heal/end the irritation/inflammation in my body.[25]

This cosmic communion with the God Particles blossomed into "prophetic cosmic activism" that correspondingly invites all the God

---

[21] Pinsent, "Jesuits and the 'God Particle'."

[22] Journal entry, 26 and 27 August 2016.

[23] Journal entry, 6 September 2016.

[24] Journal entry, 2 September 2016.

[25] Journal entry, 6 September 2016.

Particles to triangulate the assembly of the wicked spirits behind the global hegemons of the dark-world so that our common home would attain greater flourishing.[26] On another occasion, I reached out in spirit to stop/diffuse/neutralize particular events in the physical world—the potential bomb blasts in the malls of Manila leading up to the anniversary of 11 September 2001 and the menace of gun violence in the war against drugs in the Philippines.

Above all, I realized that each of the particles is suffused with the presence of God, Jesus, and the Spirit, and so each one of the particles is also a God Particle, a Jesus Particle, and a Spirit Particle.[27]

A Cosmos of Strings

Praying on the world of God Particles has made me more aware that energies, strings, and quarks are related to the expansion of the universe. I realize that while I am finite and limited, I am infinite and limitless in my spirit, and that I can become as expansive as the universe. To be infinite is to be eternal as well. It is consoling to know that though I will die, my spirit will remain eternal, that is, infinitely and eternally alive with the Triune God.[28] Moreover, I learned to be in communion through prayer with the zillions of strings in the entire cosmos and within my body-space so that intention could be translated into one specific action in the natural world.[29] This communion became an intense experience through ritual celebration, a realization I came to when I attended the Pamamtig gathering of sojourners in deep communion with the cosmic energies and spirit world on 22 November 2016, the Feast of Christ the King. During the closing ritual with sacred chants, I experienced a surge of energy

[26] Journal entry, 2 September 2016.

[27] Journal entry, 8 September 2016.

[28] Journal entry, 15 and 23 September 2016.

[29] Journal entry, 18 October 2016.

from within my body amidst the sounds of musical instruments. I realized that the surge of energy happened when I dwelt at the level of communion with the interconnected sacred web of zillions of cosmic strings.[30] I realized further that the surge of energies during the cosmic communion with the zillions of strings could be channeled toward overpowering the systemic evil of very black/dark powers and specific struggles in our earth community.[31]

At this stage, both quantum physics and planetary science have informed me that reality is like a hologram, porous and penetrable. Yet, in God's wisdom, I was grateful for that material solidity in the "hologramic nature" of the masses of strings such that I have a floor to walk on, a building with a room around me, and a chair to sit in beside the table I work on. This material solidity would cause injury and even death if, for instance, a car slammed into a tree or wall. Yet God has deigned that materiality—from the bed we lie on, the room we live in, the roof over us, the host and wine we consume—sustain us, so much so that I realized that materiality is theophanic, in that matter reveals God who is present in Spirit, and Christophanic, in that it reveals Jesus as Emmanuel (Is 7:14; Matt 1:22–23).[32]

I wonder if the "hologramic nature" of reality analogously explains Jesus's risen life as he passed through walls and stood in the midst of the apostles who were hidden behind locked doors (Jn 20:19). What about the life of Ama Garing, my shaman father, who changed from human form to that of a pig and vice versa? Master Lee, too, admitted to me that he could go through walls. This "hologramic existence" fascinates and challenges me at the same time.[33]

Finally, *Rûah Elohim* has led me to practice what I call the "string-prayer," with the awareness that the world of strings had invited me

---

[30] Journal entry, 22 November 2016.

[31] Journal entry, 26 November 2016.

[32] Journal entry, 16 December 2016.

[33] Journal entry, 20 November 2016.

into their presence so that I could join in the whole cosmos with the different planets that produce different melodies in giving praise to God, together with the celestial hosts of ancestors, angels, and saints. The first string-prayer that emerged from within is as follows:

Rest in me.
Flow with me.
I will guide you.
I will direct you.[34]

After breakfast with Fr. Niphot, I sat at the doorstep of the dining room and entered into an intimate communion with nature. I realized then that most tertiary institutions and writings on strategic sustainable development (SSD) lacked this dimension of listening to the earth/cosmos. More so, academic conferences and discourses hardly, if at all, included the mystics or allowed the mystics to guide them mystagogically toward this listening. A case in point is the article "Ecological Consciousness, Moral Imagination, and the Framework for Strategic Sustainable Development" (in *Creative Social Change: Leadership for a Healthy World*, edited by Kathryn Goldman Schuyler, John Eric Baugher, and Karin Jironet), which lacked this non-negotiable dimension in the discussion on frameworks for strategic sustainable development.

At the end of my intimate communion with nature, I realized that

Creation is spirited,
Creation is "string-ed,"
Creation is "music-ed," and
Creation is "particled."

My heart exults with gratitude toward *Rûah Elohim* for such insights that God is truly with us. Teilhard de Chardin believed that matter is spirit and that "we are coincidental with it. We feel it within. It is the very thread of which the other phenomena are woven for us. It is the thing we know best in the world since we are itself, and it is for us

[34] This prayer came to me while I was lying in my bed in Fr. Niphot's house in Tung Po, Samkampaen, Chiangmai, Thailand. Journal entry, 5 December 2016.

everything."[35] For this reason, matter is "bursting" with the presence of God. Matter sacramentalizes God's boundless gratuitousness.[36]

Becoming Like God

St. Basil invited us to be immersed in the presence of God: "So too, Spirit-bearing souls, illuminated by God, finally become spiritual themselves, and their grace is sent forth to others."[37] From this, St. Basil averred, "comes knowledge of the future, understanding of mysteries, apprehension of hidden things, distribution of wonderful gifts, heavenly citizenship, a place in the choir of angels, endless joy in the presence of God, *becoming like God*, and, the highest of all desires, *becoming God*."[38] *Rûah Elohim* has enabled many sojourners, including Ali al-Khawas (as cited in Pope Francis's encyclical *Laudato Si'*), to experience this state of union: "There is a subtle mystery in each of the movements and sounds of this world. The initiate will capture what is being said when the wind blows, the trees sway, water flows, flies buzz, doors creak, birds sing, or in the sound of strings or flutes, the sighs of the sick, the groans of the afflicted."[39] In this mystical

---

[35] This insight that matter is spirit builds on Chardin's "phenomena of spirit.… We are coincidental with it. We feel it within. It is the thing we know best in the world since we are itself, and it is for us everything"; see his 1937 essay "The Phenomenon of Spirituality" in Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *Human Energy*, trans. J. M. Cohen (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971), 93. See also Prof. Tu Wei-Ming, who averred that matter is "the embodiment of the spirit" in his essay "Beyond the Enlightenment Mentality," in *Worldviews and Ecology: Religion, Philosophy, and the Environment*, eds. Mary Evelyn Tucker & John A. Grim (New York: Orbis Books, 1994), 10–29.

[36] Journal entry, 5 December 2016.

[37] Denis Edwards, *Breath of Life: A Theology of the Creator Spirit* (New York: Orbis Books, 2004), 28 (emphasis added).

[38] Edwards, *Breath of Life*, 28.

[39] Francis, *Laudato Si'*, fn no. 159. See also Eva de Vitray-Meyerovitch, ed., *Anthologie du soufisme* (Paris: Sindbad, 1978), 200.

experience, the "distance between the creatures of the world and the interior experience of God" no longer exists.[40]

I learned that *all* of creation is so *Godly* and *Divine* while reflecting on *Laudato Si'* §234 ("all things are God") during the *earthing* prayer session behind Moro Lorenzo stadium from 26 to 28 August 2015.[41] Yesterday, I prayed to the tree in front of me, "Speak to me that *all things are God*." I heard the tree's communication in my innermost being, "*I am God* indwelling in the tree." I responded, in praise and reverence to the Divine voice within me, "*I am God* too indwelling in you." Then I heard the response from the tree, "We are one."[42]

In the prayer on 28 August 2015, I asked everything in front of me as I sat praying on the sofa in the TV room, "Speak to me that *all things are God*." The building, the tree, the chairs, *everything/everyone* and *all things* spoke to me, "*I am God* indwelling in creation." I realized that each part of creation reflects *God indwelling in creatures*. God is indeed in all, through all, all in all. I realized that I am living in such a *divine milieu*, the same insight Teilhard de Chardin had during his time.[43] He is truly a geo/cosmic mystic! The divine milieu is all around me and inside me, too. God, Jesus, and God's *Rûah* are the center and source of this divine milieu, this cosmic sacred web of life.[44]

In hearing the voice "I am God" in relation to *Laudato Si'* §234, "all things are God," I now understand that the tree is a creaturely or incarnated manifestation of "I am God indwelling in this tree" in

---

[40] Francis, *Laudato Si'*, fn no. 159.

[41] Ateneo de Manila University campus, Quezon City, Philippines.

[42] Journal entry, 27–28 August 2015. See also Jojo M. Fung, "A Call to Live a Contemplative and Prophetic Mysticism," *Voices* XXXIX (July–December 2016): 161–167, here cited at 163, available at http://eatwot.net/VOICES/VOICES-2016-2.pdf (accessed 10 October 2015).

[43] Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, *The Divine Milieu: An Essay on the Interior Life* (New York: Harper Torchbooks), 1968.

[44] Journal entry, 27–28 August 2015.

the sense of *theo-en-passim*. Like God, I, too, indwell in the tree and the tree in me, like a "compenetrative presencing." At the same time, this tree exists and subsists in God in the sense of *panentheism*. In a particularized sense, the localized and focalized spirit in the tree is the spirit of the tree. In other words, the tree has a spirit, a localized spirit of God. *Theo-en-passim* is truly the flipside of *panentheism* in the mystical sense that God who indwells in all things has made it possible for "all things to exist and subsist" in God. The indwelling of God and the existential subsistence in God make possible the mystical experience that "all things are God."[45]

I realized further that matter is theophanic in revealing God and of God to all sojourners. It is not just that "all things are God" but that "all is God," that "all that is within me and the cosmos is God" and that "all is God as well." When I drew the energy of the earth and rested amidst zillions of strings, I realized that I was drawing God's energy or the God-energy in/of creation.[46] This realization led me to the oft-repeated chant, "God is here. All is God."[47] The awareness that emanated from praying this chant led me to relate intimately that the theophany at Jesus's incarnation was the moment God became materialized such that the materiality of the water, rocks, trees, land, and hills at the River Jordan had been theophanic of God. This theophanic realization gave great sacramental significance to the experience of my initiation at the Murut school of Longongon, at the house-shrine with Master Lee, and at the final water ritual with Sintus.[48]

---

[45] Journal entry, 5 September 2015. See also Fung, "A Call to Live a Contemplative and Prophetic Mysticism," 163.

[46] Journal entry, 21 December 2016.

[47] Journal entry, 27 December 2016.

[48] Journal entry on 24 July 2017, during my annual retreat from 21–29 July at the Loyola House of Studies, Ateneo de Manila University campus, Quezon City, Philippines.

Becoming a Cosmic Spirit

The experience of "God is here" and "all is God" has predisposed me to realize that I am a sacred cosmic spirit, with a vision of myself prostrated in the presence of the sacred celestial assembly of the Triune God, the Great Spirit of the Creator-God who is a luminous presence, all the ancestors of the diverse faith traditions, the angels, the saints, and Mother Mary,[49] including the zillions and zillions of God Particles in the cosmos.[50] More so, I experienced myself as a sacred cosmic spirit carried in the cosmic streaming and engaged in imaginative visualization in entanglement with the earthling me, inspired by *Rûah Elohim* to provide sacred cosmic spirit leadership on the cosmic level and, as a localized sacred cosmic spirit, on the global South, regional, and local levels.[51] This is a leadership that enjoins the cosmic intentionalization of all minute particles—be they gluons or quarks comprised of fermions/photinos—to bring about the New Earth, New Heaven, and New Creation.[52]

This movement to become a cosmic and contextualized sacred spirit derived some clarity from Michael Amaladoss, who wrote, "If one can control one's desires and one's egoism and lives in the present moment in tranquility, one has attained *nirvana*. Thus, *nirvana* properly lived is *nirvana*. The secular becomes the sacred."[53] *Rûah Elohim* is the transformative power that enables sojourners to live always in tranquility amidst the hustles and bustles of everyday life, all while beholding all things secular as sacred. *Rûah Elohim*'s transformation gradually made me realize that I am a sacred cosmic

---

[49] Journal entry, 2–3 August 2017.

[50] Journal entry, 28 August 2017.

[51] Journal entry, 12–13, 19, and 21 September 2017.

[52] Journal entry, 17–18 April 2018.

[53] Michael Amaladoss, "What Christians can Learn from Indian Religions," in *Interfaith Dialogue: Global Perspectives*, ed. Edmund Kee-Fook Chia (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 143–154, here cited at 153.

spirit of sacred sustainability by participating in the sustaining power of *Rûah Elohim*. I realized that each God Particle—neutrinos, fermions, quarks, photinos, bosons, winos, zinos, and charm quarks—is driven by God's Spirit of sacred sustainability.[54] Through Chardin's insight that phenomena is spirit, I, too, realized that each of all these minute particles is spirit. Together with *Rûah Elohim*, all sojourners in this cosmic Spirit movement are called to sustain the religiocultural traditions of farming and indigenous communities in both the Global South and North.[55]

A Cosmos of Sacred Particles

Rûah Elohim has made me deeply aware, convinced as I am that "all things are spirit," "all things are God," and that "God is here and everywhere" through the intimate communion of being afloat in the cosmos of God Particles, that the neutrinos, fermions, quarks, photinos, bosons, winos, and zinos streaming past me are sacred particles.

A year into this sojourn, I arrived at a greater understanding of neutrinos as the subatomic "ghost" particles that suffuse and pass through anything and everything, only very rarely interacting with matter. And almost all of them pass right on through the Earth. About 100 trillion neutrinos pass through the human body every second.[56] Believing that *Rûah Elohim* indwells all created neutrinos, sojourners learn to "pneumatize" by "intentionalizing" these countless neutrinos passing through the human body so they can carry out "specific missions/tasks" made possible by the Spirit power of *Rûah Elohim*. I also become intuitively aware and grateful for the process of pneumatizing the innumerable neutrinos to accomplish the intentions of the *Rûah*

---

[54] Journal entry, 26 November 2017.

[55] Journal entry, 27–29 November 2017.

[56] Jenny Marder, "What is a Neutrino … And Why Do They Matter?," PBS News Hour, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/science/what-is-a-neutrino-and-why-should-anyone-but-a-particle-physicist-care (accessed 28 October 2019).

Elohim, bringing forth the New Creation, New Heaven, and New Earth in the cosmos.[57]

When these sacred particles are complexified in self-organization, they have a shared consciousness. As a sacred cosmic spirit, my consciousness can network with all these pockets of consciousness in the cosmos and intentionalize these zillions of sacred particles for a twofold purpose: 1) transmute toxicity in the land, water (lakes, oceans, seas, rivers), and especially the earth's atmosphere by reducing greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide (CO2), methane (CH4), nitrous oxide (N2O), chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs), and ozone (O3) that cause excessive drought and flooding due to global warming and climate change, thereby enabling Mother Earth to regenerate herself; and 2) effect ecological conversion by awakening in all civil, corporate, political, and religious leaders and citizens that Mother Earth needs to flourish with love, peace, joy, justice, mercy, compassion, equality, and equity to attain the Gospel vision of a "New Earth" (Is 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1).[58]

The maturation of this expansive movement in consciousness resonates with Brian O'Leary, author of the book *Miracle in the Void* on the new paradigms in science and free energy. O'Leary's allusion to consciousness has affirmed and inspired me. "Ultimately," he posits, "we are going to work with our own consciousness. What is energy? What forms does it take? Mass is only trapped energy. The concept of gravity is an electromagnetic force. We can interact with magnetic fields and with anti-magnetic fields. We can unify the laws of physics."[59] This growth in consciousness has to do with a radical praxis because, as O'Leary admits, "we are speaking of supplanting a

---

[57] Fung, "Cosmicism: An Emerging Pneumatic Mystagogy," 70.

[58] Journal entry, 1, 2, 6, 17 May, 1 June 2018.

[59] Brian O'Leary, "Miracle in the Void," https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJf1XIKKgh8 (accessed 8 June 2018).

two trillion dollar economy."[60] Hence a cosmic movement that regards the cosmos and Mother Earth as constituted by sacred particles must commiserate with a corresponding Sacred Earth Movement in this era of change in our post-pandemic world.[61]

Ultimately, this intimate communion with the sacred particles in the cosmos made me deeply aware that *Rûah Elohim* had been initiating me, through Garing, Master Lee, and Sintus, in a mystagogy which I described as cosmicism.[62] In the initial stage, I explained cosmicism as a mysticism borne of the mystic experience of the cosmos as suspended in a cosmic web of "sacred eternity" construed as a timeless-spaceless state beyond the spatio-temporal construct of Earth's time and space. In other words, the cosmos is organically suffused, sacralized, and sustained by the spirit-power-presence of *Rûah Elohim*. In cosmicism, the entire cosmos is awash with God's eternal presence to the extent that the cosmos is "shot through" or suffused with the power of *Rûah Elohim*. Hence the cosmos is created to bask in a state of *spirit-fulness* or "*Rûah*-presence-ness." To this end, the cosmos was created by God to become God's sacred dwelling and divine home. Each human is called to become a sacred cosmic spirit by basking in this state of sacred eternity, experiencing that they are a cosmic spirit suffused, sacralized, and sustained in this cosmic web of "*Rûah*-presence-ness."[63]

---

[60] O'Leary, "Miracle in the Void."

[61] I initiated this Sacred Earth Movement in a Mass which I celebrated at Nakoli ("fireflies" in Karen) in honor of Garing, my Ama-shaman who was in intimate communion with the fireflies. Journal entry, 23 June 2018.

[62] It dawned on me that I am in the school of Cosmicism during the third prayer period (3:18–4:18 PM) while on my annual retreat from 14–21 July 2018. See journal entry for 15 July 2018. See also Fung, "Cosmicism: An Emerging Pneumatic Mystagogy," 59–72. Also see Jojo M. Fung & Michael Amaladoss, *Creation is Spirited and Sacred: An Asian Indigenous Mysticism of Sacred Sustainability* (Manila: Claretian Communications Foundation, Inc., Jesuit Communications Foundation, Inc., & Institute of Spirituality in Asia, 2017), x, 2, 7, 8, 22, 115–116, 118, and 123.

[63] Journal entry, 22 September 2018.

In savoring the mystical splendor of the cosmos, I have visualized myself as a stardust sojourner in the centre of the cosmos, seated in a lotus position with palms open and fingers pointing downwards, afloat in deep space as a cosmic sacred spirit. I became mindful that as a stardust sojourner I am the self-reflexivity of the sacred and conscious cosmos-Earth. Once again, I witnessed the cosmic expansionary process of flaring forth in space and time, awe-inspired by its incessant moments of ontological newness. As a stardust sojourner, I became intuitively aware of and grateful for the process of the "trinitization" of innumerable neutrinos as they bonded with each other in the fellowship of the Triune God, with a shared purpose of emanating a new cosmos.[64] In this specific prayer, a mantra burst forth from within as an everyday chant in the practice of cosmicism:

I love you, O beloved fresh air, birds, dews, grass, squirrels, soil, stream, water, trees, sky, light, moon, stars,
all of you, below me, above me, all around me, in the Cosmos, here on earth.
You each are divine. You are all divine.
I adore, I glorify you, the Divine, the Creative Spirit in all of you.
I bless all of you, I thank all of you.
All of you in me. I in all of you.
God in all of you and me, and all of you and I in God.
I adore and worship you, the Divine in you, O Creative Spirit in you, indwelling all created things in creation.
I bow in reverence to you, O Rûah Elohim sustaining, suffusing, sacralizing, sensitizing all of you and me.
You are all sacred, mystical, divine, mysterious are all of you.
All sacred, divine, mystical, all one.
We are one in God, in the Risen Lord, in Rûah Elohim, God in us all,
in a divine and divinized Cosmos of galaxies, milky ways, universes, planets,
stardusts, God Particles, strings, quarks, neutrinos,
all in sacred communion with ALL, angels, saints, ancestors, apostles, martyrs, beloved, humans, lifeforms,
all in symphonic cosmic praise to God, Trinity, celestial hosts.

[64] Journal entry of a prayer session from 1:20–2:30 AM on 24 October 2019.

All of you in me, me in all of you.
We are all one in the ALL who is through all, over all, in all,
ALL in all.[65]

This chanting of the mantra echoes like a symphonic hymn of praise that reverberates throughout the cosmos, as if all created beings and myriads of life-forms were all chanting in unison, each one with all, and all with each one, praising the Creator.

Trinitarian Cosmicism (TC)

The practice of cosmicism as a sojourner with the Trinitarian presence, in the company of the celestial host in this mystagogy entangled with Mother Earth, has led me to an inspirational notion best described as Trinitarian Cosmicism.[66]

TC and the Spiritual Exercises. Trinitarian Cosmicism is a cosmic mysticism that intimates the earth-sojourners to participate in the life of the Triune God and the cosmos by engaging in contemplation in daily personal prayer and in moments of everyday states of "wakefulness." During the Ignatian retreat, be it the annual eight-day retreat or the long retreat of thirty days, Ignatian sojourners enter the Second Week of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St. Ignatius of Loyola by praying on §101, entitled "First Day and the First Contemplation on the Incarnation." More particularly, §102 draws the sojourners' attention to stay in the presence of the Triune God: "Here it will be how the Three Divine Persons look down upon the whole expanse or circuit of all the earth, filled with human beings.… They decree in Their eternity that the Second Person should become human to save the human race. So when the fullness of time had come, They send the Angel Gabriel to Our Lady."

---

[65] Fung, "Cosmicism: An Emerging Pneumatic Mystagogy," 71.

[66] Journal entry, 31 March 2020.

Prompted by *Rûah Elohim,* the interaction with gurus and masters of different religiocultural traditions has led me to engage in the contemplation of basking in the Triune God's presence (*Spiritual Exercises* §§98, 151, 232), graced by all the life-giving, revered ancestors and renowned mystics of all the faiths, the angels and saints, and Mother Mary.[67] This contemplation will have to be the additional fifth week in the *Spiritual Exercises*. This is the week of contemplation on Pentecost where the exercises put forth will invite sojourners to engage in the Trinitarian Conversation on the sending of the Third Person into the world.[68]

Era of "Mysticalocene." The era of "Capitalocene" had been subjected to scrutiny during the pandemic. For myself, this lockdown foregrounded the emergence of an era of "Mysticalocene" that has existed as an underground stream in the hearts of many sojourners.[69]

---

[67] According to Mark Rotsaert's email dated 6 April 2020, §98 of the *Spiritual Exercises* refers to the offering at the end of the Kingdom meditation, §151 to the composition that enables the retreatants to see their place in the *meditation of the three classes of persons*, and §232 to the composition needed to be done by the retreatants in the Contemplation to Attain Love.

[68] This is akin to the Contemplation of Pentecost, on the Trinitarian Conversation on sending the Third Person into the world, in what could be designated as the 5th Week of the *Spiritual Exercises*. The first prayer period will be focused as a Trinitarian gaze on the conversation on the sending of the Spirit; the second prayer period, on the descent of God's Spirit on Pentecost (Acts 2:1–13); and the third prayer period, on God's Spirit in the early Christian movement through Peter the Apostle (Acts 10:1–48). The fourth prayer period will focus on God's Spirit through Paul's three missionary movements: first, with Paul and Barnabas in Acts 13:4–14:27; second, in Antioch, where Paul begins his second mission with Silas, Barnabas, and Judas Barsabas in Acts 15:22, 30, 35; and third, in Acts 18:23–21:17 that ends in Rome in Acts 27:1–28:31. The fifth prayer period will focus on God's Spirit at work on planet Earth, and the last prayer period, on God's Spirit at work in the cosmos.

[69] I became aware that the age of "Mysticalocene" was never lost from human civilization that abounds in great mystics and sages; rather, it was ostensibly eclipsed in the age of "Anthropocene" and what Duncan Kelly called the "Capitalocene," two periods that illustrate the conjoined histories of capitalism and ecological exploitation as Jason Moore alluded to in his books *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital* (London: Verso Press, 2015) and *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism* (edited) (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2016).

Savoring mystical silence and solitude has disposed many sojourners to the promptings of *Rûah Elohim*, to plummet into the mystery of life in the cosmos in an underlining era known as Pneumatolocene.[70] In the Pneumatolocene, I feel like a "stardust sojourner," taking the next small steps in this nurturing mystery of life which I have treasured since 2017. I find myself like a neophyte under the illuminating *guru*-ship of *Rûah Elohim*, imbibing the wisdom of the school of Trinitarian Cosmicism.

What is unique in this sacred sojourn is this new shift in my experience of being "tutored," in the presence of the Triune God, to understand more about Trinitarian Cosmicism,[71] which in turn enhances my personal communion not only with the celestial hosts of ancestors, angels, and saints but also with the countless stardust-particles in the cosmos.[72] At the same time, I gained a greater understanding of the close relation between the outpouring of God's Spirit and the renewal of the face of the earth. I have also grown deeper in my knowledge of the meaningfulness of the mantra that I have begun embodying and offering some time ago.[73] I repeat this mantra as I jog in the early morning so that it acquires a deeper felt-sense with each passing day.

See also Duncan Kelly, "Ecological Debts," Chapter 4, in *Politics and the Anthropocene* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2019), 68.

[70] While in prayer on 16 April 2020, I felt that the era of mysticalocene is very much the age of *Rûah Elohim* that suffuses and sustains the Cosmos and Mother Earth as breath and wind, thus recreating the Cosmos to become a New Creation.

[71] I formally named this experience Trinitarian Cosmicism. See journal entry, 31 March 2020.

[72] Diarmuid Ó. Murchú opines that the Cosmos with the innumerable stardusts-particles therein moves toward "enlarged horizons and even [flows] in patterns, albeit chaotic sometimes, toward a preferred sense of direction" in his book *In the Beginning was the Spirit: Science, Religion, and Indigenous Spirituality* (New York: Orbis Books, 2012), 46, 73.

[73] This mantra—"you/all of us are the doxa/glory of God"—was a further addition as of 3 April 2020.

Easter Saturday, 11 April 2020. St. Thomas More Chapel, Campion Hall. While listening to the first reading (Gen 1:1, 26–31) at the 8:15 PM Easter Vigil Mass and contemplating on how God's Spirit is fashioning the cosmos into being, I could visualize the planet Earth inflamed with fire. This vivid image reminded me of the tongues of fire in Acts 2:13, the second decree of the 35th Jesuit General Congregation, "A Fire That Enkindles Other Fires: Rediscovering Our Charism," and how Ignatius of Loyola talked about inflaming the world *(Ite Inflammate Omnia*) with God's spirit of love.[74] May the fire of God's Spirit, with all the prayers of all the believers of all faiths, consume systemic evil, the sacrilegious wickedness in human hearts, and the viral and genocidal toxicity and lethality of the COVID-19 pandemic that contaminate the air around the earth.

Easter Sunday, 12 April 2020. Sitting in the lotus position, visualizing myself in the presence of the Triune God with the celestial host of Mother Mary, all the angels, saints, renowned and reputable chiefs, mystics, sages, and shamans of all faiths, we turn our attention, from a distance, to the planet Earth. In unison of heart and mind, we "rain down" the creative and liberating power of God's Spirit that inflames the earth from within, that breaks forth and consumes the infected and polluted surface of the earth, outpouring God's Creative Spirit that flows out into the hearts of individuals, families, communities, and the global village as compassion and justice, for the sacred sustainability of life and livelihood of all at the frontline and margin in every continent on earth.

---

[74] In the practice of Trinitarian Cosmicism, *Ite Inflammate Omnia* is a personal mystagogical response to Luke 12:49, where Christ said, "I have come to cast fire on the earth, would that it were already kindled." St. Ignatius, responding to this Biblical injunction, often ended his letter to Jesuits going to the missions with the exhortation *ite inflammate omnia*, "go set the world on fire." This refrain is commonly found in the mission literature of many Jesuit colleges and universities today, for just as Ignatius wanted everyone to be set afire with passion and zeal for the Kingdom of God, the apostolic mission of Jesuit tertiary institutions continually exhorts faculty, students, and alumni to be agents for change in the world—to be H.O.P.E.-agents (Humans with Option for the Poor and the Earth).

Pilgrimage with a Mystagogical Process.[75] Reflecting on my own journey, Trinitarian Cosmicism (TC) represents a school of wisdom that presumes that sojourners enjoy a maturity in their spiritual life. It presupposes that they already experience the nearness of the Divine/God/Beyond in their everyday lives. Such a sensitivity disposes sojourners to be led by *Rûah Elohim* to the succeeding phase in the s*chola sacra*. This is the school of intimating oneself with the sacredness of all things created in the natural and human world and which culminates in identifying one's spirit-guide. In s*chola sacra*, sojourners take about three years to mature in this experience of the sacred.[76] Then the sojourners undergo an eight-day *Laudato Si'* retreat (LSR) and are personally directed to learn and engage in an active practice of Trinitarian Contemplation during all four daily prayer periods/sessions.[77] Upon completing the *Laudato Si'* retreat, the sojourners will be welcomed through a "portal ritual" that introduces them into the s*chola contemplativa* or the School of Contemplation which involves being mentored directly/personally by *Rûah Elohim*.[78] This school involves trials and testing, akin to Jesus being sent by *Rûah Elohim* into the desert to be tested with temptations (Matt 4:1–11).

---

[75] I have personally compiled the notes for the mystagogical process of *Schola Sacra* and for the *Laudato Si'* Retreat which was packaged after reflecting on and drawing from my personal experience of my own annual retreat in a Karen village in Dok Daeng, Chiangmai Province, northern Thailand from 12-21 April 2014. All praise and glory to God for the opportunity of even offering it to small groups, and the *Laudato Si'* Retreat as well to the Sisters of Charity of St. Anne in the province of Rizal, Philippines from 4–11 April 2018.

[76] In Campion Hall on Brewer Street, Oxford, UK, I begin the day with an hour's prayer, perform the Examen at lunch and before retiring to bed, and celebrate daily Mass at 6:00 PM. I also begin with the following mantra in front of a tree as if to a human: "I am sacred. You are sacred. We are both sacred." This I recite during my wakeful state, as I walk about in the building, at table, while eating or taking a stroll or a jog, and at daily Mass.

[77] An example would be the eight-day Ignatian retreat that I had in the Karen village of Dok Daeng, Chiangmai, northern Thailand.

[78] While engaging in the *chipko* gesture on Easter Wednesday, 15 April 2020, I felt inspired by *Rûah Elohim* to acknowledge that there are stages designated as *schola sacra* and *schola contemplativa* during the chanting of the mantra.

The aim is to ascertain the maturity of the sojourners as they become discerningly open/transparent to the stirrings of *Rûah Elohim* and are led/moved into prophetic actions of solidarity on the local, regional, and global levels.[79]

Schola contemplativa prepares earth-sojourners to engage in the mystagogy of Trinitarian Cosmicism[80] which allows God to draw them in to experience *Rûah Elohim* as the cosmic power within the process of recreating the Cosmos-Earth. This is directly related to the ultimate goal of Trinitarian Cosmicism, which is to enable sojourners to experience the cosmic creative power of *Rûah Elohim* that recreates creation daily until it becomes a New Earth with a New Heaven (Rev 21:1; Isa 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet 3:13) in the eschaton as a New Creation, enjoying the fullness of life on earth with the triune God.

Conclusion

Under the tutorship of *Rûah Elohim*, the sacred pilgrimage during the *schola Rûah* witnesses to an epistemic shift from the global to the cosmic in which there is a relishing of the *sophia*/wisdom of God in all of creation. The initial phase of *schola Rûah*, known as *schola sacra*, enables sojourners to live in an affective sense of experiencing the sacred in the cosmos and planet Earth, and to learn to become a sacred cosmic spirit who is in communion with all matter in the cosmos. In this communion, the sojourners learn that *Rûah Elohim* suffuses all particles, strings, and neutrinos, and that they are all sacred and divine in God and manifest the glory of God. *Rûah Elohim* is the *Rûah* of the Creator-Sustainer-God who is corporealized in the cosmos at the moment of creation and becomes the omnipresent *Rûah Elohim*

---

[79] Having a community of sojourners in the *schola contemplativa* participate in periodic spiritual conversation and receive regular spiritual direction certainly helps them in their sacred pilgrimage.

[80] In my prayer period on Tuesday, 31 March 2020, I felt a confirmation that this communion with God's creation, seated in the presence of the Triune God and the celestial host, is rightly a practice of Trinitarian Cosmicism.

indwelling all created things. At the same time, this omnipresent *Rûah Elohim* is also focalized and particularized in each created life form, such as the forest, for instance, which is to be respected, as posited in *Querida Amazonia* 42, for "its being, or various beings" which indigenous peoples and sojourners learn to relate to as the spirit(s) of the forest.

The succeeding *schola contemplativa* introduces sojourners to Trinitarian Cosmicism which intimates all sojourners to enjoy the cosmic, celestial fellowship of all the angels and reputable ancestors, mystics, sages, shamans, and saints of all religiocultural traditions in the presence of the Triune God and Mother Mary, and to behold contemplatively the Divine inflaming the cosmos to become a New Creation.

Having imbibed the wisdom of *schola Rûah,* the sojourners are challenged to enter into the *schola pauperum* to learn the wisdom of the homeless at the margin of society, which the next chapter will delve into.

Chapter 5

Wisdom from the Oasis at the Margin

The sacred pilgrimage across the four different oases of wisdom prepares sojourners to descend from the "spiraling heights of contemplation" to an actual praxis of alterity that calls for personal face-to-face encounter with the poor at the margins where *Rûah Elohim* is actively at work. In my case, Oxford was the site of my face-to-face encounter with the poor or *schola pauperum* whence *Rûah Elohim* mentored me in the wisdom of the margins. The homeless have been a source of critical thinking on the structural asymmetry and inequality of society.

I arrived at Campion Hall in Oxford, UK, on 8 August 2019, excited for my sabbatical as an academic researcher/visiting fellow. I came with a particular focus—to get my research done, have my manuscripts ready for my two upcoming books, and go home on 15 May 2020. However, the presence of the homeless in the byways of Oxford disturbed me. I prayed, "God, what are you asking of me?" Little did I know how God "edged me" to the margin, to be encountered by the homeless and transformed gradually by them. Looking retrospectively at my journal entries, I realized that the graph of encounter with the homeless climbed sharply toward the end of 2019 and peaked in early

2020. Then the curve dipped in the second week of March 2020 during the pandemic in the UK. In the month of May 2020, a few homeless were gradually resurfacing on the streets of Oxford even though the city council had taken measures to house them in hotels.

Proximity to the Poor

The first encounter with the homeless took place on Sunday, 1 September 2019, the day the Church Universal celebrates the first day of the Season of Creation.[1] *Laudato Si'* serves all sojourners in this school a timely reminder: "Today, however, we have to realize that a true ecological approach *always* becomes a social approach; it must integrate questions of justice in debates on the environment, so as to hear *both the cry of the earth and the cry of the poor.*"[2] On this day, the pneumatic "stirring" from within was palpable as I went to meet up with three homeless men at a lodge situated on Speedwell Street called The Wharf House. I beseeched God to pave the way for this first encounter.

As I walked up to them and stooped down with the intention of equalizing my relation with them, I said, "Sir, I collected some food and want to share with you." The one on my right retorted, "Ma'am [because of my long hair], you are a food collector." The third one interjected, "You are a good man." As I handed over the food, I apologized, "I am sorry that I did not put the food on a plate." Their gratitude touched me and moved me to offer gratitude for God's bounteous magnanimity toward the poor. I shook hands with all three of them and left. As I walked away, the clock struck 9:00 PM.

---

[1] The annual Season of Creation begins on 1 September and culminates on 4 October, the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi.

[2] Francis, *Laudato Si'*, §49.

Learning from the Homeless

John was my first guru from the margins. I first met him on 12 November 2019, though I had always jogged past him before dawn along the back street of Campion Hall known as Rose Place, aware of him sleeping in a nook in the garage of the Catholic chaplaincy. He often jostled me with his sharp critiques: "The authorities threw away my belongings when they came around, and this is England";[3] "Boris Johnson, as a leader, he looks stupid. He just mouths that he cares about the poor, but it's just talk";[4] "The rich do not care";[5] "I do not want anyone to know where I am staying. They knew me. The council people knew that I am homeless. They are more interested in getting paid than looking after the poor"; "These staff, they work in Café Loco but they have never given me a cup of coffee."[6] His critique and unimposing demeanour challenged me to reflect on the asymmetrical relationship between a "have-more-giver" and a "have-less-receiver" as compared to a more symmetrical "I-Thou" relationship which allows for a gradual eclipse of two complex worlds with different upbringing, cultures, and histories. This eclipse of two worlds enjoined my capacity to walk an extra mile with the homeless, sustained by the spirit of boundless compassion.

In an asymmetrical relationship, the homeless are faceless, nameless, and sometimes scorned as ungrateful beneficiaries of whatever is doled out from the surplus of institutions, organizations, families, and individuals. On the other hand, in a symmetrical relationship, the "I" and "Thou" are coeval fellow human beings, enjoying frontal relation and demanding that we find "ways to meet the Other on the same ground, in the same time," as Johannes Fabian summarily

---

[3] Journal entry, 12 November 2019.

[4] Journal entry, 19 December 2019.

[5] Journal entry, 2 January 2020.

[6] Journal entry, 15 May 2020.

insisted.[7] The "I" and "Thou" cherish warmth and friendship oftentimes strengthened by affirmation, gratitude, and reciprocity.

Coevalness with the homeless entails stooping down delightfully, conversing with and listening attentively to them with kenotic humility. In the second encounter with Susanne on 1 January 2020, at the corner of High and Queen Streets, I sat on the concrete floor after sharing breakfast with her and listened to what she had to say to me from the heart.[8] I sat next to her for the first time, on the same plane, experiencing our equal status, and requested if we could take a photo together. I was delighted when she asked me if I would mind it if she placed her right hand over me. I took delight in the freedom that Susanne demonstrated in putting her right arm over my shoulder for the photo. It was an intimate experience of our interbeing-ness, seated on the bosom of Mother Earth and realizing that she and I are both sacred and divine in God.[9]

The coeval proximity with the homeless sharpens the respons-*able* subject's sensitivity to beholding the dignity of the homeless, cherishing their liberty, and responding to their actual needs without imposing perceived needs arrived at from an unequal relation, always evaluating whether this or that is what the Other truly needs.[10] In all politeness and humility, I decided to ask John, "What else do you need?"[11] He responded, "A radio is a good companion to me. Do you have any

---

[7] Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014), 165.

[8] Journal entry, 1 January 2020. My last meeting with Susanne was on 8 March 2020, before the lockdown in the UK.

[9] This encounter took place on the first day of 2020, at High Street, Oxford. Journal entry, 1 January 2020.

[10] For more detail on Levinas's notion of the respons-able subject, see Anna Westin, *An Existential Phenomenology of Addiction* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 189. See also Mary-Ann Crumplin, "Returning to Wonder," *The Heythrop Journal* 60:4 (2019): 551–559, here cited at 557.

[11] Journal entry, 19 December 2019.

battery like this?" He took out and showed me a Duracell battery. I also felt a need to review with John what had been served him thus far: "How do you like your coffee to be served? How do you like your toasts?" I was glad to hear what he had to say: "I like milk in my coffee, with little sugar. I want toasts as it is cold in the morning."[12] After the brief review, what he said touched and motivated me as I was feeling "tired of reaching out to the homeless." "The rich do not care. But you care. And I care!! I will sleep here, because this spot belongs to the church."[13] From the basic affirmation of the relational value of care, John expressed appreciation and gratitude by offering me a hat, a handicraft from Indonesia, a paper weight, and a box of incense.[14] He even extended a personal invitation on 13 May 2020 to drink coffee with him as he cued up to draw money from the Halifax bank on Queen Street.[15]

Driven by empathy, relational care is an affect that vibrates the chords of the heart and brings tears to the eyes. Eight days into 2020, I decided to bring with me a surplus from breakfast of boiled eggs, fried bread, omelette, tomato, and mushrooms when I walked to meet Christina, Rachel, and Sarah, who had spent the night in the nook next to Boots on High Street. However, I met only a young lady who was asleep. I placed the food by her side and wept as I walked away, feeling a surge of empathy and sadness, wondering what were the circumstances in her life that landed her in such a predicament.[16] Nine days later, I met Nancy, a young lady in her late 20s. Out of the five boxes of surplus dinner laid out before her, she selected only the box of fried potatoes. Seeing her shivering in the cold, I asked her, "Are you cold?" "Kind of," was Nancy's sheepish reply. I promised

---

[12] Journal entry, 2 January 2020.

[13] Journal entry, 2 January 2020.

[14] Journal entry, 21–22 January, 27 February 2020.

[15] Journal entry, 13 May 2020.

[16] Journal entry, 8 January 2020.

to return with a long thick coat for her as I left the four boxes of food in her care. Sometime later, I passed a long winter coat to her, which she took and wrapped around her petite self. Then, when she confirmed that the paintings on display next to her were her drawings, I interjected that I would bring money next time to buy a particular painting that I was drawn to. The affirmation of her artistic talent was a vibration that occasioned drops of tears to roll down her cheeks. The sight of her reaching up to wipe them away has been etched deeply into my memory.[17]

Appreciation, gratitude, spontaneity, and solidarity represent a string of interrelated dispositions. Allen and Josie, whom I met on 6 February 2020, are in their 30s. I passed them some vegetarian pasta, cheese, and biscuits. Allen shared, "I am a bit stupid. I have pain in my left thigh." I hugged both of them and went home. I then met Allen again on 11 February 2020 with his two friends. Joss just hugged me when I passed him the fish cakes. He remarked, "I would like to give you back the rest of the fish cakes. I do not like to waste food. You can pass it to someone else." I was touched by his sense of appreciation for the food shared with him, and more so by his sense of frugality and solidarity. I left the four of them and soon met with Ray and his dog, Bruno, and passed the fish cakes to him along with some vegetables.[18]

Respons-*able* sensitivity calls for denuding the enchained self to embrace the call of the homeless. After celebrating Mass at the Salesian community one evening, I took a bus back to Oxford. After I alighted at St. Aldates and began walking home, a homeless man called out to me for some shillings. I turned and met an elderly man with grey locks by the name of Eddy. He pleaded for seven pounds so that he could spend the night in the shelter. I gave him some shillings and advised him to spend the time at the covered market. However, as I was walking away from him, I realized I had ten pounds worth of

[17] Journal entry, 17 January 2020.

[18] Journal entry, 6 February 2020.

Mass stipend in my side pocket. I retraced my steps, found Eddy, and pressed the ten pounds into his hand. I realized, in my encounter with the nudity of Eddy's frail vulnerability, that I was motivated to free my enchained self so that I could respond joyously and selflessly to his denuded self. The thought of him having a roof over his head and a bed to rest for the night flooded my heart with untold consolation.[19]

On Ash Wednesday, 26 February 2020, I was at the St. Mungo's Shelter run by the New Road Baptist Church after buying my train ticket when a homeless man called out to me, inquiring about the time of day. When I told him it was 3:22 PM, he came down the stairs and asked for a cup of tea. I led him to buy tea and sandwiches, only to realize that I could go back to Campion Hall and make the sandwiches for him. I put some cold dishes in a container, made the sandwich and a cup of tea for him, and returned to find him. His name was Charlie, born and bred in South Kensington, London. I left him and took a short walk so that he could eat in comfort.[20]

Coevalness promotes the gradual eclipse of two complex worlds of differing upbringing, cultures, and histories. Awakened to John's actual need for a battery for his transistor radio, I jogged past him when he was sipping his coffee and informed him, "John, Tesco is open. Shall we go and get the battery for your radio?" "Yes, I appreciate your kindness to me," he replied. Then I said, "Let me go and get some money and we can go together to Tesco to get your battery." I rushed back to my room, took my wallet, and went down to meet him.

John and I walked alongside each other for the first time, chatting. The two worlds eclipsed a little. He told me that he usually makes his way to the Church of the Greyfriars after waking up in the morning: "The monks there are kind to me. They are good fellows. They give me a cup of coffee and a sandwich. Then I spend about two hours

---

[19] Journal entry, 1 February 2020.

[20] Journal entry, 26 February 2020.

praying in the Church. You see I am from Spain and I am a Catholic. So I like to spend time in the Church."

We reached Tesco only to find out that it opened at 7:00 AM, which left us about 20 minutes to wait outside and continue chatting. John shared with me about his ill health; about how he would go to the bank at 9:00 AM on most days to draw some money and buy salami and bread as he, a Spaniard, enjoyed eating them; about his girlfriend, who passed him a sandwich when he went to her window and knocked, how they had known each other for 30 years, and that she was now frail, with a greyhound as her companion.[21]

At 7:00 AM, I went into Tesco, bought John a pack of four Duracell batteries, passed them to him, and walked back with him. "I need to collect the rest of my stuff," he told me. "I am glad you have new batteries for your radio," I said, "to use during and after Christmas! I will go ahead, John, to take a shower as it is getting cold." With that, we parted.[22]

Finally, coevalness enjoins the tenacity for total surrender to God, to do God's will, to walk the extra mile (Matt 5:41) to raise funds and send a stranded homeless man back to his country. The decision was made to carry Vasile through the fluctuating ebbs of anxiety, anger, joy, disappointment, frustration, and the death of his older sister from cancer from the time I met him in Cambridge on 30 April 2020, when I shared coffee and cake with him while observing social distancing. He was stranded for three months in Oxford as the President of Romania declared a national lockdown.[23] He appealed for financial aid to buy his ticket so he could return to his two young children and wife in Bucharest, Romania. However, while sufficient funds were raised to fly him on Wizz Air on Friday, 15 May 2020, the flight was cancelled. Vasile managed to get a spot in a car ride on Thursday,

---

[21] Journal entry, 19 December 2019.

[22] Journal entry, 19 December 2019.

[23] Journal entry, 30 April 2020.

21 May 2020, but the car left without him and he returned to Oxford in disappointment and frustration.[24] Finally, he managed to fly on TAROM, the Romanian national carrier, and landed in Bucharest on Saturday, 23 May 2020.

Conrad Zepeda Miramontes, S.J., avers that boundless compassion from the Gospel viewpoint "cannot be detached from civic affairs" as "compassion must be political so that it does not lose its power to change things."[25] All the faces and traces each homeless person offers us are an opportunity to be involved in their suffering and pain as well as their joy and hope. Such involvement, Miramontes adds, "inspires actions promoting respect for the human rights of everyone and all communities."[26] Moreover, "*political compassion* links the gospel with practical action to respect rights that have been denied, among others: security, life, food, education, freedom to travel, work, home … since we all have the right to enjoy these basic requirements for human fulfilment."[27]

Theophanic Moments

In Emmanuel Levinas's ethics of alterity, every encounter is an experience of "the face" in her/his nudity.[28] Levinas painstakingly

---

[24] Journal entry, 15 May 2020.

[25] Conrado Zepeda Miramontes, "Exiles in the Global Village and Political Compassion," in *Queer Theologies: Becoming the Queer Body of Christ*, eds. Stefanie Knauss & Carlos Mendoza-Alvarez, trans. Dinah Livingstone (London: SCM Press, 2019), 133–136, here cited at 136.

[26] Miramontes, "Exiles in the Global Village and Political Compassion," 136.

[27] Miramontes, "Exiles in the Global Village and Political Compassion," 136.

[28] Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1998), 99–129; Emmanuel Levinas, "Humanism and An-archy," in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht, NL: Nijhoff, 1987), 127–139; Emmanuel Levinas, "Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity," in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 65–66.

emphasized that "the nakedness of the face is not what is presented to me because I disclose it, what would therefore be presented to me, to my powers, to my eyes, to my perceptions, in a light exterior to it."[29] A face-to-face encounter is possible only when "the face has turned to me—and this is its very nudity. It *is* by itself and not by reference to a system."[30] Furthermore, the experience of alterity, while cognitive, is "beyond quantification, calculation, and observation," allowing the marginal other to rend the present and take up residence as "an incision made in the visitation and a coming."[31] Levinas emphasized further the experiences of multiple affects, from anger to illusion, frustration, haplessness, empathy, and solidarity, in the awakened subject. Most poignant, in Levinas's opinion, is "the eruption of affect into the present time of the subject" which is experienced as a "trace" that is "a ghostly, non-phenomenal revenant who haunts the subject through the moods and feelings that travel from one time to another, summoning subjects to take responsibility for a vulnerability encountered."[32] Levinas further explained the trace as "what is left over from a fully material encounter, carried bodily into the subjective present; it is a disincarnate, though sensuous, an echo whose fullness lies in another time, but now resides within the present."[33]

The face-to-face encounter with the homeless calls for a joyful and liberating embrace of the marginal other in her/his *illeity*. The

---

[29] Levinas, "Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity," 74.

[30] Levinas, "Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity," 74.

[31] Emmanuel Levinas, "Phenomenon and Enigma," in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 61–73; Emmanuel Levinas, "The Trace of the Other," in *Deconstruction in Context*, ed. Mark Taylor, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986), 345–359, here cited at 354.

[32] Levinas, "The Trace of the Other," 354.

[33] Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity,* trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2013), 220–247; see also Robert Gibbs, "The Disincarnation of the Word: The Trace of God in Reading Scripture," in *The Exorbitant: Emmanuel Levinas between Jews and Christians*, eds. Kevin Hart & Michael Alan Signer (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 32–51.

alterity of the face of the other, in Levinas's explanation, is "always a threesome: I and you and the Third who is in our midst," who is always inextricably entangled with the face of the vulnerable neighbor—a jobless migrant worker, a refugee in the border camp, within the face/body of the marginal-vulnerable other.[34] The face is the other person, beyond the you, described by Levinas as "the *illeity* of the other—the *il* or the *elle*, the he, she, or otherwise beyond the 'you' met in the present," and "the *illeity* of the other is the other as such" whose nudity communicates "through affect within the face-to-face relationship."[35] The marginal other, in her/his illeity, "is an irreducible, transcendent singularity, the infinite expression from which the idea of God becomes possible, awakens, and comes to mind."[36] Ultimately, for Levinas, "illeity is itself divine. God … is not a subject mediated through the face of another; God is entangled within, even if irreducible to, the face of another."[37] The face is theophanic and revelatory of God who journeys with the marginal other through the accompaniment of the awakened subjects.

Theophanic moments have a Biblical orientation in Matthew, the evangelist who offers accompaniment of the homeless a liberating vision in chapter 25, verse 35: "For I was hungry and you gave me food. I was thirsty and you gave me drink. I was a stranger and you made me welcome, lacking clothes and you clothed me, sick and you visited me, in prison and you came to see me."[38]

In the chilly winter of 15 December 2019, I was jogging back to the hall when I felt the urge to bring my leather jacket, some toasts, and

---

[34] Emmanuel Levinas, "Ideology and Idealism," in *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Sean Hand (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), 235–248; Emmanuel Levinas, "The Ego and the Totality," in *Collected Philosophical Papers*, 25–46.

[35] Levinas, "Phenomenon and Enigma," 72.

[36] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 77–79.

[37] Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 77–79.

[38] Journal entry, 19 December 2019.

warmed up bread-pudding to David, the homeless gentleman whom I encountered in Christ Church Meadow. However, when I returned to the seat where David was usually seated, he had already left. I felt regret and thought, "I should have told him to wait for me!" Then I realized that David should be left free to do what he wanted rather than live his life on my terms. I left his toasts but took the leather jacket back with me, then reflected on my own action: "I am not free enough to give up all that I had brought for David because I did not meet him personally. It is harder for me 'the-have-more' to part with what I intend to give away."[39]

A few days later, on 19 December 2019, John, who was thinly clad for the biting cold of winter, encountered me. I met him in the dark, at the nook at Rose Place, and called out to him, "Good morning, John! I brought you some toasts. Shall I bring you a cup of coffee?" John groaned, "Yes, please!" Then he stood up to greet me. I asked him, "Are you warm enough? It's winter. Shall I bring you a leather jacket?" He nodded his head. I said, "*Wait for me please*." I rushed home, took the leather jacket from the cupboard along with a wool scarf, and made a cup of coffee. I walked back and passed him the gifts.[40]

My reflection on the Third Sunday of Advent led to me to be grateful for God's message that was communicated through the faces of the eleven homeless persons: "Conversion from my own complacency is what God desired most from me so that God can work through me. God is the face of the homeless, the poor, the toxified lake, the deforested mountain, the volcanic eruption." The God of alterity is the God of Advent and Christmas who challenges me through the poor, the excluded, and the rejected in society so that I become all the more motivated to work for the structural transformation of our world, with its throwaway culture premised on relativism or how the

---

[39] Journal entry, 15 December 2019.

[40] On 8 December 2019, John, shivering in the cold, called out to me and I was caught off-guard. It took me until 19 December 2019 to respond to his shivers. See journal entry, 8 and 19 December 2019.

other benefits me in relation to me. Relativism has left the excluded even more marginalized in our global world.[41]

In commemorating the meaning and significance of the Nativity scene, Pope Francis wrote that "the crib is like a living Gospel. While we contemplate the Nativity Scene, we are invited to put ourselves spiritually on the way, drawn by the humility of Jesus, and God, who made himself human in the boy child Jesus, to encounter each one of us. And we discover that God loves us to such a point as to unite Godself to us so that we too can unite ourselves to God."[42]

David, John, Susanne, Nancy, Christina, Rachel, Sarah, Nicolai, Allen, Josie, Chuck, Charles Peter, Dan, Theodora and Adrian, Vasile, Jane and Jasmine her dog, and Emmanuel are the living Gospel for me, and they are the faces of God. Their bodies, perforated with the violence of marginality, are parts of the Body of Christ. John's bed, made up of the cold concrete slabs of bricks on the floor, is a "holy crib." As much as the Christmas crib in our churches, made of straw, symbolizes a holy place for God-with-us (Matt 1:23) to rest with the sheep, so is the cold brick-bed of John a "holy crib" where the homeless rest at night, with the cold winter air and breeze, the sky and the clouds, with the birds, the bees in the budding flowers, the plants, and the animals in the fields, and the clouds and the crescent moon in the sky.[43]

Sacred and Divine in God

The mantra "All are sacred and divine in God" draws its initial inspiration from the Chipko Movement or Chipko Andolan of India.[44]

---

[41] Journal entry, 15 December 2019.

[42] Francis, *Admirabile Signum*, §1.

[43] Journal entry, 19 December 2019.

[44] Vandana Shiva & Jayanta Bandyopadhyay, "The Evolution, Structure, and Impact of the Chipko Movement," *Mountain Research and Development* 6:2 (1986): 133–142;

This forest movement emerged in the 1970s as a peasant and women's movement in the Garhwal Himalayas in Uttarakhand, and then in Uttar Pradesh, under the leadership of the Sang workers of Gopeshwar and Gaura Devi, head of the *Mahila Mangal Dal* association at Reni village. The Chipko protesters resorted to *satyagraha* (non-violent protests/ resistance) and fasting; examples would be the environmentalist Sunderlal Bahuguna, who in 1974 protested forest policy, and the Chipko activist Dhoom Singh Negi, who observed *satyagraha* and fasting in 1978 in the Advani forest of the Tehri Garhwal district to protest the auctioning off of the forest while local women tied sacred threads around the trees and read from the *Bhagavad Gita*. Today, Chipko Andolan has evolved into an eco-feminism movement. The women of the Chipko movement, according to Vandana Shiva, have learned from the oasis *schola naturae* that "the real value of forests [is] not the timber from a dead tree, but the springs and streams, food for their cattle, and fuel for their hearths."[46] Such wisdom is expressed in a folk song of that period:

> These beautiful oaks and rhododendrons,
> *They give us cool water*
> *Don't cut these trees.*
> *We have to keep them alive.*
> What do the forests bear?
> Soil, water, and pure air.
> Soil, water, and pure air.
> Sustain the Earth and all she bears.[45]

For these women, *Chipko* is a defiant embrace that protects nature, and a nonviolent protest against deforestation such that "loggers would have to kill them before killing the trees."[46] For me, *chipko* is a reverential embrace of God in creation and a joyful acclamation

---

Melissa Petruzzello, "Chipko Movement: Indian Environmental Movement," *Britannica*, https://www.britannica.com/topic/Chipko-movement (accessed 27 May 2020).

[45] Shiva & Bandyopadhyay, "The Evolution, Structure, and Impact of the Chipko Movement," 133–142.

[46] Shiva & Bandyopadhyay, "The Evolution, Structure, and Impact of the Chipko Movement," 133–142.

of God's sacred and divine presence in all of creation. Rabindranath Tagore was voraciously right in postulating, "Know all that moves in this moving world as enveloped by God."[47] The personal experience of the sacred and divine in the natural world, the *schola naturae*, is inseparable from the same experience in the *schola pauperum*. *Rûah Elohim's* sacralizing mission is at work in the same way, both in nature and at the margins.

The oasis *schola naturae* of Christ Church Meadow in Oxford taught me, more than a month after I arrived on Thursday, 8 August 2019, to recognize and acclaim nature as created sacred and divine by God, and that nature remains sacred and divine in God. While hugging the second tree in Christ Church Meadow, I saw a four-level imaginary vision of myself as a stardust sojourner (SS) in the presence of the preexistent *Rûah* of the triune God, gazing from outside the cosmos on myself as I hugged the tree in the "tabernacle" of the cosmic sanctuary, the earth, inviting all in the cosmos, the Earth, all the neutrinos around me, to praise God, acknowledging that "we are all sacred and divine in God." I heard the spirit of the tree inviting me, "Do this as often as you live your day, your life." By Thursday, 12 September 2019, I experienced an affective connection with the natural world of Christ Church Meadow along with a heartfelt acclamation of the sacred and divine in the trees, the stars, and the wind. On Saturday, 28 September 2019, I exulted in God as I chanted:

I am (in) all of you.
You are (in) me.
We are all sacred.
I bless you.
I thank you.
I adore you, spirit of the tree, of the sky, of the wind, spirit of the earth, of the Cosmos.
I love you.
Bless me too.

---

[47] Vandana Shiva, "Everything I Need to Know I Learned in the Forest," *Yes!*, https://www.yesmagazine.org/issue/nature/2019/05/03/vandana-shiva-seed-saving-forest-biodiversity.

By Friday, 3 April 2020, the exultation took on an additional mantra: "You are the glory of God. I am the glory of God. We are both the glory of God!"

The exultation soon overflowed into my relationship with John and Jason. In my meeting with John on Thursday, 2 January 2020, this mantra exuded from the deep recesses of my heart: "You are divine. You are sacred. We are divine. We are sacred," as I freely and willingly extended my hand and shook his with a greeting of "Happy new year!" On Tuesday, 14 January 2020, the occasion came for me to meet with Jason, who hailed from Daven, and to share food, sit, and converse with him. When I met John on Tuesday, 11 February 2020, to pass him a pair of reading glasses, I uttered to him, "You are sacred and divine in God."

The chanting of the mantra "All are sacred and divine in God, all are the glory of God" was transposed from the homeless to the chapel of the Catholic Chaplaincy and Campion Hall. After communion on Thursday, 5 March 2020, I was moved to chant the mantra "All are sacred and divine in God," first, to all the utensils on the altar, and second, to all persons and things present in the chapel. On Thursday, 14 May 2020, as I was presiding over the Mass at Campion Chapel, *Rûah Elohim* inspired me to chant "You are sacred and divine in God" and "You are the glory of God" to every member of the congregation present. *Rûah Elohim* had continued to inspire me since then to recite the chant in relation to everyone present at the daily Masses at Campion Chapel.

This sacred chant, "All are sacred and divine in God," articulated what I shared six years prior at a gathering on Saturday, 15 March 2014, in the two adjacent Karen villages of Ban Kaw Lam and Mae Ma Nai in Northern Thailand: "I am very grateful to Hpati[48] Ta Le Poo for sharing a wise traditional insight on the sacredness of nature, to the full moon I experienced during the two nights in Ban Kaw Lam

[48] *Hpati* is a term of respect for an elderly Karen person.

and Mae Ma Nai. The full moon is so divine, holy, and sacred. Nature and the earth are really sacred."[49]

Now I am more intuitively aware that the sacredness of the trees, nature, and earth has to do with the affirmation in *Querida Amazonia* that "the forest is not a resource to be exploited; it is a being, or various beings, with which we have to relate."[50] This assertion of the "being/various beings" of the forest resonates, to a certain extent, with what the shamans, steeped in an "indigenous wisdom-mysticism,"[51] acclaim as the "spirits," which Davi Kopenawa called "Xapiripë" in his talk on Thursday, 6 February 2020, at Campion Hall. Emmanuel de Vienne, citing Viveiros de Castro, translates Xapiripë as "spirit" which denotes "an ontological mode of the 'intensive virtual multiplicity' type."[52]

The discussion with Oliver Putz on the spirits led to another breakthrough in which I realized that I am able to live in an affective state of synthesis regarding the creator-spirits, ancestral and nature spirits, and plural deities and goddesses, and that *Rûah Elohim* of synchronicity would enable me to achieve cognitive understanding and wholeness.[53] Nevertheless, I also realized that it is alright to live in affective synthesis with cognitive gaps. The plural deities, goddesses, and spirits are the focalized and localized presence of *Rûah Elohim* in the lifeworld of humankind and otherkinds. These focalized and localized spirits participate in the creative power of *Rûah Elohim*, a participation constituting what Matthew Eaton calls "a fellowship of

---

[49] Journal entry, 13 March 2014.

[50] Francis, *Querida Amazonia*, §42.

[51] Francis, *Querida Amazonia*, §§51, 73.

[52] See Emmanuel de Vienne, "A Shamanic Bible and Its Enunciation," *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 4:2 (2014): 311–317, here cited at 312, https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.14318/hau4.2.020 (accessed 6 February 2020).

[53] Oliver Putz and I discussed the relationship of nature spirits with the Holy Spirit in the Campion Hall library on Sunday, 8 March 2020, from 8:15–10:00 PM.

the Holy Spirit" here on Earth, a pneumatic fellowship that orients the Earth toward becoming an "eschatologically minded community (2 Cor 13:13)."[54]

Mark I. Wallace's postulation is closer to indigenous beliefs: "The point is not that the Spirit *is* in nature as its interanimating force, as important as that is, but that [the] Spirit *is* a natural being who leads all creation into a peaceable relationship with itself" to the extent that "Spirit and earth internally condition and permeate one another without collapsing into undifferentiated sameness or equivalence."[55] For reputable Karen shamans and healers like Singtong and Kihe, from the village of Dok Daeng in the Chiangmai Province of northern Thailand, the creator, ancestral, and nature spirits are the "mystic owners" and "guardian spirits" of nature who foster sustainability of life in harmony with the creator and their ancestors. The spirit world amidst nature occasions the Karen shamans to remark that nature is spirited and sacred. The sacred presence evokes sentiments of respect and reverence among the villagers and shamans, and a deep communion with nature, often in silence and solitude.

Praying on the contemplative communion of the Karen shamans, I concur with Gregory and Mary Catherine Bateson: "Contemplation of this ecology brings peace through the unveiling of the sacred which could aptly be described as the 'pattern that connects'."[56] Based on the notion of the sacred as the pattern that connects, Professor Assad Ali of the University of Damascus avers that "nature [is] a process

---

[54] Matthew Eaton, "An-Archy and Awakening: The Ethical and Political Temporalities of Christology and Pneumatology," *The Heythrop Journal* 60:4 (2019): 624–641, here cited at 633.

[55] Mark I. Wallace, "The Wild Bird Who Heals: Recovering the Spirit in Nature," *Theology Today* 50:1 (1993): 13–28, here cited at 15.

[56] Abdul Aziz Said & Nathan C. Funk, "Peace in Islam: An Ecology of the Spirit," in *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust*, eds. Richard C. Foltz, Frederick M. Denny, & Azizan Baharuddin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), 155–183, here cited at 165. See also Gregory Bateson & Mary Catherine Bateson, *Angels Fear: Towards an Epistemology of the Sacred* (New York: Macmillan, 1987).

associated with the sacred—that is, as a process within which human beings experience [a] connection to the divine."[57] Regarding this connection, William R. Stoeger opines, "we need to sense and relish our profound connectedness to all our ancestors, to all of the events and processes on which our lives and being depend, stretching back from the present moment to our parents, to the animals and more primitive organisms from which we have evolved, to the stars whose life and death produced all the heavy elements (heavier than helium) which make up our bodies, to the Big Bang in which our possibility was first initiated and expressed."[58] With humility, Stoeger adds: "In a very real sense, we cannot grasp them—they grasp us. This is the dawning—and everything consuming—awareness of Mystery, of the inexhaustible richness and depth … at the heart of the reality that embraces us."[59]

In the final analysis, my personal experience of the sacredness of nature in the *schola sacra* in Oxford has enabled me, as Eugene McCarraher asserts, to behold the cosmos-earth as "a cosmic theatre of divine vitality, charged with the grandeur of God."[60]

---

[57] S. Nomanul Haq, "Islam and Ecology: Toward Retrieval and Reconstruction," in *Islam and Ecology*, 126.

[58] William R. Stoeger, "Our Intimate Links with the Universe and Nature: The View from Cosmology and Astrobiology," unpublished manuscript, 1 (Tucson, AZ: Vatican Observatory), here cited at 3. See also Paul J. Schutz, "Cultivating a 'Cosmic Perspective' in Theology: Reading William R. Stoeger with *Laudato Si'*," *Theological Studies* 80:4 (2019): 798–821, here cited at 809.

[59] William R. Stoeger, "Rationality and Wonder: From Scientific Cosmology to Philosophy and Theology," in *Astronomy and Civilization in the New Enlightenment: Passions of the Skies,* eds. Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka & Attila Grandpierre (New York: Springer, 2011), 259–268, here cited at 259, https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-9748-4_26 (accessed 20 May 2019).

[60] "Epilogue," in Eugene McCarraher, *The Enchantments of Mammon: How Capitalism Became the Religion of Modernity* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2019), 663–679, here cited at 674.

Conclusion

The Levinasian ethics of alterity opened me to a face-to-face encounter with the denuded vulnerable other who challenged me to become a respons-*able* subject toward the plight of the homeless. Though Duncan Kelly opines that cities "are often designed as much to keep poverty and homelessness hidden from the gaze of residents and tourists,"[61] I am glad the homeless in Oxford resurfaced with strong spirits at the tail end of the pandemic.

The homeless serve us a grim reminder that our current world order, as Arundhati Roy opines, "offers us a chance to rethink the doomsday machine we have built for ourselves" so that we can break with the past and courageously walk through a portal, with little luggage, "ready to imagine another world" and "ready to fight for it."[62]

I draw inspiration from the unflinching resistance of Pope Francis in unmasking virulent neo-Malthusianism and how it influences "the way people are selected according to their utility or productivity." There is the throwaway culture "from the beginning to the end of life" in the use of "prenatal selection," the observable absence from the streets of people with Down's Syndrome ("when the tomograph [scan] detects them, they are binned"), the "culture of euthanasia, either legal or covert, in which the elderly are given medication but only up to a point," and the "homeless [who] continue to be homeless" or "put in quarantine," even though "the hotels were empty [during the pandemic]. But the homeless cannot go to a hotel."[63]

---

[61] Duncan Kelly, *Politics and the Anthropocene* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2019), 41.

[62] Arundhati Roy, "The Pandemic is a Portal," *Financial Times* (4 April 2020), https://amp.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca?segmentid=acee4131-99c2-09d3-a635-873e61754ec6&__twitter_impression=true (accessed 15 April 2020).

[63] Austen Ivereigh, "Pope Francis says pandemic can be a 'place of conversion'," *The Tablet*, https://www.thetablet.co.uk/features/2/17845/pope-francis-says-pandemic-can-be-a-place-of-conversion (accessed 20 May 2019).

Religious communities and institutions, I submit, need to heed Pope Francis by resisting such utilitarian philosophy, by "opening up new horizons, opening windows, opening transcendence toward God and toward people, and in creating new ways of being at home"[64] with those at the margins of society.

The sacred chant "All is sacred and divine in God, all are the glory of God" serves as a timely reminder in the concerted efforts to imagine the post-pandemic world, that all life on Earth and in the cosmos are created sacred and divine in the image of the triune God and are revelatory of the glory of this triune God. The cosmos and the Earth constitute the cosmic theatre in which the theophanic drama unfolds the pleroma of Divine *all*-ness in our midst. May this Divine *all*-ness evoke a sense of awe, reverence, and wonder, and thereby engender a deep gratitude for God's eternal gratuitousness.

[64] Ivereigh, "Pope Francis says pandemic can be a 'place of conversion'."

Conclusion

This sacred pilgrimage in the Pneumatolocene has mapped out a pneumatic mystagogy of imbibing the wisdom of oases bubbling with the mystery of life. Three of these oases are bubbling with the resolute tenacity of the ancient civilizations of Asia, honed through centuries of plural challenges, complexities, paradoxes, and untold suffering from civil strife and natural calamities. Yet these Asian oases abound in joyful celebrations, tenacious resilience, aesthetic sensitivity, and spiritual contemplativity, imbued with a deep sense of beauty, compassion, gratuity, splendor, and reverence for the divine and the sacred that is cosmic and in our midst. Whereas the North Atlantic is preoccupied with the "Truth" while Africa and Latin America with "Life," this sacred pilgrimage is a sojourn that the late Adolfo Nicolas called the "Way" for Asia.[1] This is the way of humble learning at the feet of unassuming gurus of plural sapiential oases, with unmistakable hallmarks of marginality-subalternity in Asia and around the world.

It is a sojourn led by *Rûah Elohim* who is already present and active in an era of Pneumatolocene—the era of the underground streams of God's Creative *Sophia* which never dried up in the age of Capitalocene. This era foregrounds how Sophia is equated in the

[1] Antonio Spadaro, "An Interview with Fr. Adolfo Nicolás," *La Civiltá Cattolica*, https://www.laciviltacattolica.com/an-interview-with-fr-adolfo-nicolas (accessed 29 May 2020).

Hebrew scriptures with *Rûah Elohim* (Wis 1:6) whose power pervades all of creation. Sophia's omnipresence corporealized the Creator-God within the creaturely/natural world to the extent that Sophia expresses in her omnipresence "all her potentialities such as mobility, freedom of action, omnipotence, universal concern, and penetrating all spirits" of nature, the ancestors, gods and goddesses.[2] This omnipresence of Sophia occasioned Gerhard von Rad to opine that "life wisdom" is not differentiated from "nature wisdom."[3] Moreover, he believed that the Wisdom writers had "unwavering certainty that creation herself will reveal her truth to the [man or woman] who becomes involved with her and trusts her."[4] Besides, Sophia is always open to the mystery beyond, allowing the transcendental dimensions of created things to "retain their constantly puzzling nature" and "become themselves active, and, by what they have to say, to set [the human person] right."[5] In addition, Celia Deane-Drummond opines that the omnipresent Sophia enables humankind to experience "God present in the midst of uncertainty" as we grapple with "suffering and loss" associated with the current climate crises "through an appreciation of deep incarnation, the wisdom of the cross" while beholding the beauty and wisdom of creation.[6]

Rûah Elohim has set humankind aright in this pandemic-stricken world, and rightly so, unmasking the untenability of an exclusive dependence on scientific rationality behind the productivist-technocratic paradigm of life, privileged by its "coloniality of knowledge" that has

---

[2] Anecito L. Abais, "Wisdom: The Feminine in the Divine," *Loyola Papers* 4:1 (2023): 65–91, here cited at 74, 89.

[3] Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972), 71.

[4] von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, 317.

[5] von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, 318.

[6] Celia Deane-Drummond, "Nature, Sophia and Spirit: Interpreting Creation and New Creation Under the Sign of the Wisdom of the Cross and Resurrection," in *Ecology and Theology of Nature*, eds. Linda Hogan, Joao Vila-Cha, & Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator (London: SCM Press, 2018), 55–63, here cited at 59.

been deeply ingrained in the geopolitical West with its claim to its hegemonic Eurocentric universality. At the same time, *Rûah Elohim* is awakening the post-pandemic world to the need for decolonized epistemic shifts and post-colonial paradigms and perspectives. These shifts privilege the emergence of local knowledges and emphasize the indispensability of the religiocultural wisdom of subaltern communities associated with reputable wo/men gurus, healers, mystics, sages, chanters, herbalists, midwives, wisdom-Earth-keepers-sharers, and shamans who still abound in the oases of this global "godless space" for the sustainability of a post-pandemic world.

The age of Pneumatolocene has witnessed the emanation of this pneumatic mystagogy of doing contextual theological reflection out of the "immersional" and "manifestational" experiences of the plural worlds of spirits, deities, and goddesses, bringing about a decolonial epistemic shift toward emerging pneumatic perspectives. These perspectives posit that "creation is borne of *Rûah Elohim* (*creatio ex Spiritus*) who is corporealized in the Cosmos and Mother Earth" and that our cosmos and planet Earth are always sacralised and sacredly sustained by the primordial Spirit power of *Rûah Elohim*.[7] Such a creation-centric perspective "privileges the life-sustaining ancestral and nature spirits, acknowledging them as divinely created spirits who participate in the Spirit power of *Rûah Elohim* in the cocreation of the Cosmos and the Earth. At the same time, the life-giving ancestral and nature spirits, and local deities/gods and goddesses, are revered by the diverse communities as the localized presence of *Rûah Elohim*" in ancestral homelands and shrines as the spirits of the sky, trees, wind, earth, and cosmos.[8]

This cosmic paradigm also offers sojourners a Trinitarian perspective that recognizes the primacy of *Rûah Elohim*, particularly

---

[7] Jojo M. Fung, "Sacred Encounter of the Living Spirit: Narratives and Living Faith in *Rûah Elohim*," *Asian Horizons* 13:4 (2019): 617.

[8] Fung, "Sacred Encounter of the Living Spirit: Narratives and Living Faith in *Rûah Elohim*," 617.

as it mentored this stardust sojourner in the "life and nature wisdom" of the Longongon Murut school at the borderland of Malaysia and Indonesia, the ancestral wisdom of the *Máoshān* School that dates back to ancient China, the life wisdom of the *Kejawèn*-Decaloris oasis, the cosmic wisdom of the school of *Rûah Elohim*, and, finally, the "life and nature wisdom" of the poor and the natural world in Oxford. These five oases in this sacred pilgrimage represent the five pearls of the mystical stream that this Asian sojourner was awash in from 1998 to 2020. Each pearl singularly and collectively mirrors the interdependent interconnectivity of the Triune God with the celestial assembly of ancestors, angels, and saints, with all lifeforms and species on earth, all sacred particles, strings, and neutrinos in the cosmos.

In retrospect, this sacred sojourn was punctuated by initiation rituals that are so ordinary yet profoundly sacred and divine at the same time. The initiation rituals in the three Asian oases have a pre-initiation journey leading to a climax that is so extraordinarily ordinary. These rituals took place in the midst of chuckles, with food and drink, and were always a festive celebration of life in intimate communion with the Sacred and Divine. Yet the experience was as profound and mystical as a personal "burning bush" experience in the Jordan of Asian religiosity, one that prepared me to decry the Calvary of Asian poverty spawned by the pandemics of greed, corruption, and violence. I became more convinced that the God-Creator is the God who sacralizes, suffuses, and sustains the cosmos, all the God Particles, strings, and neutrinos, the God who is the sacred web of interrelations among the mystic owners, ancestral and nature spirits, and pantheons of deities/gods and goddesses. This conviction is grounded on the declaration of *Redemptoris Missio*, in which John Paul II affirmed that "the Spirit's presence and activity affect not only … individuals but also society and history, peoples, cultures and religions," for "the Spirit is at the origin of the noble ideals and undertakings which benefit humanity on its journey through history" and, more so, because "every authentic prayer is prompted by the Holy Spirit, who is mysteriously present

in every human heart," the seat of all the lifegiving wisdom of the religiocultural oases in the world.[9]

The sacred rites and customs conducted at sacred sites, be they a stream in the vicinity of the sacred cave or the house-shrine, are associated with hierophanies which, Mircea Eliade painstakingly argued, "have the peculiarity of seeking to reveal the sacred in its totality" as "the manifestation of the sacred in a stone or a tree is neither less mysterious nor less noble than its manifestation in a 'god' … even if the human beings in whose consciousness the sacred 'shows itself' fasten upon only one aspect or one small part of it … the process of sacralizing reality is the same: the *forms* taken by the process in [the human person's] religious consciousness differ."[10] In addition, Eliade clarified that the most elementary hierophanies "are nothing but a radical ontological separation of some objects from the surrounding cosmic zone," and that the objects could be trees, stones, and places "by the mere fact that [the object] *reveals that it is sacred*, that it has been, as it were, 'chosen' as the receptacle for a manifestation of the sacred … and occupies a different, supernatural plane."[11]

Reputable personages like the gurus, priests/priestesses, and shamans of the religiocultural oases of the Longongon Murut, *Máoshān* Daoism, and *Kejawèn*-Decaloris are intermediaries of the sacred power of ancestral and nature spirits, of the gods and goddesses of the spirit world. These personages, in Eliade's exposition, are acclaimed through singularization, a process that sacralizes persons "by 'election,' by

---

[9] John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, §§19–20, 28, and 56; see also John Paul II, Address to the Roman Curia for Christmas Greetings (22 December 1986), http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1986/december/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19861222_curia-romana.html (accessed 10 June 2020). See also Daniel A. Madigan & Diego R. Sarrió Cucarella, "Thinking Outside the Box: Developments in Catholic Understandings of Salvation," in *Religious Perspectives on Religious Diversity*, ed. Robert McKim (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2016), 63–119, here cited at 105.

[10] Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (Princeton: The Princeton University Press, 1964), xxii.

[11] Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, 32.

'choice,' of those who experience the sacred with greater intensity than the rest of the community—those who, as it were, incarnate the sacred because they live it abundantly, or rather 'are lived' by the religious 'form' that has chosen them (gods, spirits, ancestors, etc.)."[12] In Vatican II's theology of religions, they are intermediaries who embody elements of the "truth, grace and goodness" of God.[13] Their lives and roles, according to the 1974 FABC Plenary Assembly, are the "authentic expression of the noblest longings of the hearts" of the religiocultural communities as they participate in God's plan of salvation.[14] In embracing poverty of spirit, simplicity of life, and everyday mysticism, these personages have borne witness to the fruits of the Spirit: a commitment to the pursuit of sustainable livelihood with dignity, a thirst for self-realization through a profound experience of the transcendent, a desire for self-renunciation, a struggle for justice, an involvement in selfless service to the community, a total surrender of the self to God, an attachment to the transcendent in their symbols, rituals, and life itself, and a deep sense of the sacred.[15] In recognizing all this, a genuine friendship and dialogue with these personages becomes an encounter with the "God with a human face."[16]

I have become more convinced, from the significant religious experience of God's presence at the rituals of initiation in the five oases, that *Rûah Elohim* is active in the religiocultural traditions

---

[12] Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*, 32.

[13] Paul VI, *Optatam Totius*, §16.

[14] Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, *Evangelization in Modern Day Asia* (Taipei, Taiwan: 22–27 April 1974).

[15] See Thesis No. 2 of "Seven Theses on Interreligious Dialogue: An Essay in Pastoral Theological Reflection" by the Theological Advisory Commission of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences, https://doi.org/10.1177/239693938901300303 (accessed 20 May 1990).

[16] Benedict XVI, Homily for the Eucharistic Celebration on the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord (St. Peter's Basilica: 6 January 2008), http://www.vatican.va/content/benedictxvi/en/homilies/2008/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20080106_epifania.html (accessed 8 February 2008).

of our subaltern communities. In the era of Mysticalocene and Pneumatolocene, these oases need to be acknowledged as the "people's mysticism" or as spiritualities "incarnated in the culture of the lowly" the way Pope Francis has epistemically privileged them in *Evangelii Gaudium*.[17] Equally relevant to the "people's mysticism" of the oases of the Longongon Murut, *Máoshān* Daoism, and *Kejawèn*-Decaloris is what Pope Francis said in *Querida Amazonia,* that indigenous songs, dances, rituals, gestures, and symbols are "charged with spiritual meaning" as these are "occasions for gathering and fraternity" in reverential communion with the Divine.[18] The privileging of the oasis of Daoist wisdom enables us to learn from Chuang Tzu on how each human being "establishes [themselves] in (what is) the root and source [of their capacity], and [their] wisdom grows to be spirit-like … [it mounts] up on the light, and (the limitations of) the body vanish. This we call being bright and ethereal.… Their joy is that of heaven and earth."[19]

The wisdom of the homeless at the margins, according to *Fratelli Tutti*, alerts us that the Samaritans of today, too, need to regard "the bruised and abandoned person on the roadside" not as "a distraction, an interruption from all that," or as someone "hardly important, a 'nobody,' undistinguished, irrelevant to their plans for the future."[20] The wisdom calls for what Joseph McCrave opines is an acquired virtue of hospitality that "lies at the intersection of fidelity and

---

[17] "Mysticalocene" denotes the mystical era that was never eclipsed by the Anthropocene and Capitalocene as the mystics are always with us in every age, and even more so after the mental age of scientific rationality. See Francis, *Evangelii Gaudium*, §§122, 124.

[18] Francis, *Querida Amazonia*, §§78–79.

[19] Chuang Tzu (莊子), literally "Master Zhuang," was an influential Chinese philosopher who lived around the 4th century BC during the Warring States period. This period corresponded with the summit of Chinese philosophy and contained stories and anecdotes that exemplify the carefree nature of the ideal Daoist sage. See Zhuangzi, "Book XII Part II, Section V, Thien Ti or 'Heaven and Earth,'" in *Chuang Tzu: Daoist Teachings*, trans. James Legge (London: Aziloth Books, 2017), 85, 91.

[20] Francis, *Fratelli Tutti*, §100.

justice" and which enjoins the practice of the hospitality of outreach to strangers at the margins characterized by "invisibility, instability, and material barriers to inclusion."[21] Hospitality, particularly in a feminist understanding as Kate Ward avers, involves encounter that is "a risky, mutual, marginal practice across difference," one demanded of sojourners in the contemporary world of globalized economic inequality built upon social structures of inhospitality and exclusion.[22]

This sacred pilgrimage continues with the daily chant of that sacred mantra that deepens one's awareness of the divine sacredness of creation—"All is sacred and divine in God! All are the glory of God!" It arises unceasingly from the hearts of many stardust sojourners, a sacred chant that reverberates in the cosmos, conjoins with other sacred chants, and coalesces into a cosmic hymn of glory rendered by creation to the Triune God and the celestial host. This is the sacred chant that evokes the creative power of *Rûah Elohim* to divinize and sacralize the cosmos in anticipation of the eschatological vision of a New Earth and a New Heaven in the New Creation.

---

[21] Joseph McCrave, "Hospitality," in *Street Homelessness and Catholic Theological Ethics*, ed. James F. Keenan (New York: Orbis Books, 2019), 222, 226.

[22] Kate Ward, "Jesuit and Feminist Hospitality: Pope Francis' Virtue Response to Inequality," *Religions* 8:4 (2017): 1–11, here cited at 7.

Epilogue

Oases as Sacred Springs of Wisdom

The savoring of religiocultural wisdom from plural oases during this sacred sojourn in this era of Pneumatolocene has convinced me that generations of humankind today and tomorrow need to imbibe the invaluable wisdom of these inestimable "sacred springs" to ensure the flourishing of a post-colonial, post-pandemic world. To avail of the wisdom of these sacred oases, subsequent generations will need recourse to this pneumatic mystagogy that enables sojourners to learn and savor the wisdom of these sacred springs through periodic immersions and interaction with the everyday women and men, elders, healers, mystics, sages, chanters, herbalists, midwives, shamans, and wisdom-Earth-keepers-sharers of these oases.

Moved and guided by *Rûah Elohim* in the celestial presence of the three renowned Murut shamans, the *Máoshān Juseng*, the Goddess *Guan Ying* and *Kim Ying Tung Tze*, and the *Kejawèn*-Decaloris ancestors, I have learned to integrate the wisdom of these three oases with my daily Ignatian prayer, which facilitates the daily relishing of the richness of these sacred springs bubbling with the sacred mystery of *Rûah Elohim* in the deepest recesses of my heart. The daily Ignatian prayer normally takes up the salient points of the readings of the

day to allow *Rûah Elohim* to mentor me for 30 minutes. Then, in the succeeding 30 minutes, I gather the energies of the earth and begin the *Ite Inflammate Omnia* petitionary prayer, beseeching *Rûah Elohim* to set the world on fire. In this prayer, I recourse to the power of the primordial and renowned shamans to subvert the systemic wickedness of institutions and structures, consume the pandemics of corruption, inequality, and racism, and inflame the earth with the flame of *Rûah Elohim* to consume climate emergencies and the coronaviral pandemic around the world.

Relishing the sacred spring within has also inspired me to resume the *ta cho* every afternoon beginning on the 30th of March 2020, accompanied by the lighting of incense sticks and use of a Zen bell. I completed the 202nd session of *ta cho* by 2 August 2020. Each *ta cho* required calling on the names of the *Máoshān Juseng*, the Goddess *Guan Ying*, and *Kim Ying Tung Tze* as they belong to the celestial hosts of intermediaries and saints in communion with the Triune God, have been acknowledged as efficacious by the Daoist community of believers, and for personal petitionary prayers. Each session of *ta cho*, which lasts for as long as the incense sticks are burning, is dedicated to listening and praying for persons whom I accompany and are in need of physical healing, liberation, and reconciliation.

This same relishing has also allowed for this stardust sojourner to experience another "new shift," courtesy of *Rûah Elohim*, beginning on Wednesday, 3 June 2020. After communion at the daily Mass in Campion Chapel, I had a wonderful experience—I had a vision of myself being lifted up, along with the chanting of the mantra "You are sacred and divine in God. You are the glory of God. You are the body of Christ. Glory be to God forever and ever. Amen,"[1] from created things around where I was seated, as though I was in the lower half of the oval lantern, looking upwards at the celestial court of all the hosts, sensing the praises rising upward and resounding in the entire

[1] "You are the body of Christ. Glory be to God forever and ever. Amen" has been an additional mantra since the Solemnity of *Corpus Christi*. Journal entry, 10 June 2020.

cosmos, all in praise of God. Then there was a descending movement, and I was seated with the Triune God, enjoying a panoramic view of the cosmos below me, basking in the ascending crescendo of a zillion mantras being chanted from below. This was a vision of the "two halves," with an ascending movement of praises from the "lower half," arising from the earth, conjoining with the view of the "top half" from above. This experience of the two halves conjoining also occurred at the *chipko* gesture on Thursday, 4 June 2020, during my jog at dawn in Oxford, and subsequently throughout the Eucharistic celebration in honor of the Blessed Trinity on Sunday, 7 June 2020, in Campion Chapel.

This paradigm shift has offered a glimpse of *Rûah Elohim* transforming the earth and the cosmos into sacred springs of innumerable oases of wisdom for sojourners to relish. Basking themselves in these plural sacred springs, all stardust sojourners, though they carry the scars of colonization, are soaking themselves in the ancestral wisdom and relational spiritualities that Sofía Chipana Quispe cogently advocated for.[2] These are the ornate sacred springs that decolonize the beings, knowledge, and power of stardust sojourners, reconnecting them with their millenary roots that harmonize their beings with their mosaic pluriverses splendidly expressed in artifacts, candles, chants, colors, crosses, dances, drums, faces, flavours, festivals, gongs, joss-sticks, *lalang*, languages, seeds, soil, songs, and rituals that organically constitute their pluri-identities. The glimpse of this beautiful pluriverse of sacred springs offers a prospect of what *Rûah Elohim* is accomplishing now and in the future—a "New Creation" where our planet Earth is being transformed into a "New Earth" with a "New Heaven."

---

[2] Sofía Chipana Quispe, "Relational Wisdom and Spiritualities in Abya Yala," in *Decolonial Theology: Violence, Resistance and Spiritualities*, eds. Carlos Mendoza-Alvarez & Thierry-Marie Courau (London: SCM Press, 2020), 59–68.

Glossary

Ama: a Murut word that means dad/father.

Aru: a Murut word that particularly denotes evil spirits.

Buka pantang: a Malay word that denotes the release from prohibitions or taboos.

Fu: usually a piece of yellow paper with red Chinese words that carries with it the power of a talisman.

Gong: a Mandarin word that denotes emptiness.

Gunung: a Malay word that means mountain.

Hoi Kong: a term in Hakka that connotes a ritual called *Hoi Tien Mun* which opens up the five senses to perceive the seen and the unseen and to communicate with spirits from the *yin*-world in our world.

Hpati: a respectful term in the Karen language for a male elder of Chiangmai Province, northern Thailand.

Ilmu hitam: a phrase in Malay that means "black magic."

Ilmu putih: a Malay phrase that denotes lifegiving white magic as opposed to black magic.

Jinx: a word in the shamanic lexicon that Elap Garing uses to denote the spirit.

Kando: a Murut word that means a flat denial or simply "no."

Kejawèn or Javanism: a mystical tradition of the island of Java that dates back to the 15th century.

Konfrontasi (or Confrontation): a conflict, which began in 1963 and lasted until 1966, that was started by Indonesia under the leadership of President Sukarno, who opposed the formation of the Federation of Malaysia consisting of Singapore, peninsular Malaya, Sarawak, and Sabah.

Ling: a word in Mandarin that means being efficacious in bringing about the intended result.

Longongon Murut: an autonym that Murut inhabitants like Elap Garing ascribe to themselves, though they are generally known as Murut Tagal/Tahol.

Lumaagon: a Murut word that denotes the ritual practices of Murut shamanism.

Máoshān [茅山]: one of the great and most sacred mountains of Daoism.

Máoshān Daoism: the Daoism that originates from *Máoshān*

Meditasi: a Malay word that means meditation.

Na Rio: a Murut word that refers specifically to ritual bathing in a stream.

Nunsuab: a Murut word that means tomorrow.

Orang Putih: a Malay term denoting the British or white people.

Papan tinagot: a bouncy squarish platform resting on several logs in the middle of a Murut house upon which women, men, and children engage in communal ritual dances and chants. The platform also acts as a spring that enables the youth to bounce up and grab currency notes hanging down from the ceiling.

Parang: a Malay word designating a knife.

Pneumatolocene: a perennial age of the active presence of *Rûah Elohim* in creation, Mother Earth, and marginal communities. God's *Rûah* is corporealized in creation, focalized and particularized in all created lifeforms. Hence *Rûah Elohim* is omnipresent and indwelling in every and all lifeforms, and every and all lifeforms have life in *Rûah Elohim*.

Rahsia: a Malay word that means secret.

Sapientialocene: a perennial age in the accumulative and collective memory of our world where the *Rûah*/Spirit of wisdom, either personified and/or embodied in wisdom-Earth-keepers-sharers, elders, chanters, healers, midwives, mystics, and sages, accompanies, inspires, and motivates us to ensure the sacred sustainability of all lifeforms. In this way, humankind lives with the wisdom of one-ing with creation so that our common home remains an inclusive and livable planet in the cosmos.

Ta cho: a term in the Hakka dialect that denotes meditation in front of the altar in a house-shrine or Daoist temple.

Talur: a Murut word that refers to eggs.

Tung: a word in Murut that means pipe.

Vun pak: a word in Hakka that denotes the soul/spirit that animates the body/self.

Yim: a word in Hakka that means dim, indicating an inner psycho-emotional state of an imbalance of energies.

Yu: a word in Mandarin that denotes fulfillment or being full.

Bibliography

Articles and Book Chapters

Abais, Anecito L. "Wisdom: The Feminine in the Divine." *Loyola Papers* 4:1 (2023): 65–91.

Amaladoss, Michael. "What Christians can Learn from Indian Religions." In *Interfaith Dialogue: Global Perspectives*. Edited by Edmund Kee-Fook Chia. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. Pp. 143–154.

Crumplin, Mary-Ann. "Returning to Wonder." *The Heythrop Journal* 60:4 (2019): 551–559.

de Vienne, Emmanuel. "A Shamanic Bible and Its Enunciation." *Hau: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 4:2 (2014): 311–317. Available at https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.14318/hau4.2.020 (accessed 6 February 2020).

Deane-Drummond, Celia. "Nature, Sophia and Spirit: Interpreting Creation and New Creation Under the Sign of the Wisdom of the Cross and Resurrection." In *Ecology and Theology of Nature*. Edited by Linda Hogan, Joao Vila-Cha, & Agbonkhianmeghe Orobator. London: SCM Press, 2018. Pp. 55–63.

Eaton, Matthew. "An-Archy and Awakening: The Ethical and Political Temporalities of Christology and Pneumatology." *The Heythrop Journal* 60:4 (2019): 624–641.

Fung, Jojo M. "A Call to Live a Contemplative and Prophetic Mysticism." *Voices* XXXIX (July–December 2016): 161–167. Available at http://eatwot.net/VOICES/VOICES-2016-2.pdf (accessed 10 October 2015).

———. "Cosmicism: An Emerging Pneumatic Mystagogy." *The Way* 59:2 (2020): 59–72.

———. "Sacred Encounter of the Living Spirit: Narratives and Living Faith in *Rûah Elohim*." *Asian Horizons* 13:4 (2019): 655–667.

———. "The Legendary Batu Punggul." *Sabah Society Journal* 15 (1998): 59–73.

Gibbs, Robert. "The Disincarnation of the Word: The Trace of God in Reading Scripture." In *The Exorbitant: Emmanuel Levinas between Jews and Christians*. Edited by Kevin Hart & Michael Alan Signer. New York: Fordham University Press, 2010. Pp. 32–51.

Haq, S. Nomanul. "Islam and Ecology: Toward Retrieval and Reconstruction." In *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust*. Edited by Richard C. Foltz, Frederick M. Denny, & Azizan Baharuddin. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000. Pp. 121–154.

Horan, Daniel P. "Deconstructing Anthropocentric Privilege: *Imago Dei* and Nonhuman Agency." *The Heythrop Journal* 60:4 (2019): 560–570.

Johnson, Ian. "Two Sides of a Mountain: The Modern Transformation of *Máoshān*." *Journal of Daoist Studies* 5:5 (2012): 89–116.

Knauss, Stefanie & Carlos Mendoza-Alvarez. "Queer Theology and Theologies." In *Queer Theologies: Becoming the Queer Body of Christ*. Edited by Stefanie Knauss & Carlos Mendoza-Alvarez. London: SCM Press, 2019. Pp. 7–10.

Levinas, Emmanuel. "Humanism and An-archy." In *Collected Philosophical Papers*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Dordrecht, NL: Nijhoff, 1987. Pp. 127–139.

———. "Ideology and Idealism." In *The Levinas Reader*. Edited by Sean Hand. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989. Pp. 235–248.

———. "Phenomenon and Enigma." In *Collected Philosophical Papers*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Dordrecht, NL: Nijhoff, 1987. Pp. 61–73.

———. "Philosophy and the Idea of Infinity." In *Collected Philosophical Papers*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Dordrecht, NL: Nijhoff, 1987. Pp. 65–66.

———. "The Ego and the Totality." In *Collected Philosophical Papers*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Dordrecht, NL: Nijhoff, 1987. Pp. 25–46.

———. "The Trace of the Other." In *Deconstruction in Context*. Edited by Mark Taylor, translated by Alphonso Lingis. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1986. Pp. 345–359.

Madigan, Daniel A. & Diego R. Sarrió Cucarella. "Thinking Outside the Box: Developments in Catholic Understandings of Salvation." In *Religious Perspectives on Religious Diversity*. Edited by Robert McKim. Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2016. Pp. 63–119.

McCrave, Joseph. "Hospitality." In *Street Homelessness and Catholic Theological Ethics*. Edited by James F. Keenan. New York: Orbis Books, 2019.

Mignolo, Walter D. "Delinking: The Rhetoric of Modernity, the Logic of Coloniality and the Grammar of De-Coloniality." *Cultural Studies* 21:2–3 (2007): 449–514.

Miramontes, Conrado Zepeda. "Exiles in the Global Village and Political Compassion." In *Queer Theologies: Becoming the Queer Body of Christ*. Edited by Stefanie Knauss & Carlos Mendoza-Alvarez, translated by Dinah Livingstone. London: SCM Press, 2019. Pp. 133–136.

Mohad, Abd Hakim. "Spiritual Journey of Murut Tahol in Sabah and Its Effect to Their Headhunting Practice." *International Journal of*

Social Science and Humanity 4:6 (2014): 426–429. Available at http://www.ijssh.org/papers/392-H00009.pdf (accessed 4 May 2020).

Mohanty, Chandra Talpade. "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Feminist Review* 30:1 (1988): 61–68.

Quijano, Aníbal. "Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America." *International Sociology* 15:2 (2000): 215–232.

Quispe, Sofía Chipana. "Relational Wisdom and Spiritualities in Abya Yala." In *Decolonial Theology: Violence, Resistance and Spiritualities*. Edited by Carlos Mendoza-Alvarez & Thierry-Marie Courau. London: SCM Press, 2020. Pp. 59–68.

Said, Abdul Aziz & Nathan C. Funk. "Peace in Islam: An Ecology of the Spirit." In *Islam and Ecology: A Bestowed Trust*. Edited by Richard C. Foltz, Frederick M. Denny, & Azizan Baharuddin. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000. Pp. 155–183.

Schutz, Paul J. "Cultivating a 'Cosmic Perspective' in Theology: Reading William R. Stoeger with *Laudato Si'*." *Theological Studies* 80:4 (2019): 798–821.

Shiva, Vandana & Jayanta Bandyopadhyay. "The Evolution, Structure, and Impact of the Chipko Movement." *Mountain Research and Development* 6:2 (1986): 133–142.

Stoeger, William R. "Our Intimate Links with the Universe and Nature: The View from Cosmology and Astrobiology." Unpublished manuscript, 1. Tucson, AZ: Vatican Observatory.

———. "Rationality and Wonder: From Scientific Cosmology to Philosophy and Theology." In *Astronomy and Civilization in the New Enlightenment: Passions of the Skies*. Edited by Anna-Teresa Tymieniecka & Attila Grandpierre. New York: Springer, 2011. Pp. 259–268. Available at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-90-481-9748-4_26 (accessed 20 May 2019).

Thompson, Ian J. "Are Quantum Physics and Spirituality Related?" *New Philosophy* 107 (2002): 333–355.

Wallace, Mark I. "The Wild Bird Who Heals: Recovering the Spirit in Nature." *Theology Today* 50:1 (1993): 13–28.

Ward, Kate. "Jesuit and Feminist Hospitality: Pope Francis' Virtue Response to Inequality." *Religions* 8:4 (2017): 1–11.

Wei-Ming, Tu. "Beyond the Enlightenment Mentality." In *Worldviews and Ecology: Religion, Philosophy, and the Environment*. Edited by Mary Evelyn Tucker & John A. Grim. New York: Orbis Books, 1994. Pp. 10–29.

Widodo, Sahid Teguh & Kundharu Saddhono. "Petangan Tradition in Javanese Personal Naming Practice: An Ethnolinguistic Study." *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies* 12:4 (2012): 1165–1177.

Books

Bateson, Gregory & Mary Catherine Bateson. *Angels Fear: Towards an Epistemology of the Sacred*. New York: Macmillan, 1987.

de Chardin, Pierre Teilhard. *Human Energy*. Translated by J. M. Cohen. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1971.

———. *Hymn of the Universe*. London: Collins, 1965.

———. *The Divine Milieu: An Essay on the Interior Life*. New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1968.

de Vitray-Meyerovitch, Eva. (Ed.). *Anthologie du soufisme*. Paris: Sindbad, 1978.

Edwards, Denis. *Breath of Life: A Theology of the Creator Spirit*. New York: Orbis Books, 2004.

Eliade, Mircea. *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy*. Princeton: The Princeton University Press, 1964.

Fabian, Johannes. *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2014.

Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences. *Evangelization in Modern Day Asia* [Statement and Recommendations of the First Plenary Assembly of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences (FABC)]. Taipei, Taiwan: 22–27 April 1974.

Fung, Jojo M. & Michael Amaladoss. *Creation is Spirited and Sacred: An Asian Indigenous Mysticism of Sacred Sustainability*. Manila: Claretian Communications Foundation, Inc., Jesuit Communications Foundation, Inc., & Institute of Spirituality in Asia, 2017.

Gray, Donald P. *The One and the Many: Teilhard de Chardin's Vision of Unity*. London: Burns and Oates, 1969.

Ignatius of Loyola. *Spiritual Exercises*.

Kelly, Duncan. *Politics and the Anthropocene*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2019.

Kopenawa, Davi & Bruce Albert. *The Falling Sky: Words of a Yanomami Shaman*. Translated by Nicholas Elliott & Alison Dundy. Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2013.

Levinas, Emmanuel. *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 1998.

———. *Totality and Infinity*. Translated by Alphonso Lingis. Pittsburgh, PA: Duquesne University Press, 2013.

McCarraher, Eugene. *The Enchantments of Mammon: How Capitalism Became the Religion of Modernity*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press, 2019.

Moore, Jason. (Ed.). *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*. Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2016.

———. *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital*. London: Verso Press, 2015.

Ó. Murchú, Diarmuid. *In the Beginning was the Spirit: Science, Religion, and Indigenous Spirituality*. New York: Orbis Books, 2012.

Pieris, Aloysius. *An Asian Theology of Liberation*. Quezon City, Philippines: Claretians, 1988.

———. *God's Reign for God's Poor: A Return to the Jesus Formula*. Kelaniya, Sri Lanka: Tulana Research Centre, 1999.

von Rad, Gerhard. *Wisdom in Israel*. Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972.

Westin, Anna. *An Existential Phenomenology of Addiction*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020.

Zhuangzi. *Chuang Tzu: Daoist Teachings*. Translated by James Legge. London: Aziloth Books, 2017.

Church Documents and Encyclicals

Francis. *Admirabile Signum* [Apostolic Letter on the Meaning and Significance of the Nativity Scene]. 1 December 2019. Available at http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco-lettera-ap_20191201_admirabile-signum.html (accessed 5 December 2019).

———. *Evangelii Gaudium* [The Joy of the Gospel]. 24 November 2013. Available at http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20131124_evangelii-gaudium.html (accessed 12 December 2013).

———. *Fratelli Tutti* [On Fraternity and Social Friendship]. 3 October 2020. Available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20201003_enciclica-fratelli-tutti.html (accessed 12 December 2020).

———. *Laudato Si'* [On Care for Our Common Home]. 24 May 2015. Available at https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html.

———. *Querida Amazonia* [Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation to the People of God and to All Persons of Good Will]. 2 February 2020. Available at http://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20200202_querida-amazonia.html (accessed 6 February 2020).

John Paul II. *Redemptoris Missio* [On the Permanent Validity of the Church's Missionary Mandate]. 7 December 1990. Available at https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_07121990_redemptoris-missio.html (accessed 10 June 2020).

Paul VI. *Optatam Totius* [Decree on Priestly Training]. 28 October 1965. Available at https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19651028_optatam-totius_en.html.

Online Sources

Benedict XVI. Homily for the Eucharistic Celebration on the Solemnity of the Epiphany of the Lord. St. Peter's Basilica: 6 January 2008. Available at http://www.vatican.va/content/benedictxvi/en/homilies/2008/documents/hf_ben-xvi_hom_20080106_epifania.html (accessed 8 February 2008).

"Excerpts from the Journal of a Soul." Available at https://www.papagiovanni.com/sito/images/pensiero/journal_of_a_soul/excerpts.pdf.

Ivereigh, Austen. "Pope Francis says pandemic can be a 'place of conversion'." *The Tablet*. Available at https://www.thetablet.co.uk/features/2/17845/pope-francis-says-pandemic-can-be-a-place-of-conversion (accessed 20 May 2020).

"Javanese Culture-Religion and Beliefs." Available at http://thespicerouteend.com/javanese-culture-religion/ (accessed 27 February 2020).

John Paul II. Address to the Roman Curia for Christmas Greetings. 22 December 1986. Available at http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/speeches/1986/december/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19861222_curia-romana.html (accessed 10 June 2020).

———. "Pope Saint John Paul II's 1986 Message to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders." Available at https://catholicoutlook.org/pope-saint-john-paul-iis-1986-message-to-aboriginal-and-torres-strait-islanders/ (accessed 12 December 2019).

"Mao-Shan: Sacred Daoist Mountain of Eastern China." Available at http://www.san-shin.org/China-Maoshan.html (accessed 3 March 2020).

Marder, Jenny. "What is a Neutrino … And Why Do They Matter?" PBS News Hour. Available at https://www.pbs.org/newshour/science/what-is-a-neutrino-and-why-should-anyone-but-a-particle-physicist-care (accessed 28 October 2019).

O'Leary, Brian. "Miracle in the Void." Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJf1XIKKgh8 (accessed 8 June 2018).

"Origin and Migrations of the Hakkas." Available at https://pages.ucsd.edu/~dkjordan/chin/HsiehHakkaHistory.html (accessed 20 May 2020).

Petruzzello, Melissa. "Chipko Movement: Indian Environmental Movement." *Britannica*. Available at https://www.britannica.com/topic/Chipko-movement (accessed 27 May 2020).

Pinsent, Andrew. "Jesuits and the 'God Particle'." Thinking Faith. Available at http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20120803_1.htm (accessed 17 August 2016).

Roy, Arundhati. "The Pandemic is a Portal." *Financial Times* (4 April 2020). Available at https://amp.ft.com/content/10d8f5e8-74eb-11ea-95fe-fcd274e920ca?segmentid=acee4131-99c2-09d3-a635-873e61754ec6&__twitter_impression=true (accessed 15 April 2020).

"Secret Magic Behind a FU Talisman." Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nx-HK-4Xx2U&t=1568s (accessed 4 April 2020).

"*Shangqing pai* 上清派, the School of Highest Clarity, and *Máoshān zong* 茅山宗, the Line of Mt. Maoshan." Available at http://www.chinaknowledge.de/Literature/Religion/schoolsshangqingpai.html (accessed 18 March 2020).

Shiva, Vandana. "Everything I Need to Know I Learned in the Forest." *Yes!* Available at https://www.yesmagazine.org/issue/nature/2019/05/03/vandana-shiva-seed-saving-forest-biodiversity.

Smith, Michael. "The 'Ultimate' Grand Theory of Everything." Thinking Faith. Available at http://www.thinkingfaith.org/articles/20110727_1.htm (accessed 19 August 2016).

Spadaro, Antonio. "An Interview with Fr. Adolfo Nicolás." *La Civiltá Cattolica*. Available at https://www.laciviltacattolica.com/an-interview-with-fr-adolfo-nicolas (accessed 29 May 2020).

"Tagal Murut in Malaysia." Joshua Project. Available at https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/15174/MY (accessed 4 May 2020).

Theological Advisory Commission of the Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences. "Seven Theses on Interreligious Dialogue: An Essay in Pastoral Theological Reflection." Available at https://doi.org/10.1177/239693938901300303 (accessed 20 May 1990).

"What is *Kejawen?*" Available at https://www.indoindians.com/what-is-kejawen/ (accessed 27 February 2020).

Index

A

a 'nobody' 141
Admirabile Signum 125, 157
aesthetic sensitivity 135
Aki Kaulung 8, 33
all things are God 98–99, 101
allness 5, 72–73, 87–89
alterity 113, 121–124, 132
Ama 30–33, 44, 73–74, 77, 81, 83–85, 95, 147
Ama-shaman 85, 103
anawim 1
ancestors viii, 9, 33, 39, 42, 46, 49, 51, 67, 71–72, 76–78, 83, 85, 88, 96, 100, 104, 106–107, 111, 130–131, 136, 138, 140, 143
ancestral spirits 73, 85, 87
Antanum 10, 21, 76–77, 81, 83
Anthropocene 106–107, 132, 141, 156
aru 8, 25, 32
Asian religiosity 138
astral travel 38, 54–56

B

Ban Kaw Lam 128
Bantul 9, 11–17, 20–21, 23–26, 28–29, 45, 72
beranakan cina 11
Bookan 7
borderless 87
boundary-less 87
Buddha 45–46, 49, 59, 67
buka pantang 15
burning bush 138

C

Calvary of Asian poverty 138
Campion Chapel 128, 144–145
Campion Hall vii, ix, xvi, 71, 108–109, 113, 115, 119, 128–129
Capitalocene 106, 135, 141, 156
chakra 74–75
Chang Lama 22
Chardin, Teilhard xiii, xvi, 89–90, 96–98, 101, 155–156

Chipko 109, 125–126, 145, 154, 159
Chuang Tzu 141, 157
coevalness 115–116, 119–120
coloniality of knowledge 3, 136
compenetrative presencing 99
coronaviral pandemic 106, 108, 114, 132, 144
cosmic zone 139
cosmiciousness 72, 93
cosmicism 89, 102–105, 107–111, 152
creational pneumatology 2
culture of euthanasia 132

D

Daoist pneumatology 67
decolonial 4, 137, 145, 154
deities 32, 39, 55, 57–58, 62, 67, 129, 137–138
Devi, Gaura 126
distraction 141
Dok Daeng 109, 130
doomsday machine 132

E

eco-feminism movement 126
election 20, 139
Eliade, Mircea 139–140, 155
elle 123
epistemic contrasts 4
epistemic shift 3, 32, 67, 85, 110, 137
equivalence 130
ethnocentric universality 3
Evangelii Gaudium 141, 157
exclusion 142

F

Federation of Asian Bishops' Conferences 140, 156, 160
fifth week 106
focalized spirit 99
foon 61
Fratelli Tutti 141, 157
fu 20, 50, 59–62, 67, 147

G

Garing, Elap 9, 12, 16, 18–20, 23–31, 147–148
Garing bin Muntalan vii, 4, 9–33, 44, 72–74, 76–77, 81, 83–85, 95, 103, 147
Ge Hong 36
girl-spirit 63–65
God Particles 5, 89–90, 93–94, 100–101, 104, 138
God-Creator 100, 110, 136, 138
God-in-allness 72
goddesses 129, 136–139
Golkar soldiers 16–18
gong 37, 73, 147
Guan Kung 58
Guan Ying xiii–xiv, 54, 58, 65–66, 68, 75, 143–144
guardian spirits 130
gunung 17, 147

H
Hakka xiii, 38–44, 46, 48–49, 51, 54–55, 57–59, 61–63, 67–68, 74, 85, 147, 149
have-less-receiver 115
have-more-giver 115
hegemonic Eurocentric universality 137
hierophanies 139
Higgs boson 90
Higgs field 90
Hita binte Korom 11
hoi kong 43, 45–46, 147
holographic nature 95
homeless x, xiv, 1, 5, 111, 113–125, 128, 132, 141
hospitality 141–142, 153, 155
house-shrine 38, 41–49, 51, 53, 55–56, 58, 99, 139, 149
Hpati 128, 147
hungry ghosts 67

I
illeity 122–123
ilmu hitam 22, 81, 147
ilmu putih 77, 147
inclusion 142
inequality 113, 142, 144, 155
instability 142
intensive virtual multiplicity 129
interanimating force 130
interbeing-ness 116
invisibility 142
Ite Inflammate Omnia 108, 144

J
Jesus Particle 94
Jiangzu Province 4, 35
jinx 9, 23, 25, 28, 32, 147
Jiuxiao Wanfu Gong 37
Jordan of Asian religiosity 138
joss-sticks 39, 45–47, 50, 53, 58, 63–64, 145
Jurong County 4, 35

K
Kalabakan 7
kando 21, 148
Kejawèn 1, 5, 69–70, 72, 85, 138–139, 141, 143
Kihe x, 130
Kim Ying Tung Tze 143–144
Konfrontasi 16–17, 148
Korom 9, 11–15, 24, 27–28, 76–77, 81, 83
kui tzai 38, 63

L
la tok 57–58, 60
lalang 48, 63–64, 145
Laudato Si' x, xvi, 97–98, 109, 114, 131, 154, 157
Laudato Si' retreat 109
life wisdom 136, 138
ling 37, 148
localized spirit 99, 129
Longongon Murut v, 4, 7, 32, 85, 138–139, 141
lumaagon 8–9, 18, 21, 27, 148

M

Mae Ma Nai 128–129
Mahila Mangal Dal 126
mantra 104–105, 107, 109, 125, 128, 142, 144–145
Máoshān v, 4, 33, 35–37, 39, 41–42, 45–46, 51, 54, 64, 66–68, 72, 75, 77, 80–81, 83, 85, 87, 138–139, 141, 143–144, 148, 152, 160
Máoshān Daoism v, 4, 33, 35, 72, 77, 139, 141, 148
Máoshān Fengjing Qu 37
Máoshān Juseng 42, 46, 143–144
Máoshān Pai 35
Máoshān Zong 35, 160
Master Lee vii, 4, 38–44, 46–52, 54, 57–62, 66–67, 72, 74–77, 81, 83–85, 95, 99, 103
meditasi 73–78, 80–83, 148
Meizhou 51
Moiyen 51
mosaic pluriverse 145
Murut shamanism 18, 22, 25, 27, 29, 32, 77, 148
mystic owners 130, 138
Mysticalocene 106–107, 141

N

na rio 28–31, 84, 148
Nam Pak 37, 52, 59–61
Nanking City 4, 35
nature spirits 70, 78, 129–130, 137–139
neo-Malthusianism 132
neutrino 5, 101, 104, 110, 127, 138, 159
New Creation 100, 102, 107, 110–111, 136, 142, 145, 151
New Earth 100, 102, 110, 142, 145
New Heaven 100, 102, 110, 142, 145
nirvana 100
nudity 119, 121–123
nunsuab 30, 148

O

oases xiv, 1, 4–5, 85, 87, 113, 135, 137–141, 143, 145
Ontoros 9–11, 24, 27–28
Orang Putih 9–11, 15, 148

P

pak fu 59–60
Paluan 7
panentheism 72, 99
papan tinagot 28, 148
parang 13–14, 56, 148
particle mass 90
pattern that connects 130
Paul, Joseph (Chief) 22
people's mysticism 141
Pieris, Aloysius xi, 1–2, 22, 157
planetary science 95
pneumatic mystagogy 2, 89, 102–103, 105, 135, 137, 143, 152
Pneumatolocene viii, 1, 107, 135, 137, 141, 143, 149

political compassion 121, 153
portal 109, 132, 159
post-colonial 137, 143
post-pandemic 103, 133, 137, 143
primordial 76–77, 80–81, 84, 137, 144
productivist-technocratic 136
Puin 16, 25–26

Q

qi 44, 61
Qianyuan guan 37
qigong 38, 45
Querida Amazonia 2–4, 32, 111, 129, 141, 158
Quispe, Sofía Chipana 145, 154

R

rahsia 21, 149
relational care 117
religiocultural communities 2, 140
religiocultural oases 1, 5, 139
religiocultural traditions 80, 101, 106, 111, 140
respons-*able* sensitivity 118
respons-*able* subject 2, 116, 132
Roy, Arundhati 132, 159
Rûah Elohim v, xiv, 1–2, 4–5, 8, 73, 85, 87–92, 95–97, 100–101, 103, 106–107, 109–111, 113, 127–129, 135, 137–138, 140, 142–145, 149, 152
Rûah-presence-ness 103

S

sacralizing reality 139
sacred eternity 103
sacred springs v, x, 143–145
sacred web of interrelations 138
Samaritans 141
san sien 57–58
Sapientialocene i, iii–iv, viii, 149
sasambui 8
satyagraha 126
schola contemplativa 109–111
schola naturae 126–127
schola pauperum 111, 113, 127
schola Rûah 110–111
schola sacra 109–110, 131
scientific rationality 136, 141
Sembakung 7
Serundung 7
shaman vii–viii, xiv–xv, 4, 33, 72, 76–77, 80–81, 83–85, 95, 103, 108, 111, 129–130, 137, 139, 143–144, 156
shamanic personage 11
shamanic traditions 8, 25, 32
Shangqing Dao 35
Shangqing Jing 35
Shangqing Pai 35, 160
Shiva, Vandana 125–127, 154, 160
sien 43, 51, 57–58
Singtong x, 130
slamet 70
slametan 70
Sophia 85, 135–136, 151
Spirit Particle 94
spirit-ful-ness 103

spirit-guide 44, 53, 74, 81, 109
spiritual contemplativity 135
spiritual meaning 2–3, 141
spirituality x, xiv, 1, 69–70, 72, 88, 90–92, 97, 103, 107, 154, 156–157
stardust sojourner 104, 107, 127, 138, 142, 144–145
stardust-particles 107
strings 5, 94–97, 99, 104, 110, 138
subaltern 3, 135, 137, 141
supernatural plane 139
sustainability of life 108, 130

T

ta cho 38, 41–48, 50–57, 59–61, 64–65, 67, 144, 149
Ta Le Poo 128
tabernacle 77–78, 82, 127
Tagal 7, 148, 160
Tagore, Rabindranath 127
Taizong (Emperor) 36
talur 30, 149
tan kinoyo ngopo 69
Tang Dynasty 36
Tao Hong Jing 36
tenacious resilience 135
the-have-more 124
theo-en-passim 72, 99
theophanic moments 2, 121, 123
throwaway culture 124, 132
Tidung 7
Tien Mun 43, 75, 147
Tijah bte Chopil 22
Timugon 7
titah 69
tomograph 132
Trinitarian Cosmicism 105, 107–111
Triune God 2, 30, 89, 94, 100, 104–108, 110–111, 127, 133, 138, 142, 144–145
tung 9, 149
tze mei 49–50, 61

U

unacknowledged privilege 3
undifferentiated sameness 130

V

various beings 32, 111, 129
virtual processes 91
vun pak 42–43, 51, 54–56, 65, 67, 149

W

Ward, Kate 142, 155
wisdom i, iii–v, vii–viii, xiv, 1–5, 7, 32–33, 35, 68–69, 77, 85, 87, 91, 93, 95, 107, 109–111, 113, 126, 129, 135–139, 141, 143, 145, 149, 151, 154, 157

X

Xapiripë viii, 129

Y

yang-world 39, 56, 67
yim 49, 61–62, 149

yim cha 61
yin-world 38, 42–43, 48, 56, 67, 147
yin-yang eyes 38
yu 72–73
Yuan Dynasty 36
Yuanfu Wanning Gong 37

Z

Zen bell 144

This book is more than just a fascinating biographical account, weaving in rich anthropological details of those who have acted as gurus in creating important milestones on this path. It is also about deep epistemic shifts in faith that, if the author is followed, have relevance more widely to those living in the Western world, often forgetful of its own complicity in oppression, injustice, and colonial domination. It is, in other words, the birth of a new era, a Pneumatolocene. Such a shift is brought to light more pointedly for a Western audience in the account of specific homeless people living in Oxford described in the final chapter of this intriguing book.

Celia Deane-Drummond
Senior Research Fellow in Theology, Campion Hall
Director of the *Laudato Si'* Research Institute, Campion Hall
Visiting Professor in Theology & Science, CCS, Durham University

As a member of an *ecclesia discens* (a learning church) of Asia, this corpus is a personal testimony of the burning passion and freedom of heart of my fellow Jesuit companion to sit at the feet of our Asian gurus of the primal religion, *Máoshān* Daoism, *Kejawèn* Decaloris, and the homeless. This is certainly an engaging autobiography of an Asian sojourn of interculturality, sustained under the aegis of *Rûah Elohim*, embodying a "polyhedral" faith that discerningly imbibes the rich treasures of wisdom in these diverse sapiential oases in Asia.

Enrico C. Eusebio, Jr., SJ, JCD
President, Loyola School of Theology



Jojo M. Fung, SJ is an associate professor at Loyola School of Theology, Quezon City, Philippines. His recent publications include *Creation is Spirited and Sacred: An Asian Indigenous Mysticism of Sacred Sustainability* (Manila: Claretian Communications Foundation, Inc., Jesuit Communications Foundation, Inc., & Institute of Spirituality in Asia, 2017) and "Insights from Asian Indigenous Peoples in Light of *Fratelli Tutti*," in Cyril Veliath, ed., *The Wheel & the Cross: An Anthology by Jesuits & Friends on Buddhism and Dialogue* (Phnom Penh & Manila: MAGGA Research Center, 2021), 389–401. His forthcoming books are entitled *Polyhedral Christianity: Creational Pneumatology for Cosmicism & Enspirited Leadership* (with Routledge, UK) and *One-ing with Creation: An Asian Ecological Sense*.