Antiquity Comes Full Circle - Part V

THE MING DYNASTY

By 1382 the Mongols had been expelled from China by the founder of the Ming Dynasty, Hung-Wu. This renewal brought by the Ming Dynasty in China ran, in many ways, parallel to what was happening in India. Like so many times in history, we see that invasion, migration of people and ideology keeps re-writing the script of a country/ continent and changing the socio-religious-political landscape in the process. A great deal happened during the Ming years, but it could be summarized by four words: 'physical reconstruction' and 'institutional renewal'. China saw the building of bridges, refurbishing of irrigation works, enlarging of canals and paving of highways. All of which expanded production and trading. There was growth in the. cultivation of cotton, maize, sweet potatoes, peanuts, tea, etc. And also the large scale production of porcelain. The demand for cotton cloth and silk also grew rapidly. Institutional renewal matched the changes in infrastructure and social opportunity, as a new code of administration and criminal law, overturning the Mongol influence, was established in 1397 and by 1511 the.dynasty had compiled a collection of statutes setting out imperial rule and purpose. Although Hung-Wu had been a Buddhist monk, he restored Confucianism as the guiding principle for the state and its emperors. So once again the changing of the guard, between Buddhism and Confucianism, continued to play itself out in the hearts and the minds of the Chinese. This return to Confucian ideals brought with it meritocracy. This was not a system based on hereditary and feudal aristocracy. Those who wished to enter state service had to study the ancient Confucian classics and take examinations in order to achieve their positions within the hierarchical structure. These exams insured impartiality and uniformity. They also ensured that the genuinely talented and hard working could and would rise to the top. As the Confucian classics were conceived with the nature of man and the right ordering of society as their foundations, these exams ensured candidates acquired a common attitude of mind, a public spirit and morality. This was important for both the cultural unity and the administrative efficiency of the vast Ming Empire. This system was not without its flaws, but its primary premise of building a society on principle and merit has global value. A boy in 16th century China had more chance of rising through the ranks of the civil service on his merits than he would have in 21st century Britain!

The economic security and prosperity of this time also brought a flowering of the arts: bronzes, porcelain, enameled ware, extraordinary lacquer work, painting and calligraphy to name a few. In 16th century China, the arts -especially landscape painting - became a spiritual exercise, in which artists sought to tell the story of the inner harmonies and principles of nature. Once again, as has been true from the time of Confucius and of Lao Tzu, man's relationship with nature was for China the ultimate love song and artistry was another way in which this song could be sung.

The demise of the Ming dynasty came in the manner that is so familiar in history. The founder of the Ming dynasty had begun as a leader of peasant revolts against the oppressive demands of the

Mongols. He had tried to change the system and had largely been successful but there remained an underbelly of corruption, which eventually brought, along with war, the toppling of this artistic, cultured, expansive era in China. So the Ming dynasty, which had initially been the restorer of native rule and Confucian ideals, eventually fostered such discontent that it was overthrown and replaced by the Manchu. China again fell under the influence and rule of nomads but this time they were a welcome relief from the growing corruption under Ming rulership. This was an uprising where internal forces (Li Tsu-Cheng – a Chinese rebel) sided with the external invader (Nurhachi-a Juchen Chief) and reclaimed China from its paralysis and corruption.

For those more interested in the Indian and Chinese experience there is plenty of literature examining - and in some cases comparing - these two giants of the East. What we've tried to do here is to sketch the story of their individuality as well as to highlight some of their obvious similarities.

The next 250 years would serve up many more contradictions in the East as the world began to rapidly expand and different influences, perspectives and ideologies began to emerge, especially the influence of science. For those of you interested in science's role, take a closer look at 'Science, The New God?' which is also featured in Reach Research.

ASIA MEETS EUROPE ON SEVERAL FRONTS

The thought that the withering Mogul empire would one day be replaced by a European one seemed ludicrous at the time especially when the greatest threat in the early and mid 17th century came from India's menacing neighbours, Persia and Afghanistan. There was also the formidable Hindu power of the Maharatta Confederacy. In the end as a result of a series of battles that culminated at the Battle of Paniput in 1761, the various pretenders to the throne eliminated each other leaving the door open for the Europeans.

About two decades before the battle of Paniput it was becoming clear that a new relationship was developing between the Islamic political powers and the Europeans who were trading on the subcontinent. There were a number of enclaves: the British were in Madras, Bombay and Calcutta, the French in Pondicherry, the Portuguese in Goa and Diu. However, this friendly co-existence and co-operation began to change as a result of the increasing rivalry between the British and the French. When the English arrived in India, the Dutch and Portuguese were already there, the Germans and the Danes had also begun to show an interest. The Moguls however became friendly with the English and in the 17th century the East India Company's ships had even been used as the Mogul Empire's navy. By the beginning of the 18th century the French interest seemed to have subsided but in the reorganisation of Colonial enterprises the French East India Company was put on a better footing and because it was becoming a more profitable concern this reignited France's interest and would eventually change the landscape of India again. So with their control of two very important islands in the Indian Ocean – Reunion and Mauritius – the French were well positioned. For the following nearly one hundred years the tug of war between France and Britain continued as each sought to stake their claim. However, it was the British who steadily found themselves in the ascendancy, slowly increasing their grip on India and its people. There were many terrible wars between the two as they strove to extend their respective European Empires.

There are too many defining moments to earmark here during this period of ebbing and flowing of power and influence. Suffice it to say that the British did eventually claim dominion over India after many treaties, broken agreements and wars etc…For example the Black Hole of Calcutta (1754), the Seven Years War (1757-1763), the dissolution of the French East Indian Company (1767), Lord North's Regulating Act of 1773, just to name a few.

The Eastern landscape continued to change under the weight of so many competing interests. In China the Ming Dynasty had been replaced by the Manchu Dynasty, also known as Ch'ing (pure) Dynasty. They gave China good government, internal peace and increased the empire under the dynamic K'ang Hsi (1662 – 1722) and his successors, Yung Chang (1723 – 35) and the extremely able Ch'ien Lung (1736 – 96). During this period the Chinese empire had the lands adjoining China under proper control, the Mongols were crushed, the area northwest of China was organised under the name Sinkiang ('the new dominion'); the Tibetan Dalai Lama became a Chinese nominee and the borders within Manchuria were stabilised by a treaty with the Russians. In addition Korea, Annam, Burma and Nepal all acknowledged China as their celestial emperor. The remarkable continuity of Chinese history survived despite the numerous. invasions and imperial changes,- just as is the case for India. And so respect for the past, for ancestors, for long established customs and practices of the Confucian ethic continued to stand firmly. In the 19th century it is this attachment to the past (Chinese conservatism) and reluctance to change that many would say proved to be disastrous in the face of the aggressive, technologically advanced culture of Europe which had begun to take a grip on the world. This meant China began to fall behind. For the most part it continued to happily 'look back' whilst the western world galloped ahead. The same can be said for China's political history in the 19th century, as there is substantial evidence of extortion and injustice by a corrupt civil service that continued until the end of the empire in 1912. So the closed world of China did not welcome the dynamic eruptions and progress taking place in the West. China did not feel threatened by this progress as it largely saw it as folly and the pursuit of false ideals.

JESUITS IN CHINA

There was a significant exception to the Chinese's refusal to embrace Western values and way of life which was their relationship with the Jesuits. A lot of knowledge and principles from 'outside' of Asia have shaped some aspects of Eastern culture and we can see some evidence of that in the T'ang dynasty (AD 618 – 907) when the earliest Christian missionaries went to China. The overwhelming majority of these missionaries were Catholics. The most notable to have entered China since the T'ang dynasty was a Jesuit, Matteo Ricci in 1601. He was an astronomer and mathematician and he started what was to become a tradition: Jesuits acting as scientific advisors to the Chinese. Their general input was appreciated and their input in the reforming of the Chinese calendar was considered invaluable. In 1692 an edict of religious tolerance was issued. The Jesuits were equally adaptable in their attempts to convert the Chinese. Ricci and other Jesuits achieved some success by desisting from arguing about the compatibility of Christianity and Confucian ideals and so religious tolerance and religious persuasion co-existed for a while.

However, in 1715, the Pope condemned some of the Chinese 'rites' and cultural and religious practices, and by 1717 the previously benevolent K'ang Hsi, who had backed the Jesuits, was

deeply offended by this insult to Chinese culture; his new decrees effectively ended the spread of Chinese Christianity. This hastened the Papal dissolution of the Jesuits in 1773.

This was a loss to the Chinese too as their contact with the Jesuits had enabled them to aquaint themselves with the inventions of the West. Not that Chinese culture was set up or ready for the changes that the West was about to undergo during the industrial revolution, but that a better understanding of the western mind and the power that was accruing at that time may well have helped, even prevented much of the conflict between East and West in the 19th and 20th centuries. This lack of comprehension was a mutual issue, as the Europeans equally lacked a depth of understanding about the Chinese and the Indians as well as the Middle and Far East. The very insular nature of China helped by its geography of mountains, deserts and seas meant that for millennia China had known only cultural inferiors. And so it is understandable that they saw their state as 'the' state and their culture as 'the' culture. Therefore, their Emperor was the only legitimate ruler below heaven. This position made diplomatic and trade connections and relationships with the Europeans difficult. This was further reinforced by China's self sufficiency. The Europeans wanted China's silk, porcelain, tea etc; China at the time wanted nothing from Europe. So as the European forces grew, it was against this background that the 19th century conflicts took place.

It's worth noting that Japan closed its doors to the West even more firmly. The Europeans arrived in Japan in 1542-43 and taught the Japanese to use firearms and build fortifications. They also brought Christianity, which the Japanese embraced. However, by 1638 Christianity had been uprooted by force as it had come to be identified with political subversion and external aggression. The Japanese then shut their ports to the Europeans and whereas they had previously been a roving people with a reputation as fearless soldiers and pirates, they became introverted and traded less with the world, the only exceptions being China and the Dutch. As the Jesuits had been a conduit for western science to filter into China, the Dutch performed a similar service for the Japanese, bringing news of western science, especially medicine.

PHILOSOPHER MEETS WARRIOR

The great thinkers and philosophers of the East continued their march for truth during the 16th and 17th centuries. In India there were minds such as: Madhusudana Sarasvati who produced major scriptural works but whose greatest contribution was arguably promoting that the path of Bhakti (the path of love and devotion) was a swifter route than Gyan (the path of knowledge) to Moksha (liberation). Around the same time Dharmaraja Adhvarin, like many of the great philosophers before him, wrestled with epistemology (theory of knowledge). For him there were six distinct means of knowledge: perception, inference, comparison, postulation, verbal testimony and non-apprehension. He discusses these means of knowledge at length in his major work: The Vedanta Parabhasa.

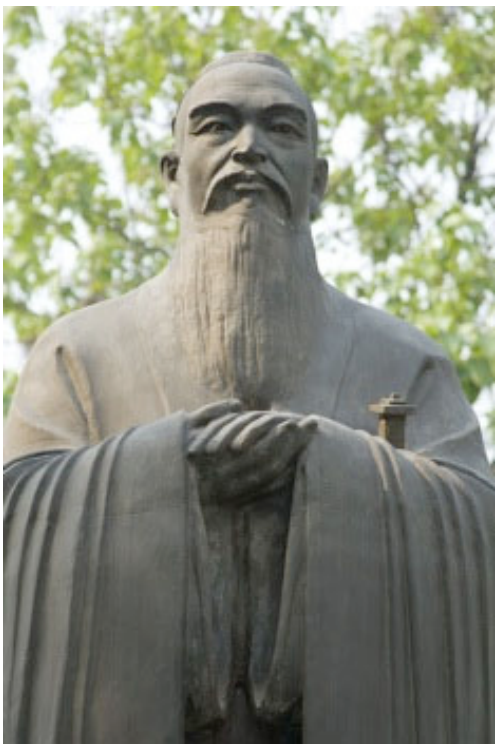
Meanwhile, the fundamental conflicts remained between Hinduism and Islam and although by the time of the 17th and 18th centuries Sikhism was well established, rather than being a faith that would bridge the differences in India, as first hoped, it was now clearly carving its own path. Islam continued to produce great philosophers too, many influenced by the mystic tradition of the Sufis, such as Mulla Sadra (1574-1641). (He did not accept all aspects of Sufism). He produced several major works amongst which were: The Four Journeys of the Soul, The Book of Origin and Return, Descending from the Divine Throne... He also produced commentaries on the Koran and went on to consolidate the School of Isfahan, which his teacher Mir Damad had

established. This philosophical school was a turning point in the history of Islamic philosophy in Iran and as a result produced some of the greatest masters of Islamic philosophy. The thrust of Mir Damad's work was that God is the ultimate perfection and 'becoming' is a spiritual journey from less perfect to more perfect. His contribution to the eastern, particularly Islamic, philosophy is substantial. One of his interesting tenets is that one kind of knowledge is 'acquired' or 'learned' through the senses, and another kind is learned through intellectual intuition. He also saw knowledge as a combination of the theoretical and the practical and through unifying the two, knowledge becomes not only an informative process but a transformative one too. It's worth pointing out at this stage that this philosophical equation is one we have enormous respect for and has become one of the major underlying principles, which we've embroidered in the Reach Approach; the idea that theory is never enough. Transformation comes through application.

Another great mind within the Islamic tradition is Shah Wali Allah (1703 – 1762). He lived through a time for Muslims known as the 'Wisdom' period. This was a time of reintegrating and revitalising the study of the Islamic sciences: philosophy, theology, mysticism and Koranic law which was the thrust of his work. His major works were: the Conclusive Argument from God (Hujjat Allah al-baligha) and Full Moons Rising (Al-Budur al-Bazigha). He did go on to write over 40 books and treatises. He also served as a religious scholar and spiritual guide, having been influenced by his father (who founded an Islamic institution, a madrasa, in Delhi). He became his father's successor at the tender age of 17 and this quite remarkable young man began his long journey of shaping and influencing Islamic thought, addressing issues such as: the purpose of creation, the dynamics of human psychology, the higher significance of human thoughts, and the progressive development of human social and political systems. Because of his integrative approach and reconciling of the inner and outer dimensions of Islamic practice he is often compared to the great thinker and mystic al-Ghazali (1058-1111) who also had a strong metaphysical view of reality.

China also continued to harvest a crop of great thinkers at this time who helped sustain the heritage of their ancestors. Wang Yang-Ming (1472-1529) was such a scholar and philosopher. He, like many before him, had been brought up on the five Confucian classics and had been shaped by the Neo-Confucian educational programme and Zhu Xi's 'School of Principle'. He felt constrained by his education and by the fact that somehow it denied the spirit of the individual. He nevertheless considered himself indebted to his education and background because it had helped him to ask the critical questions and do the self evaluation that would go on to shape his philosophical views. Wang is credited with being the guiding light of the 'School of the Mind' (Xin-Xue) or 'Idealist School' of Mind Neo-Confucianism. This school was characterised by a thorough and severe self scrutiny, which to a large extent summarised his some might say obsession with Self. For him, any person was capable of becoming a sage because all persons possessed an "innate knowledge of the good"; as the source of goodness is within oneself and not introduced from outside. He saw 'self love' (a natural expression of the innate goodness) as the basis of all love; love of family, community, creatures and things etc. His legacy (Yang-Ming School) went on to dominate Chinese intellectual history for 150 years. This maintained a focus on introspection and self examination where fault-finding was almost literally considered an art. Although his influence had faded by the time of the Ch'ing dynasty (1644-1912) the Yang-Ming School in Japan (Yomeigaku) had a profound effect upon the Toku-gana culture (1615-1867) which went on well into the 19th century, and is credited for being a significant intellectual underpinning for the Meiji restoration which began in 1867.

Another giant followed in the form of Dai Zhen (1724-1777) in the 18th century. He was an anomaly because the intellectual world of 18th century China was a world where scholarship was increasingly based on evidential research. And so the pursuit of philosophy or any attempt to understand the reason and meaning of things was increasingly considered self-indulgent and empty, but this did not dissuade Dai Zhen. He was a brilliant man, well versed in astronomy, mathematics,



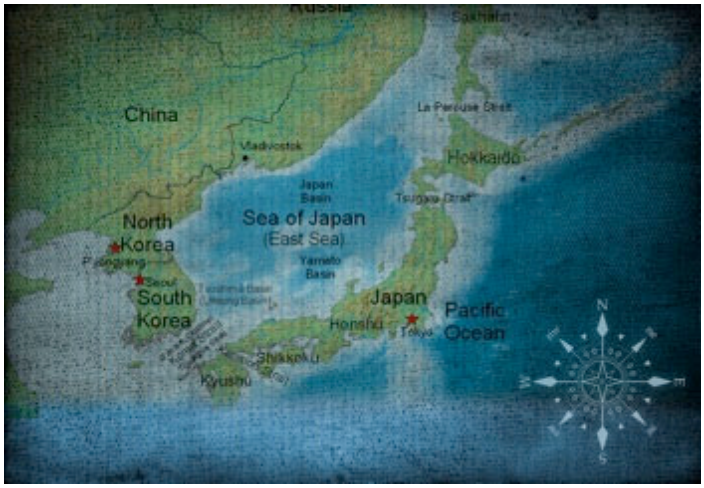
history, geography, water conservation, etymology (study of the sources and development of words), phonology and rituals. Despite his staggering mind and his extensive knowledge in nearly all areas of human understanding, it was as a philosopher that he most wanted to be remembered. The major works from his extensive history include Inquiring into Goodness (Yuan Shan) and an evidential study of the meaning of terms in the Menicus (Mergzi Ziyi Shuzheng). He and his work were controversial at the time as he was fearless in his criticisms of many philosophers who had come before him. He clearly was not a follower, but. carved his own way. He challenged nearly all that had gone before - even Menicus (371 BC – 289 BC) whom he had great respect for, but whose work he considered as incomplete and proceeded to complete it! He went on to redefine the long held concepts such as: 'the way', heavenly way, principles of human nature, human potential and sincerity. He also covered such matters as the relationship of nature to destiny and what is natural versus what is necessary. He encouraged the constructive 'use' of the mind and he saw learning, especially the difficult kind, as food and drink for the mind. For him a truly developed mind has wisdom or 'divine percipience'; it is able to understand the internal texture of things. In other words, seeing things as they really are; such a mind is able to grasp what is 'necessary' whilst in the act of observing what is natural. Hopefully as this story of antiquity unfolds, many of the reasons for our respect for the past is becoming ever clearer. We think it is a tragedy for such individuals and their contributions to be stepped over as if they didn't matter when so much of their knowledge, insight and experience is as relevant now as it was then. The concept of a 'developed mind' that Dai Zhen speaks of is a subject we have developed further under the heading The Three Aspects of Consciousness. This is a useful introduction to how one can expand one's perception and experience of the world (see Philosophy and Approach page under Antiquity Meets Modernity).

JAPAN AND KOREA

As stated earlier in this commentary, we've mainly confined our observations to the two giants of Asia (India and China) as we believe their story is largely representative of the eastern tale. This is also because in truth the story of the rest of Asia would require another substantial piece of work. However, during this period of history as the world is getting ready to embrace modernity, it's worth briefly noting some of what was happening in Japan and Korea. Although both countries have their own distinctive cultures, style and beliefs, the areas of overlap in terms of principles and values are quite large and also resonate with the rest of the eastern story.

From the time of Shotoku Taishi (574 – 622 AD), the Crown Prince of Japan, traditionally revered as the sage ruler who led the nation out of tribal division into political unity and cultural greatness, Japan had been largely shaped by Buddhism, complemented with Confucianism precepts. There has been in its rich and diverse history much questioning and reflecting on 'The Way' (Daoism) and yet the primary themes as in China seem to have changed little e.g.: mindfulness, enlightenment, meditation, rebirth, karma, morality, ethics, poetry as a way to truth, mastery of the ancient texts and respecting the 'Ancient Way'. If one acts with respect for the natural order (heaven), a moral and well-ordered society will automatically follow. These are just a few of the recurring themes. By the 18th and 19th centuries the Shinto movement (Japan's official religion, which reveres one's ancestry and the spirit of nature) was again trying to reclaim Japan's spiritual past from the foreign

ideals, especially Buddhism and the Confucian ideology which it saw as being responsible for overthrowing the 'Age of the Gods' which was enshrined in Japan's past. Here we see another paradox of the past: for on the one hand Buddhism and Confucianism have underpinned so many beliefs in Japan, but at various points in its history they have also been seen as Japan's enemy, having persuaded it to move away from its own past and traditions. This position has been at the core of so much antagonism between China and Japan over the years and yet it has also fostered, for long periods of time, much harmony too.



So from the time of prophet Mohammed, Japan has seen a philosophical tug of war between Daoism, Buddhism and Confucianism. And many great thinkers and scholars argued for the virtues of one position over the other with very few seeing the value and the power of integration, so intellectual differences continued to triumph. This led to different schools of thinking and various sects emerging, each championing a theme or a particular perspective over another. This contributed to the increasing dilutions of these religions and amongst other things played its part in the revival of Shintoism. Shinto (the way of the Gods) had been the native religion of Japan until Buddhism arrived from the Asian continent when its influence gradually fell away. But when two invasions mounted by the Mongol rulers of China (in 1279 and 1281) were both thwarted by typhoons which inflicted great damage on the Mongols, Shinto belief was powerfully rekindled in the conviction that the typhoons that caused the Mongol invaders to retreat and return to the continent were Kamikaze (divine winds) send by the Gods (Kami) of Shinto. So whereas Buddhism had long been considered to be the protector of the state, Shinto now began to assume that role. This was the first phase of Shinto revival in the early medieval age. The second phase began at the beginning of the 14th century during a time when there was dynastic dispute in the imperial family. Discord over succession to the emperorship focused attention on the reviving central myth of Japanese history: the Shinto belief that the Imperial family had been given the mandate by the Sun Goddess, Amaterasu, to rule Japan eternally. Shintoism was re-establishing its belief that Japan was a divine land, superior to its neighbours, China and India.

This is because Japan insisted it had been ruled by an unbroken line of sovereigns from its founding by a descendant of the Sun Goddess; whereas China and particularly India were considered inferior because they had often undergone dynastic changes and suffered long periods of disorder without centralised rule. It should be said a written language did not emerge in Japan until the 5th century. Hence these facts were unable to be verified and are considered by many to be myth.

Japan also saw its origins as being of greater antiquity than China due to the genealogy of Japanese Gods. According to Japanese mythology, those who ruled first in Japan were Gods and then came human sovereigns. It was Kitabatake Chikafusa (1293-1354) via his major literary work Jinno Shotoki (Chronicle of the direct descent of Gods and sovereigns) who arguably played the greatest role in reviving the Shinto principles of government i.e.: ruling from the centre (by a small group of people) and renouncing the Buddhist ideology. Japan at this time had been heavily influenced by the Han and T'ang dynasties and so its social-religious and political views followed the Chinese way.

It is worth underlining that Chikafusa's political -and by default religious- influence did not really make itself felt until later on in Japanese history. But when it was taken up its influence remained

strong until the end of World War II. Jinno Shotoki was regarded as one of the principal pieces of literature outlining the ideology of imperial loyalty. Shintoism continued to find its own place as Buddhism continued to re-invent and refine itself within the Japanese borders. It was during this time (12th century) that Zen Buddhism was born.

Like the rest of the East, Japan had been scarred by conflict and war, much of which had come from within its own borders, as its many clans struggled for control either amongst themselves or against the emperor of the day. It's out of this 'warring tradition' that the greatness of the Samurai was born, and the idea of fighting and even dying for a principle became strongly revered. In fact, Japan's efficient and effective military position has been conceived out of this long heritage of fighting for a principle, for 'something better'. By 1603 the unification of Japan was achieved and lasted for over two centuries. Ieyasu Tokugawa emerged as master having defeated all his rivals and became the founder of the Tokugawa line of Shoguns. During this period Japan became isolated from the rest of the world as Buddhist sects were broken up and Christian missionary activity was rejected. New laws rigidly defined the role of lords, warriors and peasants and stability and unity was established until 1867).

Korea's story has some parallels with Japan's but obviously it has some unique elements all of its own. From the time of Wonhyo (617-686) in the 7th century Mahayana Buddhism had spread throughout Korea. Wonhyo was an extraordinary scholar who mastered all the advanced Buddhist theories and produced a huge amount of scholarly exegetes (critical explanation of scriptures). He is revered as the founder of the uniquely Korean Buddhist sect (Haedang-jang) and is considered to be the most important seminal philosopher and religious practitioner in Korean history. In addition to his prolific exegetical writings Wonhyo's concern for ordinary people translated into his spending time dancing and singing around the country to spread the notion of joy. He called it Muoe (unhindered). One of his favourite sayings was:"All unhindered persons lead birth and death along a single path" (a passage from the Flower Garland Sutra). His primary message was one of empathy, joy and especially urgency. Focus the mind and don't waste time was his mantra – "Right actions correct the delusions of the mind". "Arouse your mind and practice!" was another of his famous sayings. He evidenced in his own life the need for meditation and contemplation. To him, application was the key. Theory is impotent without practice!

By the 12th century Chinul (1158-1210) added to Wonhyo's legacy producing many major works of his own such as: Encouragement to Practice (1190) Secrets on Cultivating the Mind (1203-05), Straight Tales on the True Mind (1205), Abridgement of the Flower Garden Sutra, to name a few.

Buddhism continued to thrive during this period of Korean history, having close ties with the royal court. This meant the advice of Buddhist monks was sought on both religious and political matters. There were two dominant schools of Buddhism at the time: Kyo (doctrine) and Son (meditation). However Buddhism in Chinul's time underwent significant reform with the growth of the meditation-inspired form of Buddhism (Son).

It was at this crucial crossroads, in the middle of the Buddhist Koryo dynasty, that Chinul tried to deal with the serious signs of moral and spiritual decline, as the major split between Kyo and Son unfolded. Chinul developed an original approach to Buddhism as a response, in which he merged

the speculative metaphysics of the 'doctrine' school with the soteriological (doctrine of salvation) views of Son. This unique integration of Chinul's is considered the most distinctive Korean contribution to Buddhist thought. Korean Buddhists who came later have generally followed the basic principles outlined by Chinul. It would only be much later in the 20th century that his integrationism and synergy would be radically called into question.

The great contributors that followed such as: Yi T'oegye (1501-1570), Hyujong (1520-1604) and Yi Yul-guk (1536-1584) added to this idea of synergy and in some cases went further. There were of course points of difference but our proposition is that what binds us has always been more than what divides us! Sadly, our egos help promote a stubborn, often dogmatic, view that is unwilling to relinquish the desire for 'being right'. What a price we've paid for that! These Korean philosophers all spoke of sincerity and single-mindedness, meditation, cultivation of goodness (morality). In fact, Yi T'oegye and Hyujong both believed everyone possesses the potential for salvation and is capable of 'sage-hood', through firm determination, study, self-discipline and right action. Hyujong went further in that he saw the essential teachings of Buddhism, Confucianism and Daoism as the same (on which he wrote a treatise, in 1564, called The Mirror of Three Teachings). He suggests that "Confucius planted the root of truth, Lao Tzu then nurtured it and Buddha pulled it out (harvested it)". In other words, all three were and are important, each one being relevant to different parts of the 'unfolding nature' of truth. Yi Yul-guk was a neo-Confucian who studied Buddhism but pursued Confucianism. He became a brilliant philosopher, outstanding educator and dedicated statesman. All three of these thinkers played their part in the evolution of Korean philosophy. However, what follows next would change the face of the East forever…..

The overwhelming feel of this chapter of the story is one of great minds rebelling against war and conflict, striving to re-establish the importance of the spirit on the landscape of humanity. **Most of the eastern contribution during this time pleads for a metaphysical revolution in which the pursuit of materialism is abandoned, where the ideals of sincerity, kindness, innate goodness, the pursuit of truth, empathy, right action, resolve and self-discipline are prized above all else.** It is also repeatedly documented during this period that action is championed above theory, something we believe has been lost in our pursuit of progress. It now seems that we revere what people know or think they know more than what they do and who they are. Surely we are best defined by our values and how we live our lives and not by how impressive our 'knowledgeable' vocabulary is. After all, does an abundance of knowledge mean anything if it is not usefully and meaningfully applied? Someone who appears to know little and yet lives authentically and with integrity.... have they not better understood what is important? Is a mind the size of a planet better than a heart full of virtue?... We think not but this is a question you need to answer for yourself.