

Leibnizian Philosophy and the Pluralism of Religion and Culture: The Case of China¹

*Filosofía Leibniziana y el Pluralismo de la religión
y la cultura: el caso de China*

SHOHEI EDAMURA
Kanazawa Seiryō University, Japan
edamura12@yahoo.co.jp

ABSTRACT

In this paper, I present Leibniz's understanding of natural theology and reason for which, according to him, any person in the world has her natural reason, through which she can realize eternal truths such as that every human soul is immortal. Secondly I discuss how Leibniz evaluated the Chinese theology. According to him, the ancient Chinese understood God or the supreme substance by the name of "*Li* (理)" or *Shangdi* (上帝), and without a revelation they knew that God created everything in the universe in accordance with His providence. Then I argue that although Leibniz's understanding of the Chinese theology was not altogether accurate, we can still understand that in a limited sense, Leibniz had a pluralistic view in terms of religion and culture that can foster dialogue today between the philosophies of the world.

Keywords: Leibniz, Natural Theology, Chinese theology, Theodicy, Interreligious Dialogue.

Introduction

Leibniz's philosophy is often characterized as pluralistic. Indeed, it must be admitted that Leibniz held that there are many substances, rejecting the monistic metaphysics of Spinoza. Every finite substance expresses the whole universe from its unique point of view. An individual substance is capable of

¹ Obviously, Leibniz did not hold the modern pluralism of religion proposed by John Hick, according to which Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Hinduism are all imperfect expressions of the Real, and the doctrine of incarnation is not literally true, but it may be 'true' "in virtue of its power to evoke an appropriate attitude." See John Hick: *God and the Universe of Faiths: Essays in the Philosophy of Religion*, London: Macmillan 1973, S. 175. But I believe that Leibniz's open attitude to accept the ancient Chinese and Greek natural religions can be appropriately characterized as "pluralistic."

acting by itself, and producing new states spontaneously. But he also provided a fruitful source for the pluralism of religion and culture. This is nowhere more apparent than in his acknowledgement of the Chinese as theists. His notion of natural theology enabled Leibniz to accept various forms of monotheistic culture, and he believed that the ancient Chinese had a robust natural theology without having revelations. Leibniz's evaluation of the Chinese culture was based upon the assumption that the ancient Chinese had their theology through the human reason given to anyone in the world.

In this paper, I first present Leibniz's understanding of natural theology and reason. According to him, any person in the world has her natural reason, through which she can realize eternal truths, such as that every human soul is immortal. Second, I discuss how Leibniz evaluated the Chinese theology. According to him, the ancient Chinese understood God or the supreme substance by the name of "*Li* (理)" or *Shangdi* (上帝), and without a revelation they knew that God created everything in the universe in accordance with the providence. Then I argue that although Leibniz's understanding of the Chinese theology was not accurate, we can still understand that in a limited sense, Leibniz had a pluralistic view in terms of religion and culture.

1. Reason and Natural Theology

In *Theodicy* (1710), Leibniz declared that there are two kinds of truths:

Now the truths of reason are of two kinds: the one kind is of those called the 'Eternal Verities', which are altogether necessary, so that the opposite implies contradiction. Such are the truths whose necessity is logical, metaphysical or geometrical, which one cannot deny without being led into absurdities. There are others which may be called *positive*, because they are the laws which it has pleased God to give to Nature, or because they depend upon those.²

In short, Leibniz thought that human being can know truths of natural theology solely by exercising reason. Since Leibniz assumed that among ancient people, the Greek had the largest contribution to the development of natural theology, he maximally praised them in *On the Greeks as Founders of Rational Theology* (1714):

Until then God, using the Hebrew race initially as if it were a tool standing for highest providence, had instructed simpler men (who were less educated in the precepts of philosophy) through the revelations of the prophets; but

² *Theodicy*, translated by E.M. Huggard, New York: Bibliobazaar, 2007, S. 76.

later he kindled a new light for the human race by infusing Greek minds with a love of wisdom, so that divine truths might be communicated with certain proofs against all doubts of men, progressing through the centuries to a greater subtlety of thinking (PR, 240).

Here Leibniz praised “Greek minds” more highly than “the Hebrews.” According to Leibniz, although the Hebrews had the monotheistic theology and religion in the ancient world, they did not have a clear and distinct concept of God, since they were mainly led by imagination. On the other hand, the Greek had a well-established natural theology before Christ presented the new revelation. And as we will see, Leibniz also highly evaluated the ancient Chinese since he assumed that they had believed the existence of the supreme Being and his providence.

2. Leibniz’s Evaluation of China

Among outstanding intellectual figures in 17th century, Leibniz showed an extraordinary interest in China and a high esteem for this empire. In this century, China had two dynasties: Ming and Qing. The Ming Chinese were fond of the advanced Western technology, brought about by the Jesuit missionaries, especially because they needed to fight on the frontiers.³ But in 1644, the Ming military was severely defeated by the rebel leader Li Zicheng at Peking, the capital, and the dynasty ended. The Jesuit missionaries soon approached high officials of the new dynasty Qing, which was established by Manchurians who drove away the troop of Li Zicheng from Peking. This is a short story for the two dynasties. Leibniz had contacts with missionaries to Qing, and he also had a remarkable interest in the activities of the former missionaries to Ming. “Certainly the size of the Chinese Empire is so great,” he wrote in *Preface to the Novissima Sinica* (1697/99), “the reputation of this wisest nation in the Orient so impressive, and its authority so influential an example to the rest” (CR.59). And he maintained that the then emperor “Cam Hi” was “a prince of almost unparalleled merit,” strongly praising the emperor’s attempt to absorb western culture (CR, 48-49). Cam Hi (Kangxi; 康熙) was eager to learn geometry and astronomy from the Jesuit advisors in his court, and let them interact with Chinese officials. Leibniz also wrote that the Chinese surpassed the Europeans in practical philosophy, since they achieved “public tranquility and social order,” and they rarely showed “evidences of hatred, wrath, or excitement” (CR, 46-47). Perhaps Leibniz’s judgment came

³ D. SPENCE, JONATHAN, *China Helpers: Western Advisers in China 1620-1960*, The Bodley Head Ltd, 1969, S. 9.

from the brutal history of Thirty Years' War (1618-48), since during the war almost one third of the population was lost in Germany.⁴

However, Leibniz spoke unfavorably about Chinese intellectuals of his time, since he believed that they were atheists. Daniel Cook and Henry Rosemont present Leibniz's attitude towards the Chinese intellectuals in his days as the following:

[T]here were many members of the intelligentsia who were, if not nihilists, then certainly of a somewhat cynical turn of mind. They followed the official state, clan, and familial ritual observances prescribed by custom and the Classics, but otherwise did not emphasize spiritual self-cultivation, or personal discipline, or even accept the metaphysical pronouncements of the earlier Neo-Confucians. [...] Leibniz did not hold such "Confucians" in very high regard, made clear by the epithets "Modern Atheists," "Skeptics," and "Hypocrites" by which he referred to them in his writings.⁵

Leibniz wrote that some modern intellectuals of China "strayed from the truth and even from their antiquity" (CR, 75). Here he suggested that the true doctrine of the ancient Chinese was not held by the moderns any more.

In contrast, Leibniz argued that the writings of the ancient Chinese "make much sense" (CR, 75), and the ancient Chinese introduced doctrines of monotheism, while he also argued that Chinese people of his time "strayed from, the truth and even from, their own antiquity" (CR, 75). According to Leibniz, they held that there is only one supreme Being, and the whole universe had been produced by Him. Leibniz tried to justify his interpretation on the basis of ancient texts. The main target of Leibniz's remark was Father Nicolas Longobardi, who "believed that the ancient Chinese were materialists" (CR, 14). In *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese* (1716), Leibniz argued against Longobardi that "*Li* of the Chinese is the sovereign substance which we revere under the name of God" (CR, 83). Leibniz critically examined the arguments which Longobardi introduced to support his view. First, Leibniz rejected Longobardi's claim that "*Li*" refers to prime matter (CR, 84). According to Leibniz, the ancient Chinese believed that *Li* is the resource of everything, but prime matter cannot be the resource since it is merely passive or receptive, and it does not have any power to produce things (CR, 85). Longobardi also argued that *Li* does not act by will or deliberation, and therefore it is not God (CR, 92). Leibniz rejected this interpretation because according to Leibniz, the ancient Chinese held that "*Li* has been brought by the perfection of its nature to choose" (CR, 93). In Leibniz's

⁴ AITON, ERIC J., *Leibniz-A Biography*, Bristol and Boston: Hilger Ltd, 1985, S. 1.

⁵ COOK, DANIEL J. and ROSEMONT JR., HENRY, "Introduction", in *Leibniz: Writings on China*, trans. and eds. by Daniel J. Cook and Henry Rosemont Jr., Chicago and La Salle: Open Court, 1994, S. 29.

view, God has a will, and nonetheless he does not arbitrarily choose something. His choice is based upon a reason, and he always attempts to choose the most perfect option. And according to Leibniz, God chose the possible world with the greatest perfection among an infinite number of possible worlds. Based upon this framework, Leibniz assumed that ancient Chinese people had also believed that God (or *Li*) chose this world to create in accordance with his providence.

Leibniz even utilized his knowledge of mathematics to argue that the ancient Chinese were theists. He interpreted *Yi Jing* (易經), the classical Chinese text, as presenting the binary number system, by which we can express any natural number using only two signs, 0 and 1. In *The Secret of Creation* (1697), he went further to argue that the discussions of *Yi Jing* are strongly associated with the doctrine of creation from nothing [*ex nihilo*], since 0 expresses nothingness, while 1 expresses the ultimate being, namely God:

After all, one of the high points of the Christian faith, which agrees least with the philosophers and is not easy to impart to pagans, is the [teaching of] creation *ex nihilo* through God's almighty power. Now one can say that nothing in the world can better present and demonstrate [this power] than the [theory concerning] the origin of numbers, as it is represented here through the simple and unadorned presentation of One and Zero or Nothing.⁶

Leibniz argued that the binary number system is an excellent representation of the doctrine of God's creation, which is essential for Christians. And here he even suggested that the ancient Chinese could introduce this number system since they also held the doctrine of creation.

As for the doctrine of immortality, in *Discourse on the Natural Theology of the Chinese*, Leibniz argued that the ancient Chinese believed that "souls receive reward and punishment after this life" (CR, 130). This implies that they also believed that souls of dead people endure, in other words, that human souls are immortal. Leibniz suggested that according to the ancient Chinese, "the spirits of the virtuous ancestors" had been "capable of obtaining good and evil of their descendants" (CR, 131). Leibniz justified his interpretation by arguing that the ancient Chinese believed that dead souls must have what they really deserve since the kingdom of spirits is ordered by the greatest monarch, namely God:

Thus this Kingdom of the Spirits under this great Master cannot be less orderly than a Kingdom of men, and consequently it follows that virtue should

⁶ *Moral Enlightenment: Leibniz and Wolff on China*, edited and translated by Julia Ching and Willard G. Oxtoby, Sankt Augustin: Institut Monumenta Serica, 1992, S. 72.

be rewarded and vice punished under this governance, justice being insufficiently done in this life (CR, 131).

As he did when he discussed whether the ancient Chinese were theists, Leibniz contrasted his view with Longobardi's understanding of the ancient Chinese. Longobardi thought according to the ancient Chinese, some thing endures after the death of a man. But it is not an immaterial spirit since it is merely a portion of matter (CR, 125). Longobardi also argued that for the ancient Chinese, "the death of man is only the separation of the elements of which it is composed" (CR, 125). But Leibniz argued that the ancient Chinese believed that great souls subsist after death, and certainly the greatest spirit, or God, eternally subsists (CR, 127). Here he rejected Longobardi's view that the ancient Chinese were materialists.

As shown above, Leibniz tried to justify his understanding of the Chinese natural theology on the basis of the classic texts. Indeed, Leibniz understood how Chinese people can be easily persuaded if discussions are based upon their classics, and argued that an introduction of the Christianity by the Jesuit missionaries was not merely an infusion of a different culture from the western side, but an important rehabilitation of the ancient doctrines for the Chinese. As Cook and Rosemont note, Leibniz thought that the western missionaries need to demonstrate that "later generations" in China "had simply lost the true meaning" of the work of Fuxi, the legendary culture hero who, according to the myth, had introduced hunting, fishing, and cooking.⁷ Leibniz knew that Chinese intellectuals trusted the classical texts so much, and they would easily be persuaded by ideas derived from the texts.⁸

3. What Kind of Pluralism Did Leibniz Hold?

We have seen Leibniz's discussions of China, through which we can understand what kind of pluralism of religion Leibniz held. First of all, Leibniz's view is obviously more pluralistic, when we compare it with those of his contemporaries like Malebranche and Arnauld. Malebranche suggested that Chinese people were atheists:

So, since there is not a single Chinese who subscribes to atheism and who, without harming the truth, could serve me as interlocutor in order to refute impiety, there is no satisfying the delicacy of the author but to change the Chinese to Japanese or Siamese, or rather, to French; for it happens

⁷ COOK, DANIEL J. and ROSEMENT Jr., Henry, "Introduction", S. 18.

⁸ COOK, DANIEL J. and ROSEMENT Jr., Henry, "Introduction", S. 15.

that the system of the impious Spinoza wreaks great havoc here; and it seems to me that there are many correspondences between the impieties of Spinoza and those of the Chinese philosopher.⁹

Here Malebranche expressed his abhorrence toward the modern impious culture spread by free thinkers like the Spinozists. And he suggested that these impious Europeans were comparable to the Chinese and Japanese who did not believe the true God. Likewise, Arnauld emphasized the importance of the revelation, claiming that they are necessary for salvation. In *The Necessity of Faith in Jesus Christ to Obtain Salvation*, Arnauld argued that a belief in Jesus Christ as the savior is absolutely required for salvation, and thus pagans are not saved.

Philosophers and virtuous pagans cannot be saved through the mere knowledge of God and his Providence, without faith in Jesus Christ. To uphold the contrary amounts to destroying the necessity of faith in Jesus Christ established through Holy Scriptures.¹⁰

According to Arnauld, even a virtuous pagan like Socrates could not have any salvation. For him, ancient Greek philosophers did not know Jesus as the Mediator between God and the mankind, and they lacked the Christian spirit of humility. And we cannot find an intense praise for the Greek in Arnauld's book.

Thus we have seen that Leibniz's view is remarkably distinct from those of Malebranche and Arnauld, since he gave exaltations to non-Judeo-Christian cultures. This, however, does not mean that Leibniz was willing to accept any kind of culture. Since Leibniz was committed to the existence of God, he rejected all versions of materialism and atheism. At this point, he may not violate any kind of pluralism of religion, given that neither materialism, nor atheism is considered as a "religion." As we have seen, Leibniz criticized modern intellectuals of China. They tried to defend traditional customs and rules without referring to the providence of the Supreme Being. For Leibniz, this kind of stance is overly secular, and should not be observed.

Another point to note is that Leibniz was never a hardcore pluralist willing to accept any kind of religion. He was tolerant to the ancient Chinese religion because in his understanding, it is consistent with what he understood as the true natural theology. Leibniz's natural theology is monistic, and it does not fit with polytheism. More precisely, Leibniz suggested that some

⁹ Malebranche: *Dialogues on Metaphysics and on Religion*, edited and translated by Nicholas Jolley and David Scott, New York: Cambridge University Press 1997, S. 47. Also see PERKINS, FRANKLIN, *Leibniz and China*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007, S. 166. Malebranche argued that "Tianzhu (天主)" of the Chinese is at most a powerful divinity like Zeus who defeated many giants, and he is not the omnipotent and absolute being.

¹⁰ ARNAULD, ANTOINE, *The Necessity of Faith in Jesus Christ to Obtain Salvation*, Bloomington: Xlibris, 2011, S. 27.

polytheism could be consistent with his natural theology, as far as it introduces the only one supreme god and subordinate deities, since these subordinate deities can be considered as creatures of the supreme god. Thus in *On the Greeks as Founders of Rational Theology*, Leibniz noted as the following: “[Plato] stated that the supreme God had created lesser beings, and that he had given them immortality, and so the inferiors of that God were none other than those whom we call angels” (PR, 236).

Here Leibniz interpreted Plato’s discussions in *Timaeus* as fitting to the Judeo-Christian worldview, suggesting that subordinate immortal beings in this book are angels.¹¹ Considering above, Leibniz seems to distinguish at least two kinds of polytheism. According to the first version, the only Supreme God exists, and other deities are his creatures. And every event in the world is governed by the providence of the Supreme God. According to the second, there is no Supreme God, and many deities have independent powers to bring about miraculous phenomena. Leibniz accepted the first version, while he strongly refused the second. Thus, if Leibniz had had some knowledge of Shinto, he would not have taken it as the true natural theology. Shinto is the traditional religion in Japan, and according to its canonical texts *Kojiki* (古事記) and *Nihonshoki* (日本書紀), there are many divinities. As a result, there are many shrines dedicated to different divinities in Japan. Although some divinity is considered as higher than others (for instance, Amaterasu, the sun goddess, is higher than Amenouzume), 17th century priests of Shinto did not believe in the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* by Amaterasu or another higher god.¹²

Moreover, Leibniz showed a constant antagonism toward what he understood as superstitions, and he did not think that some spirits cause miracles completely violating the laws of nature. To be sure, in *Discourse on Metaphysics*, Leibniz seems to suggest that there are miracles in this world, though they are also governed by the highest order prescribed by God (DM, 7). He seems to suggest that angels, for instance, can bring about miraculous phenomena. But in *Theodicy*, he argued that angels “act according to the ordinary laws of their nature, being combined with bodies more rarefied and more vigorous than those we have at our command.”¹³ Here Leibniz seems to

¹¹ In *Timaeus*, Plato introduced a story about how subordinate divinities had been born (40d-41d). Although they are not the highest beings, unlike humans, they have everlasting lives.

¹² I could not find evidence that a follower of Shinto in 17th century believed the existence of the supreme god who created all the other things. At least, in 19th century, Hirata Atsutane (平田篤胤 1776-1843) suggested that Amenominakanushinokami, Takamushinokami, and Kamumimusubiinokami are the most fundamental gods, and other divinities were directly or indirectly born from them. See *Tama no mihashira*, Tokyo: Iwanami, 1998, S. 20-21.

¹³ *Theodicy*, S. 283. Also see COOK, DANIEL J., “Leibniz and the Bible”, in IX. *Internationaler Leibniz-Kongress: Natur and Subjekt*, Teil 1, 2011, S. 177-85.

suggest that angels bring about seemingly miraculous phenomena, but they actually do not violate the laws of the bodily world. Likewise, Leibniz suggested that it is superstitious to believe that the spirits of dead people cause miracles. In *Remarks on Chinese Rites and Religion* (1709), he argued that the Chinese rites of worshipping ancestors were not superstitious:

From the fact that the worshippers of ancestors expect benefits promised by the priests, it does not follow that they expect them from the departed, since these benefits can originate from a higher cause who is pleased by gratitude, just as with Moses, God promises long life to those honoring father and mother (CR, 71).

In Leibniz's understanding, Chinese people did not have rites expecting that the spirits of ancestors directly realize miracles for the pleasant lives of the offspring, though Chinese people may expect something brought by the supreme being. But since Leibniz rejected the view that the spirits of deceased notable figures cause miracles, he would show a negative attitude to Shinto. In Japan, Sugawara no Michizane (菅原道真845-903), the minister who had been demoted to a minor rank and expelled from Kyoto, was believed to become a god of thunder. Many shrines (called Tenmangu) were founded for him, and people prayed there to change disastrous weathers.

As for Buddhism, we find Leibniz's negative attitude to it in *Theodicy*. He associated Buddhism with the philosophy of Averroes, according to which individual souls perish after death:

The annihilation of all that belongs to us in our own right, carried to great lengths by the Quietists, might equally well be veiled irreligion in certain minds, as is related, for example concerning the Quietism of Foe, originator of a great Chinese sect. After having preached his religion for forty years, when he felt death was approaching, he declared to his disciples that he had hidden the truth from them under the veil of metaphors, and that all reduced itself to Nothingness, which he said was the first source of all things. That was still worse, so it would seem, than the opinion of the Averroists. Both of these doctrines are indefensible and even extravagant [...].¹⁴

Here Leibniz suggested that according to Buddhism, human souls are not immortal. Generally speaking, Buddhists believed the doctrine of reincarnation, which suggests that human souls endure after death, and thus his understanding of Buddhism may be inaccurate. But Leibniz was also critical to this doctrine, as we can see from his note on Pythagoreans:

¹⁴ *Theodicy*, S. 81-82.

Pythagoras very clearly encouraged the belief in immortality of souls brought from the East, and spread it among the people of Greece and Italy, but he added the figment of metempsychosis. For it is a base habit of people to want embellishments of stories, and burn less eagerly for the bare truth (PR, 237).

Here Leibniz suggested that the doctrine of metempsychosis or reincarnation is a false story coming from the East, perhaps from India. He was reluctant to accept the Indian view of reincarnation.

4. Summary

To sum up, as we have seen, Leibniz rejected some religions of the eastern Asia. Two major religions of Japan, Shinto and Buddhism, seem to be rejected by Leibniz. This may not be seen as a problem. Certainly, Arnauld and Malebranche would be on the side of Leibniz, given that both of them only accepted the Christianity as a true religion.

Another point to note is that Leibniz imposed what he understood through the western philosophy to the Chinese. For instance, Leibniz seems to identify *Li* with *Shangdi*, taking both as referring to God. But according to Wing-Cheuk Chan, Zhu Xi, the representative Neo-Confucian, held that *Li* is the ultimate principle of order, and we can evaluate particular things referring to it as the standard, whereas it is not active, and it does not have a causal power to produce things.¹⁵ On the other hand, "*Shangdi*" literally means the Emperor of the Heaven, and it refers to the highest divinity, so he has something in common with the God of the Christianity.¹⁶ Thus we cannot appropriately take "*Li*" and "*Shangdi*" as referring to the same being. But Leibniz was somewhat bold in interpreting the Chinese philosophy, since he even argued that he can be a better interpreter of the Chinese classics than the contemporary Chinese scholars:¹⁷

Among the Chinese, I believe, neither history nor criticism nor philosophy are sufficiently developed. No one at all has yet emerged who has produced a li-

¹⁵ WING-CHEUK CHAN, "Two or Four Worlds? From Zhu Xi to Leibniz," in IX. *Internationaler Leibniz-Kongress: Natur and Subjekt*, Teil 1, 2011, S. 163. Cf. WING-TSIT CHAN, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963, S. 636; ROY, OLIVIER, *Leibniz et la Chine*, Paris: Vrin, 1972, S. 111-115.

¹⁶ Franklin Perkins states that according to the early texts, although *Shangdi* is the highest god, he still exists in the world, and he did not create the whole universe from nothing. PERKINS, FRANKLIN, *Leibniz and China*, S. 17. Cf. WING-TSIT CHAN, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*, S. 4.

¹⁷ Also see *On the Civil Cult of Confucious*, where Leibniz wrote that "strangers" often "have better insight into the histories and monuments of a nation than their own citizens" (CR, 64).

terary history of the Chinese and who has attributed the true works, meanings and sense to each author. I also fear that the ancient texts suffer interpolations. Consequently, as a general rule, nothing prevents us from thinking well of the ancient doctrines until we are compelled to proceed in any other ways (CR, 71).

As a matter of fact, Leibniz interpreted it on the basis of his own natural theology. Without trying to improve his own by learning new things from the Chinese philosophy, he projected his original view to understand it. This can be taken as a version of Orientalism.

Leibniz's endeavor to interpret the Chinese theology is understood as a pursuit to realize his ideal of the universal church. Leibniz attempted to unite the Catholic Church with the Lutheran and others. By so doing, he tried to establish a more universal church of Christianity in Europe. Moreover, Leibniz wanted to expand the church to the whole world, in such a way that any person understands its doctrines. The biblical history that is given through revelations is important, but it may not be essential for understanding of the doctrines of the universal church. As Malebranche and Arnauld suppose, this kind of view is close to deism, and it may degrade the value of revelation. Leibniz did not explicitly argue that natural theology is sufficient for providing a salvation to the mankind. Nor did he argue that Chinese people had been saved on the basis of the belief of *Shangdi*. But still the religion, which he introduced, can be considered as a "thin" version of revelational religion.

We have seen that Leibniz's understanding of the Chinese theology was limited, and I do not think that Leibniz's arguments establish that the ancient Chinese had a monotheistic natural theology as he suggested. But even if he attempted to interpret the Chinese theology by utilizing his framework of preestablished harmony, he still had a good excuse since he did not have sufficient literal resources to understand the Chinese theology. His endeavor is still worth considering, not only for the history of the western philosophy, but also for the comparative study of thoughts. And his natural theology proposes hints of introducing a version of pluralism of religion and culture of our time, as we can see from the history after his death. In *Religion within the Boundaries of Mere Reason* (1793), Kant introduced the concept of "pure faith of religion" based upon reason (Ak VI, 116), and suggested that this pure faith is found in followers of many different historical religions. He also suggested that we should not force others to accept a personal belief based upon a revelation, which provides an influential framework for developed countries of nowadays, given that many of them guarantee the freedom of religion in their constitutions.