

Buddhist-Christian Apologetics in Seven Stages*

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This essay is written as the introduction to my larger enterprise in book form under the title of *Buddhist-Christian Apologetics in Seven Stages: Let God Be Proved True Globally through Dialogue with Buddhism*. My basic intention as implied in the title is to propose and demonstrate that Buddhist-Christian dialogue is theologically significant today in that it serves the purpose of centuries-old Christian discipline of apologetics afresh precisely by doing justice to and incorporating fully into its core the depth and width of Buddhist wisdom. In Part One: "Buddhist Christian Apologetics in Outline" let me clarify the meaning of this statement in reference to some of the most authentic proponents of apologetic theology in the history of Christianity: (1) John B. Cobb, Jr. and Paul Tillich; (2) Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz ; (3) and Martin Luther and P. T. Forsyth.

In Part Two: "Buddhist-Christian Apologetics and Ashok Gangadean" I will present (4) my own proposal of Buddhist-Christian apologetics as it unfolds in seven stages which, as will be shown later, can be compared with Ashok Gangadean's vision of seven stages of deep-dialogue. Thus, I hope to open up a new avenue to conceiving systematic theology as it emerges through dialogue with Buddhism.

Part One: Buddhist-Christian Apologetics in Outline

I. John B. Cobb, Jr.'s Motif of "Beyond Dialogue" and Paul Tillich's Method of Correlation

The above-mentioned intention of apologetic theology was once brilliantly demonstrated by John B. Cobb, Jr. in reference to the title of his book *Beyond Dialogue: Toward a Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism* (1983). Cobb writes:

It is often stressed that the purpose of dialogue is not to convert. People of

other religious Ways will not enter the dialogue if its purpose, from the Christian side, is to convert them to Christianity. One continuing problem with establishing dialogue is that so many are suspicious that for Christians this is another instrument of conversion. Therefore dialogue must limit itself to an exchange that is not intended to fulfill its own deeper intentions! Precisely for that reason we must go beyond dialogue. If we are serious about Jesus Christ, we must intend that others learn the truth of Christ. But this does not mean that we can fall back from dialogue to a witness that has not passed through dialogue. Instead we must pass through a dialogue in which we truly hear the truth that the other has to teach us.ⁱ

Passing through a dialogue into a mutual learning—this is what is meant by Cobb when he speaks of “beyond dialogue.” This new theological thrust is distinctively different from the motif of the old-type mission apologetics as espoused by missiologists, such as Julius Richter. As is well known, in his inaugural address before the senate of the theological faculty of Berlin on his appointment to the chair of the Science of Missions Richter declared:

Mission apologetics is that branch of theology which in opposition to the non-Christian religions, shows the Christian religion to be the Way, the Truth and the Life; which seeks to dispossess the non-Christian religions and to plant in their stead in the soil of heathen national life the evangelic faith and Christian life.ⁱⁱ

Cobb’s motif of a mutual learning, in the sense of what he calls mutual transformation of Christianity and any other religious Ways, such as Buddhism, is put forward more emphatically as follows:

To hear in an authentic way the truth which the other has to teach us is to be transformed by that truth. Once we have heard the truth of Islam, our Christian witness cannot remain what it was. And in our day only those Christians who have really heard that truth can deserve a serious hearing from Muslims. Further, only those Christians who have been transformed by appropriation of the universal truth found in other religious Ways can proclaim the universal truth of Jesus Christ without a false imperialism. It will be in the process of multiple dialogue that the Christian movement as a whole will gain

an adequate understanding of the universal truth of Jesus Christ on a new and more faithful level. (BD, ix)

Cobb's Christian universalism professed as in the above has as its method the movement of passing over to the side of other religious Ways (in his case, Mahayana Buddhism) and of coming back to the side of Christian faith now transformed and enriched by the incorporation of the universal truth found in them (see BD, Chs. 4 and 5). Significantly enough, this methodological movement reminds us of Paul Tillich's motif of apologetic theology with its method of correlation as far as the back and forth motif of apologetic theology is concerned. However, compared with the former the latter sounds less dynamic because it lacks the element of mutual transformation of Christianity and other religious Ways such as Buddhism. In order to elucidate what is uniquely new in Cobb's apologetics of going "beyond dialogue" I think I need to examine some of the major contents of Tillich's endeavor in systematic theology anew.

It is well known that Paul Tillich depicts the motif of apologetic theology vividly in his *Systematic Theology, Vol. I* as follows:

Apologetic theology is "answering theology." It answers the questions implied in the "situation" in the power of the eternal message and with the means provided by the situation whose questions it answers.ⁱⁱⁱ

From Tillich's perspective, "situation," as the pole of all theological work, does not refer to the psychological or sociological state in which individuals or groups live; rather, it refers to the scientific and artistic, the economic, political, and ethical forms in which they express their interpretation of existence (ST, I, 3-4). If so, what Tillich means by the situation is not a static state of affairs but a dynamic human situation in which we humans by way of self-interpretation are incessantly in search of meaning in our existence. Hence, Tillich articulates the meaning of the situation for theology with these words:

The "situation" theology must consider is the creative interpretation of existence, an interpretation which is carried on in every period of history under all kinds of psychological and sociological conditions. The "situation" certainly is not independent of these factors. However, theology deals with the cultural expression they have found in practice as well as in theory and with these conditioning factors as such. Thus theology is not concerned with the political

split between East and West, but it is concerned with the political interpretation of this split. Theology is not concerned with the spread of mental diseases or with our increasing awareness of them, but it is concerned with the psychiatric interpretation of these trends. The “situation” to which theology must respond is the totality of man’s creative self-interpretation in a specific period. (ST, I, 4)

So saying, Tillich is disclosing that as a theologian he is responsively or responsibly attending to the human self-interpretive situation in which we find ourselves willy-nilly insofar as we are human beings. In other words, Tillich’s major theological thrust turns out to be an apologetic re-interpretation of the human interpretation of our existence by ourselves. That is, he is concerned apologetically-theologically with a double interpretation of human existence.

At this juncture there arises in my mind a crucial question: What would authentically give rise to the human interpretation of our own existence in each and any culture or religion? Or, put differently, what does enable and guarantee us to ask existential questions by virtue of which we can understand and interpret ourselves rightly? In answer to these questions it appears to me that our human self-interpretation is in itself an unavoidable answer to the hidden presence of the energizer of our questioning spirit, the philosophical mind.

I think Tillich is right when he says, “The analysis of existence, including the development of the questions implicit in existence, is a philosophical task, even if it is performed by a theologian, and if the theologian is a reformer like Calvin” (ST, I, 63). However, it seems to me that he is right only on the mundane level of human existence, not on the deeper level of existence where we are faced with the hidden call of the Godhead silently resonating in all of us creatures, and which in Buddhism appears as the Buddhist Emptiness or Dharmakaya which penetrates and pervades everything in the universe.

If we include in our understanding of the situation both the mundane level and the deeper, mystical level of existence, then it turns out that our apologetic theological task of accounting for the situation is a double business: namely, it must engage in hearing the voice of the deeper, mystical Reality, the Godhead in Christian Mysticism or Emptiness in Mahayana Buddhism, by passing over to the side of the “situation” while at the same time re-interpreting this voice anew in light of the Christ-event by coming back to the side of the Christian message.

Given this new understanding of the task of apologetic theology, it now is clear to me why Cobb’s apologetic theological motif of passing over to the Buddhist realm of

Emptiness and coming back to the Christian witness of the truth of Jesus Christ is a distinctively new one as compared with Tillich's apologetic method of correlation. What is important here is to acknowledge the deeper, mystical dimension of the "situation" as encountering us in Buddhism, which Kitaro Nishida refers to as the *topos* of absolute Nothingness.^{iv}

II. Godfried Wilhelm von Leibniz and the Structure of *Buddhist-Christian Apologetics*

At the present stage of this essay I have confirmed that what is implied in the "situation" is not only the mundane-historical level of existence but also the deeper, mystical Reality. Hence, the task of apologetic theology turns out not only to be an answering theology in response to the human endeavor of interpreting our own existence, as Tillich insists, but also to be a double business of accounting for the hidden presence of the Godhead in all creatures and of explicating the meaningfulness of our human existence in light of the Christ-event.

This new grasp of the task of apologetic theology, in my view, is inherent in Cobb's idea of "beyond dialogue" giving rise to a mutual transformation of Christianity and Buddhism. Then, two new questions present themselves: (1) What is that which enables the Christian theologian to pass over to the realm of Buddhist Emptiness?; and (2) What is that which energizes him or her to come back to Christian faith and witness? Cobb himself does not seem to be concerned with these questions. However, they are crucial as far as we are engaged in apologetic theology in the above-mentioned double sense.

It is precisely with these two questions in mind that I recently have begun reading with much interest Leibniz's essay "A Vindication of God's Justice Reconciled with His Other Perfections and All His Actions" contained in his *Monadology and Other Philosophical Essays*.^v Significantly enough, the questions fit in well with his argument in the essay. Leibniz begins the argument for a vindication of God's justice with these words:

Article 1:

The Apologetic examination of the cause of God not only enhances the divine glory, but also serves our own advantage. It may move us to honor his greatness, that is, his power and wisdom, as well as to love his goodness and the perfections which derive from it, namely, his justice and holiness, and to imitate them as much as it is in our power. This apology contains two parts, of which

the first may be considered as rather preparatory and the second as the principal. The first part studies, separately, the *greatness and the goodness of God*; the second, what pertains to these two perfections taken together, including the *providence* which he extend to all creatures, and the *government* which he exercises over the creatures endowed with intelligence, particularly in all matters concerning piety and salvation. (MOPE, 114)

It seems to me that the motif of what Leibniz calls “honoring the greatness of God” is appropriately answering my first question concerning that which enables the Christian theologian to pass over to the realm of Buddhist Emptiness which in Christian awareness is identifiable with the Eckartian sense of the Godhead (Ger., *Gottheit*) as distinct from God (Ger., *Gott*). And the motif of what Leibniz designates as the love of God’s goodness and the perfections which derive from it can be considered as rightly answering my second question concerning that which energizes the Christian theologian to come back to Christian faith and witness.

Also, the important fact, as far as my proposal of Buddhist-Christian apologetics is concerned, is that in both cases the one who honors the Divine greatness and loves the Divine goodness is no-one other than God Godself. This may also be true in the case of Shingon Esoteric Buddhism. In this type of Buddhism the One Who Has Accomplished All Aims (Skr., *Sarvathasiddha* or *Sarvasiddharta*; Jpn., *Issai-gi-jooju-bosatsu-makasatsu*) appears in the seat of enlightenment as the enjoyment-body (Jpn., *juyoo-tai*) of *Mahavairocana* (Jpn., *Dairubishana-butsu* or *Dainichi-nyorai*) or of the personified embodiment of the Dharma-body or Emptiness. Surrounded by innumerable buddhas, the All-Aims-Accomplishing-One calls upon them to ascertain the highest Enlightenment by doing justice to the truthfulness of all buddhas in the midst of difficult and painful practices.^{vi}

What I am acknowledging now is the fact that inherent in Leibnizian apologetics are the motif of passing over to the metaphysical-mystical depths of our existence permeated by the Godhead or Enlightenment in honoring the greatness of God and the motif of coming back to Christian faith and witness in loving the goodness of God and the perfections which derive from it. In a word, apologetics, as found in Leibniz, is a philosophical-theological endeavor composed of the above-mentioned twofold, back and forth dynamism in vindicating God’s justice. In this philosophical-theological science it is crucial for us to bear in mind the following prudence Leibniz adheres to:

Article 2:

Theologians of excessive rigor have taken into account his greatness at the expense of his goodness, while those of greater laxity have done the opposite. True orthodoxy would consist in paying equal respect to both perfections. One may designate as *anthropomorphism* the error of those who neglect his greatness, and as *despotism* the error of those who disregard his goodness. (MOPE, 114)

In my proposal of Buddhist-Christian apologetics both elements of God's greatness, that is, wisdom and power, and goodness, that is, providence and government, are taken into account. What is important for Buddhist-Christian apologetics is to do justice to and incorporating fully into its core the depth and width of the Buddhist wisdom of Emptiness emptying itself, which can be identified with the Christian awareness of the Godhead, as discussed above. From this viewpoint, it appears appropriate for us to conceive, with Leibniz, of the case in which God works as vindicator of the greatness of the Godhead as permeating in all creatures. Let me at this conjunction quote the following passage:

Article 126:

At this point we must resort, with Saint Paul, to the treasures of supreme wisdom [Colossian 2:3], which absolutely has not allowed God to do violence to the order and nature of the universe, disregarding law and measure, nor to disturb the universal harmony, nor to select another but the best series of events. Now, in this series it was included that all men should be abandoned to their freedom, and some among them, therefore, to their depravity. The very fact that this is what actually happened confirms our conclusion. See also article 142. (MOPE, 141)

In my book *Buddhist-Christian Apologetics in Seven Stages: Let God Be Proved True Globally through Dialogue with Buddhism* I will develop a threefold thesis: (1) God is loyal to Emptiness^{vii}; (2) Emptiness empties itself^{viii}; and (3) God is the only one who can and does actually evoke loyalty in creatures. Here suffice it to say that the first principle applies to the understanding of Leibniz's concern in article 126. Leibniz's insight into the nature of the universe as implying the hidden presence of God (i.e., the Godhead) is manifested in article 142 which shows the conclusion of his apologetics and is as follows:

Article 142:

But in the treasures of divine wisdom, that is, in the hidden God and (which comes to the same^{ix}) in the universal harmony of the world, a profundity [bathos] is latent, which contains the reasons why the actual series of the universe, comprehending the events we admire and the judgments we worship, has been chosen by God as the best and as preferable to all others. See also article 126. (MOPE, 144)

It is important to note that awakening to the hidden presence of God, *qua* the Godhead, in the human predicament is implied, if my understanding is correct, in Leibniz's two passages quoted above, articles 126 and 144; and is referred to as a profundity [bathos]. In the structure of *Buddhist-Christian Apologetics* the issue of profundity is dealt with in Part One: "Situation—Vindicating the Hidden Presence of God in the Human Predicament"; first, in Chapter I: "A Christian Interpretation of the Four Noble Truths" (contained in G. W. Houston, *Dharma and Gospel: Two Ways of Seeing*, Delhi: Sri Satguru Publications, 1984, pp. 53-69); and second, in Chapter II: "The Artistic Theology in F. M. Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*" (*Bulletin of Keiwa College*, No. 4, February 28, 1995, 119-152).

The issue of profundity is to be studied in a dual fashion: on the one hand, it contains in itself what I call the *depth*-situation where one has to know that one's crime *is* in itself one's punishment, in the sense that the criminal is condemned and abandoned to his or her freedom or crime; however, on the other hand, the profundity signifies that "ignorance," or whatever kind of moral evil, *is*, as D. T. Suzuki insightfully mentions, "the negation of Enlightenment and not the reverse."^x The former profundity I might designate the situational profundity; and the latter one the mystical, paradoxical profundity.

In addition it is crucial to notice that the situational profundity inheres in the problem of "situation" in its secular sense, which Tillich wanted to consider in correlation with the "Christian message" in his *Systematic Theology, Vol. 1*, whereas the mystical, paradoxical profundity is the one in which we find the "Situation of all situations"—i.e., what Kitaro Nishida designates as the all-encompassing "topos of absolute Nothingness" which contains in itself the secular situation as a whole, the world in which we humans exist, and which constitutes our existence as Martin Heidegger's "das in-der-Welt-sein."

Now, we can observe that out of the profundity in this double sense there arises the divine call to us to be loyal and faithful. Here my third principle, to the effect that

God is the only one in the universe who can and does actually evoke loyalty in us, is valid and important. However, I have to demonstrate how the divine call, or to use Tillich's phrase, the Christian message, which constitutes the structure of Buddhist-Christian apologetics as its third principle, arises from the profundity whose deeper, mystical meaning has in Buddhism to do with Emptiness emptying itself. Emptiness emptying itself is my second principle, to which God is loyal, as is so articulated in my first principle.

This task is what I pursue in Part Two: "Message—Toward a Buddhist-Christian Theology of Loyalty" in which Chapter III: "Sunyata, Kenosis, and Jihi or Friendly Compassionate Love" (*Japanese Religions*, 15/4, July 1989, 50-66) has to do with the greatness of the Godhead, *qua* Emptiness, and the goodness of God, *qua* kenosis. Further, Chapter IV: "A New Possibility for Logos Christology through Encounter with Buddhism: Tillich and Takizawa Critically Considered and Compared" (*Bulletin of Keiwa College*, No. 7, March 39, 1998, 91-118; and No. 8, March 30, 1999, 107-137) explores in more detail the general structure/dynamics of my theology of loyalty whose ethical articulation in Chapter V: "Toward a Global Ethic of Loyalty/Fidelity/Truthfulness: A Buddhist-Christian Perspective" (*Bulletin of Keiwa College*, No. 9, February 29, 2000, 1-27) applies to "the *providence* which he [God] extends to all creatures" (MOPE, 114).

In this threefold manner I am engaged in elucidating and articulating anew the problem of "message," which Tillich considered by a method of correlation in response to the existential questions arising from the secular situation, in a new light. If what lies at the core of a Buddhist-Christian apologetics is God's loyalty to Emptiness emptying itself, as I propose and demonstrate throughout this essay and the larger enterprise to which it is an introduction, it is something that goes *beyond* only a divine Call in Jesus Christ. I mean the Christian message, in the sense of the divine Call in Jesus Christ, is the paradoxical *outcome* of Buddhist Emptiness or the intra-Trinitarian Godhead as this emerges through God's loyalty to Emptiness or the intra-Trinitarian Godhead.

It may be in order to say a few words why ethics is dealt with at a juncture prior to a consideration of justification. It is my basic attitude to ethics to conceive of it in direct conformation to God's loyalty, but not as an application of the doctrine of justification, as most Protestant theologians would usually tend to think. This being so, the Christian message simultaneously ends up with our ethical conformation to it without reason (*sine ratione*). Thus, according to my theology of loyalty, the problem of "message" sub-divides into (1) God's loyalty to Emptiness emptying itself; (2) the

divine Call in Jesus Christ; and (3) our ethical conformation to God's loyalty *cum* the divine Call.

My theology of loyalty, however, is limited in its scope if it does not cover the way in which God's loyalty evokes our self-introspection. As Martin Luther manifests, "By his outgoing God thus causes us to enter into ourselves, and by making himself known, he causes us to know ourselves."^{xi} Namely, we have to deal with the problem of justification or what Leibniz designates as "the *government* which he [God] exercises over the creatures endowed with intelligence, particularly in all matters concerning piety and salvation" (MOPE, 114).

It is with this scope in mind that I write Part Three: "Salvation—The Wider and Richer Dynamics of Justification: Let God Be Proved True Globally through Dialogue with Buddhism"—Chapter VI: "Toward a Global Hermeneutic of Justification in Process Perspective: Luther and Shinran Comparatively Considered" (*Buddhist-Christian Studies*, Vol. 12, 1992, 103-120) and Chapter VII: "Ryokan's Interpretation of the Never-Despising-Anyone in *Hokke-san* and Whitehead's Idea of 'Envisagement'" (*Bulletin of Keiwa College*, No. 10, February 28, 2001, 1-16).

In this twofold manner I continue to consider the problem of "salvation" as this emerges by way of a re-enactment of God's loyalty in us: namely, we justify and glorify the loyalty of God while confessing ourselves, our sins, particularly, before God (*coram Deo*) thus, and only thus, being justified by God. Let me clarify more fully what I mean by this in the next section.

III. Let God Be Proved True Globally through Dialogue with Buddhism:

The Theologies of Justification in Martin Luther and P. T. Forsyth

Thus far, I think I have been able to propose and demonstrate to some degree that Buddhist-Christian dialogue, in the sense of the back and forth movement of vindicating the greatness and goodness of God in relation to Buddhist Emptiness, is theologically significant today in that it serves the purpose of centuries-old Christian discipline of apologetics precisely by doing justice to and incorporating fully into its core the depth and width of Buddhist wisdom. Particularly, I have been able to articulate my idea of "Buddhist-Christian apologetics" in close connection to the structure of my larger enterprise in book form in mind (see Appendix). To do so, I have examined Cobb's and Tillich's reflections upon the issue of Buddhist-Christian dialogue *cum* apologetics which have been further re-examined by learning anew Leibniz's contribution to apologetic theology.

However, it seems to me that I need to clarify one more important issue: that is

the issue of exploring and ascertaining the real reason, the *Realgrund*, why we are able to vindicate God's justice, including God's greatness and goodness. I quoted above Martin Luther's famous passage in his *Lectures on Romans* which I think was crucial in stating his understanding of the problem of justification in its twofold signification: namely, the passive and active justification of God. Let me quote here a longer, including the above-mentioned, passage—this time in order to understand his intention more fully:

By his outgoing, God thus causes us to enter into ourselves, and by making himself known, he causes us to know ourselves. For if God did not first go out from himself in this way, seeking to prove himself in us as true, we should not be able to enter into ourselves and become unrighteous liars. For it would be impossible for man to know from his own self-knowledge that he is a liar before God unless God himself revealed it to him. (LR, 79)

In this passage Luther is concerned to interpret Rom. 3:4: "Although everyone is a liar, let God be proved true, as it is written, 'So that you may be justified in your words, and prevail in your judging'." I believe the expression "let God be proved true" [*ginestho de ho theos alethes*] is at the core of Luther's entire doctrine of justification; and it plays a pivotal role here in his exegetical endeavor concerning the Biblical text in question. Etymologically speaking, the *ginestho* should be translated as "let come out." Accordingly, the above expression as a whole can be translated as "let God come out true." This would be in line with the fact that Luther adopts the terms "*intra se extra se*" taken from Tauler (*Sermons*, 1508) in explicating the text. His usage of these terms is vividly effective in the following passage preceding the one cited above:

Likewise, in the same sense in which we can understand the statement that God and his words are justified when in faith we believe them to be true and righteous, though they are so in themselves also without our believing, we must take the sentence that we must become sinners and liars and fools and that all our righteousness, truth, wisdom, and virtue must perish. But this becomes a fact when we believe that we are sinners, liars, etc., and that our virtue and righteousness are absolutely nothing before God. And thus we become inwardly (*intra se*), inside ourselves, what we are outside ourselves, namely, before God, although inside ourselves we are not so, i.e., we do not believe that we are so. For as God, who alone is true and righteous and powerful in himself, wants to be

such also outside himself (*extra se*), namely, in us (*intra se*) in order that he may thus be glorified (for this is the glory of any good that is in anyone that it must pour itself out beyond itself among others), so he wants also that man, who outside himself (*extra se*) (i.e., before God) is wholly and without exception unrighteous and weak, become so also inside himself (*intra se*), i.e., that he confess and acknowledge himself to be as he actually is. (LR, 79)

The problem is how the divine *intra se* turns into the divine *extra se*, thus making us aware of the greatness and goodness of God in ourselves. Apparently, this divine process of entering into ourselves is concurrent with our acknowledgment of God's words as righteous, as is testified to by Luther when he says,

The passive and active justification of God and faith or trust in him are one and the same. For when we acknowledge his works as righteous, he gives himself to us, and because of this gift, he recognizes us as righteous, i.e., he justifies us. (LR, 78)

However, this way of answering the above question is not really to the point because by raising it I was rather concerned with the real ground (*Realgrund*) as such of God's outgoing, which is the same thing as entering into ourselves. The above answer is appropriate only consequently.

It is precisely at this juncture that P. T. Forsyth's insight into the matter of the justification of God is to be referred to and prized. Forsyth writes:

Holy souls are so precious in the world because they carry the note of a holiness above the world, they are earmarked for it, and their destiny is the image of God. But Christ was not destined for this image; He wore it from the first. It was his own. He was and *is* the holiness of God. Therefore God in Christ, crucified and risen, under and over the world's worst sin, is His own theodicy [vindicating God's justice]. He is doing entire justice to His holy name. Christ stills all challenge since He made none, but in an utter darkness beyond all our eclipse, perfectly glorified the Holy Father.^{xii}

It is important to note here that precisely because Christ perfectly glorified the Holy Father and His greatness he now is paradoxically able to represent God's love or greatness. Thus, Forsyth further writes:

If He, the great one conscience of the world, who had the best right and the most occasion in all the world to complain of God for the world's treatment of Him—if He hallowed and glorified God's name with joy instead (Matt. xi. 25-7; Luke xxiii:46), there is no moral anomaly that cannot be turned, and is not by long orbits being turned, to the honour of God's holy love, and the joy of His crushed and common millions. His wisdom is justified of His children. (JG, 127-128)

Luther's doctrine of justification begins with what he calls the passive justification of God by us (*deum iustificare*) and then turns into the active justification of us by God, which is the same thing as "justification by faith alone," if viewed subjectively from our side. This doctrine, however, has to be embodied by God Godself in order for it to be an authentic *theo*-logical one. Forsyth's immense contribution to theological apologetics lies herein. And it fits in nicely with my proposal of a Buddhist-Christian apologetic theology of loyalty if what Christ glorified metaphysically, while perfectly glorifying and vindicating the Holy Father, is at once the relationality (*perichoresis*) between Him and the Holy Father and which appears in Buddhism as Emptiness emptying itself or *Dharmakaya*.^{xiii}

If that is the case, we can joyfully affirm God and say, let God be proved true globally through dialogue with Buddhism. My comparative reflections upon Luther and Shinran in Chapter VI and upon Whitehead's process metaphysics and Zen Master Ryokan's interpretation of the Never-Despising-Anyone in Chapter VII are theologically significant from this new point of view. If Christ can be and actually is perceived as being loyal and faithful to the Holy Father while at the same time loyal and faithful to Buddhist Emptiness emptying itself, his salvific meaningfulness turns out to be at once Christian and Buddhist.

The depth and width of Buddhist wisdom is to be acknowledged against the background of vindicating God's justice so much so that God *may be perceived as* globally true through dialogue with Buddhism. As Whitehead says, God is the *outcome* of that which is ultimately Really Real, creativity.^{xiv} What stands for Whitehead's creativity in Buddhism is Buddhist Emptiness; and in trinitarian theology it is in parallel to the intra-trinitarian relationality (*perichoresis*). In Buddhist terms, God, I believe, is to be designated as *Nyorai*, *Tathagata*, namely, the One who has come from thusness.

Part Two: Buddhist-Christian Apologetics and Ashok Gangadean

IV. God's Outgoing and Entering into Ourselves: Buddhist-Christian Apologetics in Seven Stages in Relation to Ashok Gangadean's Vision of the Seven Stages of Deep-Dialogue

Our whole religious life, its sapiential and practical aspects included, is, I believe, contributive to the process of God's outgoing, which is God's entering into ourselves, in seven stages, as will be shown in the volume *Buddhist-Christian Apologetics: Let God Be Proved True Globally through Dialogue with Buddhism*. This contributive nature of our religious life in its entirety vis-à-vis the Divine life hinges upon the Divine worshipability and is solely due to God's outgoing. The task of philosophical-theological apologetics resides in vindicating this whole Divine-human outgoing/incoming process in a demonstrative way. This can be achieved through dialogue with Buddhism.

First, this is shown to be true in "A Christian Interpretation of the Four Noble Truths" which is the title of Chapter I of my text. At this first stage, the Godhead (or Emptiness) is hidden in the human predicament, which is suffering (Pali, *dukkha*). What is involved in this fact is, to use Ashok Gangadean's phraseology,

Stage One Radical Encountering of Difference: Self Faces the Other.

And Gangadean writes:

This first encounter comes with a certain shock, with a realization of an Other, a different way of life, a different worldview, an alien Other that resists, interrupts, disrupts my settled patterns of interpretation. With this primal encounter there is a new realization that my habits of mind cannot make sense of this Other. This radical encounter with Difference—a different world, a different way of making sense of and experiencing the world—is disconcerting, sometimes threatening, and *evokes a vulnerability to this alien presence*. I have a new sense of delimitation and I feel challenged to change, to revise my way of relating to this Other. I realize now that my habit of translating the Other into my pattern of "minding," of appropriating the Other to my worldview, is dysfunctional. So I face a sudden silence, pause, opening—an open horizon of uncertainty and risk. I must make a decision to move forward—or draw back.^{xv}

What I am concerned with is Buddhist wisdom as it manifests itself in the “Four Noble Truths.” Certainly, my encounter with the Buddhist wisdom evokes a “vulnerability” to the Buddhist vision of reality as emptiness or no-mind. However, as is shown in Chapter I, I try to show the text of the “Four Noble Truths” is explicable from the viewpoint of Christian Natural Theology as found in Rom. 1:18-22. This viewpoint is paradoxically related to the viewpoint of Revealed Theology as this expresses itself in Rom. 3:21ff..

Second, God’s outgoing can be ascertained in relation to “The Artistic Theology in F. M. Dostoevsky’s *Crime and Punishment*” which is the title of my second chapter. At this second stage, the Godhead as hidden in the human predicament, while at the same time at work in the human abandonment to freedom, can be studied in terms of the symbolism of evil in *Crime and Punishment*. From the *depth*-situation the image of Christ can be seen as the final operator of Dostoevsky’s artistic creativity.

This state of affairs corresponds with what Gangadean depicts as

Stage Two

Crossing Over—Letting Go and Entering the World of the Other: Self Transformed Through Empathy.

And he writes:

After the initial shock and realization that I now face an alien world, a worldview very different from my own, I feel challenged to inquire, investigate, engage and enter this new world. As I open my Self to this Other I realize that I need to stand back and distance myself from my former habits and patterns of minding the world. I begin to realize that this other world organizes and processes the world very differently from my way. I realize that I must learn new habits and ways of interpretation to make sense of this different world. I must learn a “new language.” Indeed, I must translate myself into a different form of life that sees the world differently. *This involves a bracketing of my prejudices.* (SSDD, 2; emphasis added.)

In this connection, let me emphasize that there is a certain correspondence between the above passage and the effective creativity Dostoevsky demonstrates in *Crime and Punishment* in that he depicts and interprets human evil and the concomitant breakdown of each actor from the viewpoint of “phenomenology of ideas.”

He depicts each and any actor in the novel as experimenting with his or her idea only thereby to experience an existential breakdown at the end of the experiment. What is crucial here is the fact that Dostoevsky, as the creator of his literary world, never totally identifies himself with any of the ideas the actors espouse in their hearts and minds. In this specific sense, Dostoevsky knows how to deal with what Gangadean calls “a bracketing of my prejudices” (see SSDD, 2).

Third, God’s outgoing and entering into ourselves will be studied in view of the Buddhist-Christian parallelism in Chapter III: “Sunyata, Kenosis, and Jihi or Friendly Compassionate Love.” Here God’s greatness and God’s goodness are explored in relation to *sunyata* and *kenosis* with a concern to know how the Buddhist realm of *sunyata* is related to the Christian realm of *kenosis*. In this context, I think what Gangadean mentions at

Stage Three
Inhabiting and Experiencing the World of the Other:
Self Transformed into the Other

makes real sense. He writes:

I begin to feel a new and deep empathy for my new habitat; I want to let myself go—free myself to enter, experiment, learn and grow in this new way of being. I hold on to my prior views as much as I can, but I do advance in a conservative fashion. Still, I experience an excitement in discovering, in inhabiting a new and different worldview. I have a new profound realization of an-Other, an alternative reality and form of life. *But in the end I realize this is not my home.* (SSDD, 2; emphasis added.)

In my case, however, since I have begun perceiving that even God or Christ is loyal to *sunyata* or Emptiness emptying itself, I have come to acknowledge that inherent in both Buddhism and Christianity is that the grasp of truth implies both attainment and non-attainment at the same time. And I sense that this perception is my “home” newly found. In other words, what is implied in this third perception is a new possibility of re-envisioning the Christian message through dialogue with Buddhism. In this respect, the insight into this state of affairs in Chapter III is pivotal to my entire work on Buddhist-Christian apologetics in this volume.

Fourth, it is crucial when returning to the Christian realm from the realm of the

hidden reality of the Godhead or Buddhist Emptiness that we clearly notice that which coordinates the Buddhist or mystical or metaphysical realm of greatness to the Christian realm of goodness. I have found the Coordinator in the Logos, and will be developing a Logos Christology in Chapter IV: “A New Possibility for Logos Christology through Encounter with Buddhism: Tillich and Takizawa Critically Considered and Compared.”

At this fourth stage which Gangadean refers to as

Stage Four

Crossing Back with an Expanded Vision: Self Returns Home with New Knowledge,

what is most crucial, I think, is the sense of the Coordinator since this makes sense precisely within the following context Gangadean puts forward brilliantly:

I now cross back, return, to my own world, bringing back new knowledge of how to think and act—and even wish to adopt/adapt some of it for myself. As a result of this Primary Encounter with the world of the Other, I now realize that there are other ways of understanding reality. I am therefore open to rethinking how I see myself, others and the world. *I encounter my Self and Culture anew, with a newly opened mind.* My encounter with radical difference now challenges my former Identity, and everything begins to appear in a new light. There now begins a dramatic deepening of my sense of my Self, my Identity, my Ethnicity, my Lifeworld, my Religion, my Culture... There is no return to my former unilateral way of minding. (SSDD, 3; emphasis added.)

In my opinion, the Coordinator, the Logos, is loyal to Emptiness emptying itself, thus and only thus, coming back paradoxically from the side of the ultimate, mystical Reality, as its agent of actualization. In process conceptuality, this state of affairs can be described in terms by the notion of “proposition” as embodied by God. Now, according to John B. Cobb, Jr., “A proposition is a togetherness of some actual entity or nexus of actual entities with some eternal object.”^{xvi} If the notion of prehension is embodied by God, it certainly means that “God’s aim is at ideal strength of beauty and that this aim is eternally unchanging.” (CNT, 180-181). In more concrete terms Cobb beautifully writes:

God's subjective aim will then be so to actualize *himself* in each moment that the propositional feeling he entertains with respect to each new occasion will have maximum chance of realization. Every occasion then prehends God's prehension of this ideal for it, and to some degree the subjective form of its prehension conforms to that of God. That means that the temporal occasion shares God's appetite for the ideal for the occasion becomes the occasion's ideal for itself, the initial phase of its subjective aim. (CNT, 182; emphasis added)

In my own reading of the above passage, the "Himself" is to be conceived as the Godhead or creativity or the intra-trinitarian relationality (*perichoresis*). It is, I think, for this reason that God aims at ideal strength of beauty in actualizing Himself. By the same token, it seems to me that Tillich thinks of the Logos as manifesting and speaking from out of the divine abyss and that Takizawa designates the Logos as the *Proto-factum* Immanuel, in the sense of the fundamental unity of God and humanity, who speaks *as* Jesus. In my Buddhist-Christian apologetics I conceive of this entire dynamics of Divine manifesting/speaking in terms of God's loyalty in its double sense: first, God is loyal to Emptiness emptying itself; and second, by being so, God paradoxically turns out to be the only one in the universe who can evoke loyalty, faith, or trust in creatures.

Fifth, if there is in the universe the Coordinator as the Logos who mediates between the metaphysical-mystical Reality of Emptiness or the Godhead and the Christian concern for rightness or appropriateness in the world of an ever new self-creation, this means that one's perception of values is pluralistic and dialogical. With this perception in mind, in Chapter V: "Toward a Global Ethic of Loyalty/Fidelity/Truthfulness" I will develop a pluralistic-dialogical global ethic while critically examining the motif of theonomy in Hans Kung's global ethic.

In this connection, let me attend to what Gangadean says at

Stage Five
The Dialogical Awakening:
A Radical Paradigm-Shift Self Inwardly Transformed.

He writes:

As a result of this new encounter with Self, when I cross back from my deep encounter with an Other I begin to experience a profound shift in all aspects of

my world—in my inner experience, in my encounter with others, in my relating to the world. I begin to realize that my encounter with the Other has shaken the foundation of my former worldview, my former identity. For now that I am mindful of the living reality of other worlds, other perspectives, I can no longer return to my former identity and forget this living presence of the Other. Indeed, I now begin to realize that there are many other worlds, other forms of life, other perspectives that surround me. I now open to a plurality of other worlds and perspectives and this irrevocably changes my sense of Self. I feel transformed to a deeper sense of relation and connection with my ecology. I feel more deeply rooted in this experience of relationality and community. *I now see that my true identity is essentially connected with this expansive network of relations with Others. This is the ignition of the Dialogical Awakening.* (SSDD, 3; emphasis added.)

In my case, at the core of a global ethic of loyalty/fidelity/truthfulness there is an insight into the *non-ergo* reality of the universe. Descartes began the history of modern philosophy with the dictum: *Cogito, ergo sum*. By contrast, I affirm that reality of the universe is of a “non-ergo” character. By this I mean that the “Appearance” of the universe (for instance, the Cartesian “Cogito”) needs absolutely nothing in relating it to “Reality.” This is because Reality is directly undergirding an appearance ontologically or, I might say, envisagementally speaking, while, however, awaiting its actual conformation to it, axiologically speaking—in the sense of a valuational bringing into actuality.

In this view, I am in line with Whitehead’s metaphysics whose core he expresses with these words: “The substantial character of actual things is not primarily concerned with the predication of qualities. It expresses the stubborn fact that whatever is settled and actual must in due measure be conformed to by the self-creative activity.”^{xvii} Thus, inherent in my vision of reality as *non-ergo* is the understanding of myself as immediately connected with other actualities in the universe, God and creatures included. And this is, to borrow Gangadean’s expression, the “ignition of the Dialogical Awakening,” isn’t it?

Sixth, the dialogical awakening mentioned above, however, is limited in its scope if it is not in touch with what Leibniz calls profundity. As I wrote earlier, my Buddhist-Christian theology of loyalty is also limited in its relation to salvation if we do not include in itself God’s outgoing and entering into ourselves. My intention of writing Chapter VI: “Toward a Global Hermeneutic of Justification in Process

Perspective: Luther and Shinran Comparatively Considered” is precisely because I am mindful of this point. Thus, I am urged inwardly to take into account the problem of “conscience” in Luther and Shinran in its close relationships to their theories of justification or salvation (Jpn., *oojoo*). As a result, I am blessed with experiencing a possibility for globalism in the matter of a holistic salvation, not just in the matter of a global ethic discussed in Chapter V.

With this amplified idea of justification in mind, I read the following text of Gangadean’s.

Stage Six
The Global Awakening:
The Paradigm-Shift Matures Self Related to Self, Others, the World.

Gangadean writes:

In my transformed dialogical awakening I discover a deeper common ground between the multiple worlds and perspectives that surround me. I have a new sense that Self and Others are inseparably bound together in a boundless inter-relational web. I realize that multiplicity and diversity enriches my Self and my World. *I now see that all worlds are situated in a common ground of reality and that radical differences are nevertheless situated in a field of Unity.* I experience three related dimensions of global dialogical awakening: (SSDD, 4; emphasis added.)

What, then, is the “common ground”? In answer to this question I would like to point to the problem of “conscience” as it is related to the appearance of the Godhead or Emptiness in *all* creatures, including evil creatures. By contrast, God is the gauge of authentic existence in all creation, to the exclusion of evil. Accordingly, we may say that the Godhead or Emptiness is that which urges and motivates “conscience” to operate in us whereas God is the one who judges, directs, and receives “conscience,” especially “guilty conscience,” in us with justice or righteousness. Hence, the Christian view of salvation “for me” as residing in Christ alone is understandable from the viewpoint of existential faith, whereas it is to be acknowledged that God exists everywhere, metaphysically speaking.

With this understanding of “conscience” in mind, I think I can proceed to read the following threefold statement about “global dialogical awakening” appropriately:

- a) An ever deepening discovery of Self: I become aware of a deep inner dialogue within my Self. I discover a rich multiplicity and diversity of perspectives within my own inner world. In this inner dialogue I feel increasingly more deeply rooted and grounded in my world. My Identity is enriched with multiplicity and I experience a more potent sense of my uniqueness as I celebrate my expanded world of relationality with Others and with the Ecology.

- b) A dynamic dialogue opens with Others in my Community: As my new inner dialogue evolves I find myself in a new and transformed relation with others who share my world, my tradition, my religion, my culture. This new phase of relations with my peers can be disorienting and disconcerting, for as I now dramatically grow in my Identity I find myself at an estranged distance from many of my peers, even as I discover a deeper affinity and embrace of my community, my polis. I face a new turbulence—miscommunication and misunderstanding with my colleagues—and a challenging and dramatic dialogue unfolds in my polis.

- c) A global awakening emerges in all aspects of my life: As this inner and outer dialogue matures I realize that my understanding of my world enters a new “global” light: I realize that I am surrounded by many worldviews. I enter a global horizon and a global consciousness in which inter-religious, inter-cultural, inter-ideological, inter-disciplinary, inter-personal dialogues abound in all directions. I now have a new globalized sense of reality—a dialogical domain in which multiple alternative worlds are situated in dynamic ever-deepening relations. With this understanding comes a new attitude to life and to ethics. (SSDD, 4)

Seventh, let me now turn to a conclusive question: What would the final, salvific element in vindicating God’s justice, God’s greatness and goodness included, be like? I answer that it is my Self-realization as inseparably involving in itself the motif of adoration of God even surpassing my personal existence. Chapter VII: “Ryokan’s Interpretation of the Never-Despising-Anyone in *Hokke-san* and Whitehead’s Idea of ‘Envisagement’” is written with this final issue in mind.

As will be shown there, one has to live, as the Zen Master Ryokan did, in

accordance with the Divine envisagement of the future accomplishment of Enlightenment or salvation of all creatures. If you look upon anyone as a soon-to-be-awakening person, you will bow down before him or her, as the Never-Despising-Anyone appearing in the Lotus Sutra did. The Zen Master Ryokan esteemed him so much that he entrusted his entire life to the Never-Despising-Anyone as the supreme spiritual Reality. Thus, I would like to put forward a final theological suggestion proper to Buddhist-Christian apologetics: if viewed with Ryokan's eyes, Jesus praying on the cross, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34), might appear to be the incarnate personhood of the Never-Despising-Anyone. Thus, my proposal of a Buddhist-Christian apologetics ends up with a Never-Despising-Anyone Christology.

From this viewpoint it appears that Ryokan's tanka which he produced while lying sick in bed is manifesting his Self-realization based upon the concurrence of the Buddha with him:

**waga nochi o
tasuke tamae to
tanomu mi wa
moto no chikai no
sugata narikeri**

while beseeching thee
for mercy after my death
lo I find myself
already embodying
the Original Vow now!

Gangadean's following passage in

Stage Seven

Personal and Global Transforming of Life and Behavior: Self Lives and Acts in a New Global Dialogical Consciousness

can be read with Ryokan's above poetical-religious/religious-poetical spirit in mind:

As this paradigm-shift in my life matures I realize that there is a deep change in

all aspects of my life—a new moral consciousness and a new practice. As my new dialogical consciousness becomes a habit of life I find that my behavior and my disposition to Self and Other have blossomed. I feel a new sense of communion with my Self, with Others and with the Ecology. I realize that the deepest care for my Self essentially involves my care for Others and for the environment. I have a deeper sense of belonging to my world, to my community, and with this a boundless sense of responsibility in all my conduct. I now realize that I am transformed in the deepest habits of mind and behavior. *I find a deeper sense of Self-realization and fulfillment and meaning in my life and my relations with others and the world around me.* (SSDD, 5; emphasis added.)

What Gangadean terms “a deeper sense of Self-realization” is manifested in that it allows us to acknowledge anew the Divine presence with us at the core of our existence. My teacher Katsumi Takizawa designates this Divine presence as the *Proto-factum* Immanuel (see Chapter V). With innermost surprise and joy I find this same deeper sense of Self-realization in what Leibniz writes in the following passage and which shows a profound affinity with Takizawa’s notion of “the possibility of the knowledge of God even outside the walls of the Church [*extra muros ecclesiae*]”:

Article 113:

Thus, too, those outside the Church [hoi exo], to whom only the external message has been denied, must be committed to the clemency and justice of the Creator, though we cannot know whom God will succor nor for what reason he will grant his grace. (MOPE, 138)

At the end of this introductory essay to *Buddhist-Christian Apologetics in Seven Stages* it would be fitting for me to quote the concluding article of Leibniz’s essay “Vindication of God’s Justice”:

Article 144:

But the most magnificent part of the world, the City of God is a sight to which we shall at last be admitted some day, illumined by the light of the divine glory, to be able to know its beauty. For in our present state below, this City is accessible only to the eyes of faith, that is, through absolute trust in the divine perfections. The better we understand that the City of God manifests not only the power and wisdom, but also the goodness of the Supreme Spirit, the more

ardently will we love God and burn to *imitate*, as much as is in our power, the divine goodness and justice. (MOPE, 145; emphasis added)

Conclusions:

The idea of *imitatio Christi* depicted above is the culmination of our vindication of God's justice, just as the Buddhist ideal of "becoming a Buddha with one's present body" (Jpn., *sokushin joobutsu*) is the state of a diamond (Jpn., *kongoo*) in which the All-Aims-Fulfilling-Bodhisattva, coming out true here-now as this body of mine, is at one with all buddhas in the universe.^{xviii} Here the macrocosm and the microcosm are one in a vindication of the justice of the Divine. To this end Buddhist-Christian apologetics culminates while we listen to the voice of the Coordinator or Love in the universe who invites us all, saying,

Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light. (Mat. 11:28-30; NKJV)

Buddhist-Christian apologetics is the way in which we first experience, with the Coordinator or Love in the universe, the vulnerability to the hidden presence of God (*qua* the Godhead) in the human predicament and which appears in Buddhism as Emptiness emptying itself.

Second, because Love's vulnerability is Love's spirit of loyalty or "lowliness," Love paradoxically has the capability of calling forth our creaturely loyalty or "yoke" to Love and Emptiness at the same time that we are bracketing our prejudices in the midst of our existential breakdown owing to our idealisms.

Thus, we thirdly possess our home newly found and "rest" in the bosom of the Coordinator, the Logos, Love which embraces *sunyata* and *kenosis*.

Fourth, the Logos speaks and manifests from the Divine Abyss, thus coordinating the Godhead *qua* Emptiness emptying itself to the Goodness of the Deity and allowing us to encounter our Self anew. Here we are in the grip of *bene esse* based upon *esse*, the *Proto-factum* Immanuel. Love's yoke is light!

Fifth, our discovery of the immediacy of our existence in relation to all other existences, which needs no "ergo" between the Appearance and the Reality, *is* in itself the ignition of Dialogical Awakening!

Sixth, we thus are encouraged to stand with all humans and other creatures

upon the Common Ground, conscience, knowing together with the Godhead who exists everywhere and Love who re-makes our righteousness day by day.

Seventh, this entire process of Buddhist-Christian apologetics justifying the ways of God toward humanity and all other creatures culminates in the final *Self*-realization of us as *nothing* before the City of God—in the Pauline sense that “Nothing separates us from the love of Christ” (Rom. 8:35).

Appendix:

Buddhist-Christian Apologetics in Seven Stages: Let God Be Proved True Globally Through Dialogue with Buddhism

Tokiyuki Nobuhara July 31, 2001/updated November 28, 2004

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NOTES

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ⁱ John B. Cobb, Jr., *Beyond Dialogue: Toward a Mutual Transformation of Christianity and Buddhism* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), pp. viii-ix. (Hereafter cited as BD.)

ⁱⁱ Julius Richter, "Missionary Apologetics: Its Problem and Its Methods," *International Review of Missions*, 2 (1913), 540.

ⁱⁱⁱ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology, Vol. 1* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), p. 6. (Hereafter cited as ST, I.)

^{iv} See my paper "Hartshorne and Nishida: Re-Envisioning the Absolute. Two Types of Panentheism vs. Spinoza's Pantheism," delivered at the Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy, in Boston, Massachusetts, USA, August 10-15, 1998; now available at <http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Cont/ContNobu.htm>.

^v Translated by Paul Schrecker and Anne Martin Schrecker (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1965). (Hereafter cited as MOPE.)

^{vi} See Motohiro Yoritomi, "The Understanding of the Body in Shingon Esoteric Buddhism," delivered at the 21st Tozai Shukyo Koryu Gakkai Conference at Palaceside Hotel, Kyoto, July 22-24, 2002, 2 (unpublished).

^{vii} My idea of God as the principle of loyalty was first put forward in "Principles for Interpreting Christ/Buddha: Katsumi Takizawa and John B. Cobb, Jr" (*Buddhist-Christian Studies* 3, 1983) in the following manner: "My notion of loyalty applied to God may sound connotive of the subordination of God to the metaphysical ultimate. But God's loyalty to creativity or Emptiness does not mean his subordination, for it embodies the meaning of characterization, exemplification, qualification, or instantiation in the relationship of the supreme agent/patient in the universe to the metaphysical cause or principle of reality. As such, it supremely and

maximally represents the creaturely cases of loyalty, in the sense that some particular individuals are loyal to some general cause(s). That is to say, God's loyalty to creativity is the ultimate culmination of the relationship of 'individuation' of particulars to the universal in the universe. In this sense, my use of this notion for God is an attempt at theological appropriation or 'apotheosis' of Josiah Royce's philosophy of loyalty. The rationale for the transference of this notion to God lies, I propose, in the fact that God is *supremely actual*, whereas the metaphysical ultimate is the *universal of universals*, but that the supreme actuality is related to the universal of universals in some unique fashion. I designate this unique fashion of relationship 'loyalty.' Ontologically, my use of the notion loyalty for God presupposes and is undergirded by the fact that all actual entities, including God, are loyal to the universal of universals, creativity or Emptiness" (p. 88). In this proposal of a theology of loyalty I am predicated upon John Cobb's thesis, presented in the article "Can a Christian Be a Buddhist, Too?" (*Japanese Religions*, 10/3, December 1978, 11-2), to the effect that "God as the ultimate *actuality* is just as ultimate as is Emptiness as ultimate *reality*." Yet, my standpoint is different from his in that I am interested in articulating the way in which the two ultimates are related to each other—and this by reference to God as the principle of loyalty to creativity or Emptiness. I call that to which God is loyal "the covenant" or the Community within the context of Biblical theology. I believe the authentic origin of creaturely faithfulness lies in God's faithfulness to the covenant or the Community as was so espoused by Royce.

^{viii} What in Whiteheadian scholarship corresponds to the Buddhist idea of Emptiness emptying itself, in my view, is the idea of creativity as it is "without a character of its own" (PR, 31) or as it is "devoid of actuality" (PR, 7). If creativity is devoid of a character of its own, the characterlessness of creativity cannot and therefore should not be conceived of as another character. Thus its characterlessness is an ongoing business. In this respect, creativity is akin to the Buddhist notion of Emptiness emptying itself. In both cases one might be enticed to think of some particular agency who is involved in the negation of a character in respect to creativity or Emptiness. However, there would be no such agency at all, which is the meaning of Emptiness or creativity. What is at issue here is, in Kitaro Nishida's words, "determination" without a "determinant."

^{ix} It, I think, is in accordance with this Leibnizian spirit that Richard Elliott Friedman concludes his book *The Hidden Face of God* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995) with the statement that "There is some likelihood that the universe *is* the hidden face of God" (p. 284). However, what is involved in this "is" is to be explained in a sufficiently reasonable way. I think I can find one of the convincing explanations of the "is" in what Paul Davies writes in the following dictum: "The development of new forms and systems is subject to general principles of organization that guide and encourage, rather than compel, matter and energy to develop along certain predetermined pathways of evolution. In *The Cosmic Blueprint* I used the word 'predestination' to refer to these general tendencies, to distinguish it from 'determinism' (which is the sense in which Aquinas uses the term). For those, such as process theologians, who choose too see God's guiding hand rather than genuine spontaneity in the way the universe develops creatively, then stochasticity can be regarded as an efficient device through which divine intentions can be carried out. And there is no need for such a God to interfere directly with the course of evolution by 'loading the dice,' a suggestion I mentioned in passing in chapter 5. Guidance can be through (timeless) laws of organization and information flow" (Paul Davies, *The Mind of God: The Scientific Basis for a Rational World*, New York: Touchstone Book, 1992, p. 192). If "stochasticity" means "being skillful in aiming," I suspect that we cannot

explain this nature of God, i.e., the “stochastic nature of God” as probably containing in itself what Whitehead designates as the primordial and consequent natures of God, simply in reference to the personal Deity; but we have to see into the depth of the personal Deity, that is, into the intra-trinitarian Godhead which in Buddhism is identifiable with Emptiness emptying itself, thereby returning to the realm of the personal Deity. This whole *theo*-logical procedure I call in the text the principle of God’s loyalty in the universe with three ramifications: namely, (1) God is loyal to Emptiness; (2) Emptiness empties itself; and (3) God is the only one in the universe who can and does actually evoke loyalty, faithfulness, and trust in creatures. This is because without God’s loyalty to Emptiness, that is, God *an sich*, in mind, I cannot refer to and vindicate God as God is skillful in aiming, that is, God “for us,” in any meaningful manner—a point where I find Davies’s profoundly inspiring and thorough-going cosmological argument rather insufficiently equipped theologically. However, this is not the place to develop my thesis regarding the “stochastic nature of God” to the full.

^x D. T. Suzuki, *Essays in Zen Buddhism. First Series* (New York: Grove Press, 1961), p. 139.

^{xi} Martin Luther, *Lectures on Romans*, ed. Wilhelm Pauck (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1961), p. 79. (Hereafter cited as LR.)

^{xii} P. T. Forsyth, *The Justification of God* (London: Duckworth & Co., 1916). (Hereafter cited as JG.)

^{xiii} In this theological posture I think I am basically in line with two of the major orientations in Simone Weil’s Christology appearing in her *Waiting for God* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1951). One orientation is related to her understanding of the intra-Trinitarian relationality which she expresses with these words: “The love between God and God, which in itself *is* God, is this bond of double virtue: the bond that unites two beings so closely that they are no longer distinguishable and really form a single unity and the bond that stretches across distance and triumphs over infinite separation. The unity of God, wherein all plurality disappears, and the abandonment, wherein Christ believes he is left while never ceasing to love his Father perfectly, these are two forms expressing the divine virtue of the same Love, the Love that is God himself” (pp. 126-127). Based upon this view she develops a unique cosmology when she says, “...corresponding to this love, there is the infinite separation spread throughout the totality of space and time, made of mechanically harsh matter and interposed between Christ and his Father. As for us men, our misery gives us the infinitely precious privilege of sharing in this distance placed between the Son and his Father” (p. 127). The second orientation of her Christology is to do with how she understands Christ’s obedience on the cross. She writes: “In our acts of obedience to God we are passive; whatever difficulties we have to surmount, however great our activity may appear to be, there is nothing analogous to muscular effort; there is only waiting, attention, silence, immobility, constant through suffering and joy. The crucifixion of Christ is the model for all acts of obedience. This kind of passive activity, the highest of all, is perfectly described in the *Bhagavad-Gita* and in Lao-Tse. Also there is a supernatural union of opposites, harmony in the Pythagorean sense” (p. 194). As is evident in the text, I call this image of a supernatural union of opposites appearing in Christ’s obedience to God the Father and at once to the love between God and God the Coordinator without whom the universe cannot fulfill its function.

^{xiv} See Alfred North Whitehead, *Process and Reality*, Corrected Edition, eds., David R. Griffin and Donald W. Sherburn (New York: The Free Press, 1978), p. 88: “This is the conception of God according to which he is considered as the outcome of creativity, as the foundation of order, and as the goad towards novelty.”

^{xv} See Ashok Gangadean, “Seven Stages of Deep-Dialogue: Global-Dialogue Institute”: <http://global-dialogue.com/sevenstages.htm>, Stage One, 1. (Hereafter cited as SSDD; emphasis added. The Website presentation and photos is the work of Prof. Ingrid H. Shafer.)

^{xvi} See John B. Cobb, Jr., *A Christian Natural Theology: Based on the Thought of Alfred North Whitehead* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1965), p. 180. (Hereafter cited as CNT.)

^{xvii} Alfred North Whitehead, *Symbolism* (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1959), pp. 36-37.

^{xviii} See Yoritomi, “The Understanding of the Body in Shingon Esoteric Buddhism,” 12-15.