1)

COMMENT BY SUNG-40 HWANG ON

20110 12 02101

"RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY IN MARRIAGE:
IMPEDIMENT OR POSITIVE HELP?"
BY SUMANA FERNANDO

It is needless to emphasize again here that warried life is decisively important in the life of people rather than the forms of warriage as a social institution. Otherwise, we will reach the awkward conclusion that only a specific group of people approved by collective norms can enjoy happy married life while others have to have unhappy, socially rejected life.

I am not going to summarize the presentation by Prof.

Sumana Fernando here. As a Buddhist herself, she tried to deal with the issue of religious diversity in marriage by analyzing her personal experience of marrying a Christian husband. She raised the thesis of finding and re-creating humanness as a basic prerequisite to a new universality in a broader context of social change or on whomat dimension.

It is a fresh impact on us probably because of the following reasons.

Modern tradition, especially the enlightenment thought has understood humanness or humanity as something based

• SE THE SOURT THE RESULT BUILDING

upon reason. Accordingly, the Western thought perceived humanness as being innate in human being. However, Prof. Fernando's theory appears unique in perceiving humanness as something to be acquired. Therefore, if we accept Prof. Fernando's view that humanness is "to be achieved", it is obvious that humanness as a value will stand at the highest stature in value hierarchy. This means that values below the highest stature — Sub-human human beings — will inevitably exist. Prof. Fernando emphasizes that humanization of such people is the key task for religions.

Then there remains the problem of how humanization can be done. Here Prof. Fernando finds solutions in Buddha's teachings of The Four Noble Truth not simply to express her religious faiths. Differentiating the covering (institutionalized form) and the kernel of a religion in the teachings of Buddha, she points out Buddha's insight on existential contents of human life not simply as a religious founder. She also tries to review his thoughts on the general issue of human existence — thoughts leading to liberation through detachment from conflicts between human sufferings and desires.

Prof. Fernando's orientation to bring dialectic contraditions and conflicts between sufferings and desires to liberation called Nirvana through Buddha's The Four Noble Truth is basically an effort for personality transformation in the changing world. We can confirm that her pursuit of a universal human liberation rather than just a sincere religious awakening, is an outcome of accumulated refinement and training (Bildung).

married life to a universal humanness can be just symbolic at the best in this industrial and post-industrial society where majority of people remain in sub-human state. But Prof. Fernando's confidence goes beyond the belief that religious diversity in married life can lead to a happy life through creation of humanness by the couple concerned. It is also clear that on an international dimension, it can be a moment to unite all human beings together by overcoming cultural, ethnic and national differences.

However, Prof. Fernando thinks this great objective can be achieved by acquiring a right insight into life's reality based upon right understanding through Buddha's Eightfold Path. Here we see Prof. Fernando's philosophy of existence, strongly expressed in her position depending word on universal anderstanding of mamon being rather than on religion.

consciousness from fantasy to faith. transcending "a" religion, means reaching at the spirit of selflessness. In this regard, it is emphasized that the spirit of selflessness in an inter-religious marriage is quite basic for the formation of truly sublime human quality overcoming all differences in religion, nation, race and culture.

For all of us, this means a self-liberation from institutions which demanded self- restriction (including those in religious forms).

If all sorts of restrictions on human beings cause conflicts and struggles, liberation from them (Nirvana) will naturally mean peace. And the peace must be an outcome of mutual cooperation among people through selflessness.

This paper claims that for all forms of religions and religious groups, races and nations of the world to maintain peace, internal maturity of people which enables

Inter-religion's marriage a success is a prerequisite.

The paper should be evaluated not simply for its academic significance but that it sheds light on the profound wisdom of human life.