



CONFRONTATION AND COOPERATION

1000 YEARS OF POLISH–GERMAN–RUSSIAN RELATIONS

VOL. I(IV)/2018: 22–26

DOI: 10.2478/conc-2018-0004

Galyna Tarasenko, Bohdan Nesterovych

Vinnitsia Mykhailo Kotsiubynskyi State Pedagogical University, Ukraine

Philosophical Comparativism About Search of Common Ways of Ecological Problems Based on the Dialogue of Cultural Matrices of the East and West

Key words: ecological problems of humanity, philosophical comparativism, dialogue of cultures of the East and West

Abstract

The article talks about a common searching by the Western and Eastern countries the ways of solving environmental problems of humanity based on the improving the worldview reflections. The authors propose the dialogue of cultures as a methodological key solution to these problems. In the context of comparative analysis the authors characterize the ecologism of tao-Buddhistic traditions and values of the Oriental attitude, that have a great influence on Western civilization. The environmental philosophy of attitude towards nature is offered in the article as a common product of dialogue of cultures. The authors also present the experience of using the Eastern philosophical concepts of attitude towards nature in Ukraine.

Introduction

At the present stage of development of a „human-nature” problem, a broad cultural synthesis of environmentally fruitful tendencies towards the world is needed, which exist in many types of cultures. It becomes possible due to the effect of the coincidence of value orientations inherent in various forms of cultural self-consciousness.

Axiological approaches to nature have traditionally been formed as a result of mental contradictions. The cultural matrices of the East and West in relation to nature are quite different.

Analytical division of the world is distinctive for the philosophy of the European culture. Feeling of being integrity in the eastern culture resists it and it is characterized by the total aesthetic perception of nature and display of attitude towards it. In the Western phi-

losophy, the idea of the rational-volitional activity of a man in nature was always dominant, and activity was elevated to the level of substance.

First of all, the Oriental philosophy aspires to spiritual harmony – nirvana. On the basis of the mentality of the Oriental peoples, there has always been a way of „returning back inside” with the help of efforts of concentrating spiritual energy. The Oriental philosophy invokes to master oneself, not nature. In particular, buddhism preaches that everything is closely connected in the world around us: „All is in one, one is in all.” This idea is the main moral constant that imposes a restriction on the transformative activity of the human in nature.

The philosophical thought of China, which is closely connected with a tao-buddhistic tradition, has greatly promoted the role of comprehensive aestheticism towards nature (Wang Wei, Confucius, Qi Baishi).

One of the founders of Taoism, Zhuangzi, proclaimed harmony a sign of unity of the world. He compared the universe with a reed pipe: each musical note sounds particular, but together they form a coherent melody.

Chinese philosophers argued about the extraordinary role of aesthetic comprehension of nature. It is no coincidence that the main category of aesthetics and pedagogy of China was and is the category of enlightenment, which cannot be equated with ordinary pleasure. Enlightenment is a special perception of nature in the unity of contradictions, it is a pleasure of observing the harmony (close to the ancient catharsis). According to the Eastern tradition, the aesthetic perception of the world presupposes the definition of the secret essence of things. The tradition of admiration the nature with the fixation of the marvelous expressiveness of its states became dominant.

Values of the Oriental attitude have a great influence on Western civilization. Proclamation of return to the holistic being through the appeal to the Eastern wisdom sounds in works by H. Keyserling. Nobel Peace Prize laureate A. Schweitzer highly praised the achievements of the Oriental philosophy as well. The greatness of the oriental attitude to nature, in his opinion, is born by the active search for the outlook and meaning of the life, and the Europeans are dominated by instincts and impulses of action (that produces many environmental problems).

At the same time, investigations of national cultures in the context of world culture (O. Losev, D. Likhachov, S. Nutsbidze, O. Potebnya, I. Ogienko, M. Golubets, E. Malaniuk) confidently prove the affinity of cultural-value orientations contained in different types of cultures. For example, Lesia Ukrainka in the „Ancient History of the Eastern Peoples” notes that the Eastern concepts of good and righteous human life on the Earth are very close to the Old and New Testament. They are linked with the purity of moral views, the desire for justice, truth, love for all living beings. The fact of the emergence of intermediate cultures is indeed significant as they synthesize the Western European and Eastern cultural values. Such a culture can be considered the Ukrainian culture, which Indo-European basis is quite expressed.

The experience of philosophical comparativism encourages countries of the New Silk Road not only to compare different cultures of the world in order to find common points between them but also to find options for their synthesis in the name of saving nature and solving environmental problems of mankind.

Ecology of Chinese philosophy

For the East, Chinese philosophy was the same catalyst for the development of thought, and culture, which for the civilized rest of the world was the philosophy of Ancient Greece.

The philosophical basis of Ancient China comprised the principle of Trinity of the Universe, which, according to the Chinese philosophers, included heaven, earth and man¹.

For the complete understanding of the Chinese philosophy, it should be kept in mind that China is a cultural world of the right hemisphere that produces an entirely different perception of reality. Cultures that differ in the development of the right hemisphere, are concentrated in visual images, religious experiences, music, and hypnosis. People of such cultures even hear and perceive sounds in a different way, because their understanding of the world occurs through concrete and individual images.

The philosophical thinking of China includes four leading concepts:

1. **Holism**, which is expressed in the harmonious unity of man and nature. Man and nature are not contradictory subjects, but are an integral structure that aspires to harmony;
2. **Intuition**. According to the ancient Chinese philosophers, the essence of Being cannot be understood through a number of specific concepts or cannot find reflections in the semantics of a language. It can be known only through intuitive enlightenment;
3. **Symbolism**. As a leading tool for thinking, the ancient Chinese philosophy used *xinxiang*, which means imaginative thinking;
4. **Tian**. All the completeness of the principles of the macrocosm could be comprehended only with the help of a serious cognitive act, which included cognition, emotional experiences and volitional impulses. Also, a leading role in this scheme was given to ethical consciousness.

Ancient Chinese experienced well the meaning of beauty and in general, something aesthetic, which lead a man to a state of harmony with Nature, removing him from ordinary reality and raising him to the level of harmonious Being. The study of ancient Eastern wisdom (Chinese, Indian, Japanese) can substantially strengthen the ecological thinking of humanity.

¹ X. Yao, *Konfucjanizm*. Wprowadzenie, Kraków 2009.

Environmental philosophy of attitude towards nature as a common product of the dialogue of cultures

Environmental philosophy (R. Dunlap, G. Murdock, J. Mitchell, M. Moiseev, etc.) is a common product of the dialogue of cultures and can be expressed by the following principles²:

- Humanity is one of many living beings that depends on the natural environment, and in this sense is not exclusive. Due to the lack of feedback from nature, human actions often lead to unpredictable consequences.
- The highest value is the harmonious development of man and nature. Nature is inherently self-sufficient, it can exist outside the person and without it, regardless of whether it is useful or harmful to human.
- The fact that a man has got intellect does not provide him with any privileges. On the contrary, it imposes additional responsibilities on nature. The world of people and the world of nature are elements of a unified system.
- Influence on nature changes with interaction, the purpose of which is to meet maximally human needs and needs of nature.
- The natural world has certain limits, so there are restrictions on the use of nature.
- Interaction with nature should be defined as an „ecological imperative”: only that is correct and permissible which does not violate the ecological balance existing in nature.

Synthesis of ecology with aesthetics, from our point of view, harmonizes the sphere of communication in the system of „man-nature”. Harmony (ἀρμονία - link, order, combination) involves coherence, consonance, mutual conformity of qualities. Harmonization of the sphere of affairs involves mutual understanding of subjects' interaction, mutual acceptance of positions, recognition of the right to life and the corresponding consideration of life needs, that is, finding the right „counter movement” in the context of interaction. When it comes to harmonizing the relationships of children with nature, it is envisaged, first of all, their preparation for an ecologically rational perception of the environment and environmentally justified behavior in nature.

From our point of view, the success of the implementation of the environmental approach to the education of children and youth also largely depends on cultural and mental characteristics. Analyzing the European discourse of the development of educational processes, one cannot ignore the success of the Eastern pedagogy in solving the tasks of harmonizing the environmental behavior of people.

The role of philosophical and artistic traditions of the East in the system of environmental education of youth

The extremely important role in the formation of the Eastern concept of attitude to nature played the philosophical and artistic traditions of Japan, which is based on the doctrine of Zen with its proclamation of the absolute value of all things in the world. The ultimate goal of the Zen theory and practice is „Satori” - literally „enlightenment” - the intuitive knowledge of the world, attachment to the highest truth, achieved suddenly and directly while mobilizing all spiritual powers of man. The main place belongs to the concept of „jūgen”, which means „deeply beautiful”. Japanese aesthetics asserts the absolute beauty and expressiveness of the world in any manifestations. Therefore, often „Jūgen” is defined as „sophisticated misery” and is compared to true beauty with the beauty of flickering ice. This led to the eastern tradition of appealing to things which, from the European perspective, are insignificant and even scanty. However, in the eastern philosophy aesthetic experiences generate not only bright objects and phenomena of the surrounding world but also those which lack the external shine.³

For the Japanese aesthetic consciousness perception of the world, which exists in a constant movement and is deprived of any certainty and completeness, is a built-in property. But any of its object or phenomenon is worthy of human attention. Therefore, the tradition of admiration – the inspirational-love contemplation of nature, the fixation of the extraordinary expressiveness of its states at various moments of existence – became dominant.

The experience of philosophical comparativism – the comparison of different cultures of the world in order to find common moments between them, and also for the purpose of their synthesis – indicates the certain pre-

² Development of socio-environmental views. Formation of the social ecology as a branch of knowledge. Available at: <http://textbooks.net.ua/content/view/5345/46/>

³ A. Zavadskiy, L. Novikova, Art and civilization, Moscow 1986.

disposition of the European understanding of nature towards the values of the Oriental (Eastern) world perception. Eastern world perceptions are described by modern researchers as spontaneous, holistic, intuitive, undifferentiated (in contrast to analyticity, selectivity, science, objectivism, and rationalism of the Western culture)⁴.

Pedagogical systems of the East are mainly subject to the ideas of Confucianism. Here aesthetic education is always interconnected with the ethical one, it involves teaching children the eternal values of traditional culture, forming aesthetic ideas about the beauty of human relationships while studying morals and ethics, ceremonies and rites, fine arts, music, etc. Aesthetic education in the East is subordinated to the idea of continuity throughout life. For instance, the uniqueness of the Japanese tradition of forming the aesthetic culture of the individual is explained with influence of the national religion – Shintoism, which originates in the ancient pagan beliefs of Japanese. Buddhism did not cause the destruction of national traditions of aesthetic education but enriched the system of aesthetic views of Japanese with the ideas of contemplation, subtleties, etc. Specificity of formation of the aesthetic culture in the process of children's socialization in the Eastern culture is determined with the cult of child, traditional means and forms of education, including admiration of various natural objects, national architecture, decorative and applied arts, poetry, theater, ceremonial dances, children's holidays, etc.

The most important feature of elementary and secondary education in Japan is the notion of „kokoro”. For each Japanese „kokoro” means the idea of education, which is not limited to knowledge and skills, but assists in the formation of human nature. In the European languages, „kokoro” can be translated as „heart, soul, mind, mentality, humanism.” Japanese are convinced that the objective basis of education in primary and secondary schools is the enrichment of children's „kokoro” and at least, arming with knowledge and skills (as opposed to a more unified high school). In the context of education, the „kokoro” concept comprises the following issues: respect for man and animal, sympathy and generosity for people and animals, search for truth, ability to feel something beautiful and sublime, to have self-control, to preserve nature, to make a contribution to the development of society.

One of the compulsory elements of the Japanese ped-

agogy is the admiration of nature⁵. The importance of such an educational strategy is caused with such a high level of urbanization that in the process of education of children there is a need to neutralize its negative consequences. Urbanization has transformed the child's place into a dangerous area for her health and the psyche. Poisonous air, polluted food, stressful atmosphere and lack of physical activity hurt children more than adults. While admiring nature children are involved in the harmonious environmental behavior, gaining experience of emotional and artistic interaction with the surroundings. The good result of admiration of nature is that the Japanese children have a high sensory culture of the environmental perception, for instance, they are able to distinguish about two hundred colors and shades.

Observing behavior of the Japanese children at the beginning of the last century, the well-known Eastern scholar H. Vostokov noted that the eastern education yields beneficial results: „In relation to trees, flowers and animals, children do not show the cold cruelty that can often be expected from Europeans; everything in nature seems to them full of order and harmony, they demonstrate tender compassion for everything that lives and breathes”⁶.

Experience of using the Eastern philosophical concepts of attitude towards nature in Ukraine

Educational workers in Ukraine are closely studying the experience of oriental pedagogy, and therefore, tendencies of upbringing children in the immediate connection with the natural environment are gaining strength. Educators are actively using both significant national achievements (in particular, the pedagogical concept by V. Sukhomlynskyi) and advanced educational ideas of foreign pedagogy, including the eco-educational potential of the environmental approach.

Our personally developed technologies of aesthetic and ecological education „Dyvosvit”, „Parostok”, „Rosynka”⁷ are widely implemented in the educational practice of preschool institutions in Ukraine. We proceed from the fact that integrity of children's knowledge

⁵ L. Tsarova, Pedagogical traditions of aesthetic cultural formation of a person in the modern school education in China and Japan: synopsis of thesis, Kirovohrad 2012.

⁶ H. Vostokov, Japan and its inhabitants, St. Petersburg 1904, p. 328.

⁷ H. Tarasenko, Discover the divine nature to children: a parents' reference book on bringing up of a child's soul and heart, Vinnytsia 2008.

⁴ H. Nagata, History of philosophical thought in Japan [trans. from Jap.], Moscow 1991, p. 195.

of nature can be ensured by the harmony of intellectual, emotional-aesthetic and practical-creative aspects of its perception and evaluation. In the period of preschool childhood, pupils are more focused on the sensuously enthusiastic cognition of the surrounding world, which is syncretically perceived by them as an organic whole without being crushed into classes, types, and grades. Nature in the imagination of the preschool child appears as a harmonious merger of its living and inanimate objects in the diversity of bright sensory and aesthetic characteristics (colors, shapes, proportions, sounds, smells, tactile and taste features, etc.). Children easily personify the results of nature perception, giving its objects human qualities and feelings. Being in captivity of fabulous-fantastic perception of the world, preschoolers are mostly open, without bias and disgust, perceive and appreciate any living creature, seeing it as their „native soul”. However, children of a preschool age often reveal thoughtless cruelty towards plants and living creatures, that testifies to disadvantages of their emotional and value sphere development.

As a rule, minutes of admiration of nature in preschool establishments of Ukraine are carried out during daily walks in the context of certain organizational and methodical requirements, in particular:

- technology of admiration of nature must be different from the usual observation in the *way of informational dominance* – in the process of admiration, not only nominative but also emotional-imaginative information about nature should dominate on the basis of teacher's constant intellectual appeal to both emotional and sensory sphere of children;
- during a moment of admiration one should always worry about *activating of sensory analyzers* of pupils, ensuring the proper acuity of color vision, hearing, fine differentiation of smells, tactile and taste sensations (an example of sets for perception: what color is the spring? how does summer smell? name sounds of winter; find a velvet leaf; guess the flower for the smell; find the leaf gropingly; find the tree behind the bark; name the berry for taste, etc.);
- an educator should raise the child's perception up to the *appropriate emotional-figurative level*, skillfully organizing the estimated activity of pupils. Evaluative and creative tasks will help provide a high intensity for experiences of the beauty of the environment and revival of figurative thinking of children;

- during the lessons admiration of nature, it is worth to go beyond the limits of static contemplation of nature, giving this process the *necessary dynamism* (active forms of emotional and aesthetic knowledge of nature – games, competitions, contests, labor affairs, etc. – will help to do that);
- here an important role plays *expression of the ideological position* of the educator himself (bright emotional word, expressiveness of pantomimic reactions, appropriate suggestion, and as a consequence – a powerful demonstration of his own attitude towards nature).

Conclusions

Nowadays new directions of science development are gaining in weight, what indicates ways to the philosophical understanding of modes of adjusting the environmental situation with educational means. In particular, sociology of ecology unconventionally solves the problem of the subject in its activity. Its theoretical paradigm includes not only people (society), but also natural objects, ecosystems, which are considered as partners, namely, the subjects of the ecological interaction of man with nature.

An active cultural dialogue between the European and Eastern educational systems has already begun. It has good prospects for development, as educators from all the countries should unite their efforts towards harmonizing human relations with the environment. Environmentalism as a new philosophy of life on the Earth, based on the philosophical dialogue of the West and the East, is able to point out new ways for mankind.

References

- Development of socio-environmental views. Formation of the social ecology as a branch of knowledge. Available at: <http://textbooks.net.ua/content/view/5345/46/>
- Nagata H., History of philosophical thought in Japan [trans. from Jap.], Moscow 1991.
- Tarashenko H., Discover the divine nature to children: a parents' reference book on bringing up of a child's soul and heart, Vinnytsia 2008.
- Tsarova L., Pedagogical traditions of aesthetic cultural formation of a person in the modern school education in China and Japan: synopsis of thesis, Kirovohrad 2012.
- Vostokov H., Japan and its inhabitants, St. Petersburg 1904.
- Yao X., Konfucjanizm. Wprowadzenie, Kraków 2009.
- Zavadskyi A., Novikova L. Art and civilization, Moscow 1986.