

Ryszard Czekalski

The Opening Speech: A Cultural Dialogue of the West with the Indian and Far East Countries : Selected Aspects (Warsaw, January 13, 2011)

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Tekst jest udostępniony do wykorzystania w ramach dozwolonego użytku.

**The Opening Speech:
A Cultural Dialogue of the West
with the Indian and Far East Countries.
Selected Aspects (Warsaw, January 13, 2011)**

I gladly welcome all gathered here, in the John Paul II Hall due to the just opening Symposium, organised by the Religious Sciences Section of the Theology Faculty under the supervision of Father Leonard Fic, PhD.

The main topic which we are going to ponder upon together – is the cultural dialogue of the West with the Indian and Far East countries – its selected aspects. Let me say a few words then on dialogue in general. What is a dialogue? The word originates from Greek *διαλογειν* and means *to talk*. Most commonly it is understood as a meeting of people or social groups and talking to them. The aim of a so defined dialogue is an exchange of opinions and searching for mutual attitude on a given matter. To make a dialogue possible – one should acknowledge that all people are equal, for this results from the fact that God created man³. Every human being longs for living with the feeling of security, peace and friendly atmosphere of the surrounding environment. The realisation of these so fundamental human desires is supported by the ability of mutual understanding and respect for the diversity of others. Since the dialogue means understanding – it can also be applied on the spiritual and religious fields⁴.

In the history, the representatives of the religions of the world took various initiatives to make the mutual co-existence peaceful. The dialogue takes its beginnings from Abraham who trusted God completely, whereas St. Paul's speech on Areopagus (Acts 17:16-34) is the dialogue activity's fundament. The turn of the 20th century brought revival and interest into the inter-confession dialogue. The Far East religions, originating from the Hindu tradition, contributed significantly. Asian scientists and thinkers pointed to the similarities between Chris-

³ Por. M. Rusecki, *Chrystologiczne podstawy dialogu międzyreligijnego*, [w:] H. Zi-
moń (red.), *Dialog międzyreligijny*, Lublin 2004, s. 33.

⁴ E. Sakowicz, A. Piwko, *Dialog międzyreligijny*, „Ateneum Kapłańskie”, z. 3,
2009, s. 433.

tian and Hindu religions, making the believers realise that all come from one God. The possibility for the believers from the whole world to agree could be fulfilled thanks to eminent people – Mahatma Gandhi and John Paul II for whom peace, justice and love were the values most imperative.

An inter-religious dialogue – that is: a meeting of Christians with the believers of other religions. The aim of conducting a dialogue is to achieve a mutual understanding and tolerance. Today's Symposium's task is to demonstrate to its listeners the necessity to take a cultural dialogue with the representatives of the Asian countries, especially from India, Korea, Vietnam, China and Japan.

A significant increase of visitors from Eastern countries is observed. Also the Poles more and more often decide to take the Far East as the destination of their holiday trips. Central and eastern Asia is mostly constituted by centuries-old civilisations and is the cradle of multiple cultures and religions. Therefore, it is worth learning about societies, customs and traditions of this corner of the world.

I consider the Symposium opened. I wish fruitful debates to all of you.

*Father Ryszard Czekalski, PhD
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