

Mathematical Analysis of Religions

OCHIAI Hitoshi

This article tries to give a mathematical expression and analysis of world religions such as Christianity and Buddhism. Religions—the same as ontology or metaphysics as a philosophical expression of religions—cannot have verifiability in the same sense as science. However, one can insist on logical consistency. Mathematics also cannot have verifiability but must have logical consistency. There is a possibility to give a mathematical expression and analysis of religions, which are expressed philosophically by ontology.

Section 1 offers an ontology which will be able to give a philosophical expression of world religions such as Christianity and Buddhism. Section 2 expresses Christianity and Buddhism philosophically in terms of ontology. Section 3 summarizes important results of set theory through which it will be possible to express religions mathematically. Section 4 tries to give a mathematical expression and analysis of religions by means of the set theory.

Contextual Theology Today

“Asian Theology” Re-examines “Japanese Christianity”

MORIMOTO Anri

During the last three decades, Asian theology shifted its focus from issues of social justice to those of cultural identity. Its underlying assumptions on the marginality of contextual theology also changed in accordance with the rise of postmodern cultural theories. After identifying these changes, this article examines Mark Mullins' recent study on *Christianity Made in Japan* from the perspective of this redefined contextual theology. His sociological approach toward the indigenous forms of Japanese Christianity is found to focus on inadequate research objects: the groups under investigation are too small and short-lived to constitute the basis for evaluating what is genuinely Japanese about today's Japanese Christianity. More alarming is the fact that Japanese intellectual readers fail to notice this obvious mismatch and anachronism in the study. One suspects the presence of inverted Orientalism setting up an artificial image of the “exotic” East. Any effort to “give voice” to the allegedly silenced marginal subgroups today should also be careful not to invite postcolonial criticisms. In the last section, this article tries to sketch the nature and task of Asian theology as “ablative theology”. It is not an attempt to make theology Asian, nor does it make Asia its primary subject matter. It is an attempt to re-examine theology by asking questions that arise from the unique historical settings of Asian Christianity.

The Market in Sociological Theories of Religion

Criticism on the Rational Choice Theory of Religion

SUMIKA Masayoshi

The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate two points. The first is that the rational choice theory of religion is not a new theory. The rational choice theory of religion is expected to replace secularization theories, especially P. Berger's early works. The theoretical descriptions of religious markets that the rational choice theory of religion brings, however, are not so different from Berger's descriptions in the 1960's and 70's. The second point is that the rational choice theory of religion rests on dubious premises. The rational choice theory of religion describes the market model that pluralistic competition will stimulate religious markets, forcing suppliers to efficiently produce a wide range of alternative faiths well adapted to the specific needs of consumers. The rational choice theory of religion presents the premise that the market adjusts the balance of supply and consumption, and brings religious pluralism. But do religious markets always succeed in this way? A problem with this premise is that the market tends to bring about a monopoly rather than pluralistic competition. In conclusion I argue that religious markets are not always compatible with religious pluralism.

Eliade's History of Religions and Its Academic Agency

The Modern West and the Quest for the Sacred

SATŌ Shintarō

This paper targets Mircea Eliade's history of religions in an attempt to rethink the study of religion. This is in part a question of "What is the study of religion?" Since Eliade especially places "the sacred" as the key concept in his studies, I will try to shed light on this perspective.

By an analysis of Eliade's work, it becomes possible to perceive his awareness of the critical necessity of saving the modern West. In his history of religions, whether by means of his theory of hierophany or of the concept of *homo religiosus*, if it is carried through to its conclusion, the positive possibility of resolving the problems of the modern West will be revealed. That is, Eliade's history of religions emphasizes the cultural role served in the desacralized world, in accordance with the indication of the dimension of meaning, and where the principles of objectivism and empiricism are unexpectedly defeated.

Sexuality in al-Ghazālī's Theory of Mystical Practices, with Special Reference to His Cosmology

AOYAGI Kaoru

This paper analyzes the importance of sex in Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī's mystical thought, and especially clarifies the connection between his mystical cosmology and the discussion of sexual matters. It starts with al-Ghazālī's asceticism, and discusses the comparison of appetite with sexual desire. Further, it examines the originality of al-Ghazālī's discussion of sexual matters in the history of Sufi thought, comparing it with that of Abū Ṭālib al-Makkī and Ibn al-'Arabī. At first, al-Makkī's mystical cosmology is fragmentary, and he recommends restraining sexual desire. On the other hand, al-Ghazālī systematizes al-Makkī's cosmology and discusses the ascension of the human soul in his cosmology, and further he admits the positive power of sex. As a result of the connection of his views of sex and his mystical cosmology, he establishes the thought that sexual desire can be an inducement to the worship of God, especially mystical practices. Ibn al-'Arabī, who advocates the theory of the unity of being, emphasizes the sexual union of man and woman, which overlaps the unity of God and the world. It is concluded that al-Ghazālī appropriates the positive power of sex in his thought, and develops the theory of mystical practices which accords with his own mystical cosmology.

The Interpretation of the Buddha-kāya of Amitābha by Ji 基

HAYASHI Kana

In Chinese Buddhism from Sui 隋 to Tang 唐, the view of buddha-kāya (buddha's body) and buddha-kṣetra (buddha's land) was one of the main themes. It was especially important whether Amitābha should be interpreted as either saṃbhoga-kāya 報身 or nirmāṇa-kāya 化身. This interpretation was closely related to the problem of whether or not ordinary people (pṛthag-jana 凡夫) would be able to go to the pure land of Amitābha. The interpretation of the Buddha-kāya and buddha-kṣetra of Amitābha by Ji 基 who is the founder of the Chinese Hosso school of Buddhism, is found in the chapter on Buddha's land (Fo-tu-zhang 仏土章) in *Da-cheng-fa-yuan-yi-lin-zhang* 大乘法苑義林章. This has attracted much attention. In this chapter, it is written that Amitābha's pure land combines the land of saṃbhoga-kāya and nirmāṇa-kāya. However, in the chapter of buddha-kāya, San-shen-yi-lin 三身義林, there is a description which emphasizes that Amitābha is saṃbhoga-kāya, and this opinion is based on two or more śāstras. The contents overlap with *Mi-le-shang-sheng-jing-zan* 弥勒上生經贊, and we can guess that his faith to Maitreya is deeply related to his interpretation of the Buddha-kāya of Amitābha. I wish to point out in this paper that Ji's central opinion is that Amitābha is saṃbhoga-kāya, and he advocated this opinion from the different viewpoint than that of Pure Land Buddhism (Jing-tu-jiao 淨土教).

Cakrapūjā in the Śrīkula Sect

IDA Katsuyuki

The follower of the Śrīkula sect in Hindu tantrism performs the *cakrapūjā*, the worship of the wheel-shaped diagram, as the core part of *nityapūjā* daily ritual. Through the procedure of this *cakrapūjā*, *Tripurasundarī* is invited to the seat of the Śrīcakra as the main deity, and offered religious services such as *japas* and *mudrās*, by the practitioner.

In this paper I will first present several ancient practices prescribed in the *Nityāṣoḍaśikāṛṇava*. This ancient scripture contains a number of practices utilizing Śrīcakra. Originally, these practices were rather magical and secular, pursuing worldly desires, *bhukti*. Second, I will show that these mundane practices were integrated into *cakrapūjā* after the time of the *Nityāṣoḍaśikāṛṇava*. This integration was involved with a new paradigm stated in theological scriptures, such as *Yoginīhṛdaya*. In those texts, we can perceive the idea that Śrīcakra is a matrix of the world, while *cakrapūjā* brings about liberation, because this ritual procedure represents the movement from the material world to the absolute principle, *Tripurasundarī*. It is a typical manner of reorganizing ancient and esoteric *bhukti*-oriented rituals into more moderate, mock-orthodox rituals.