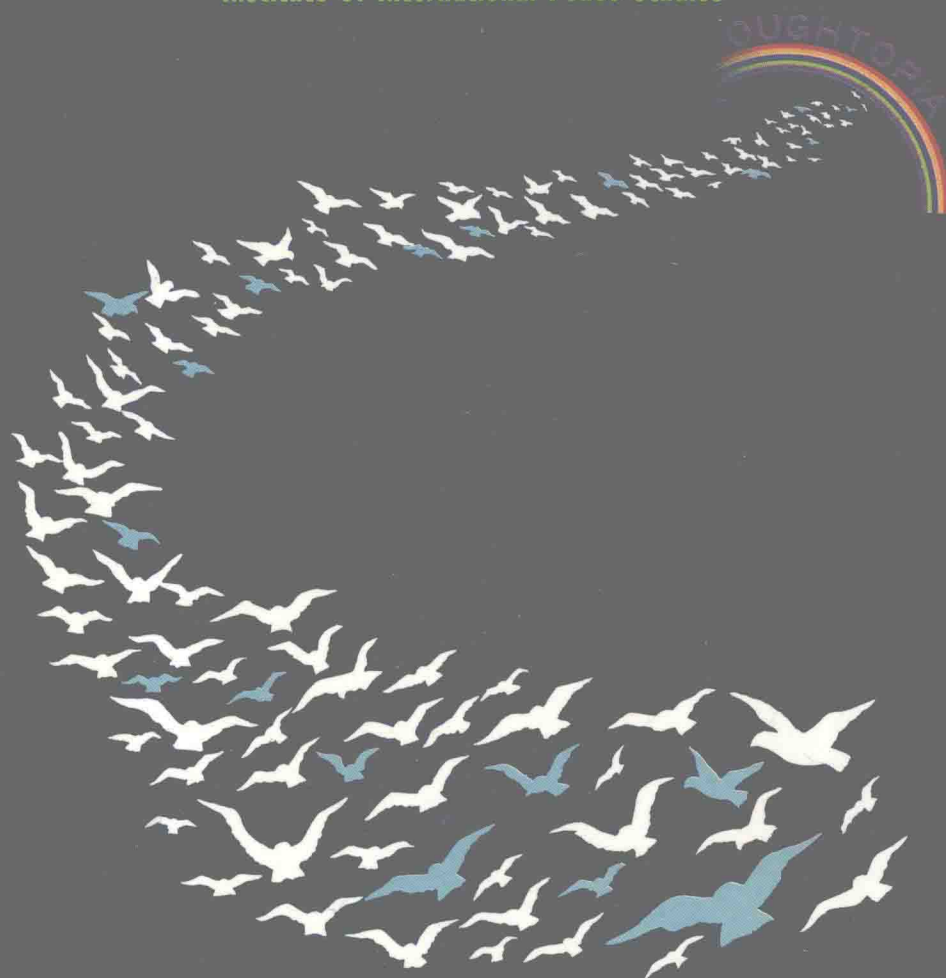


TOWARD OUGHTOPIA

—Dr. Young Seek Choue's International Activities—

Institute of International Peace Studies



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Introduction

“Man proposes, but God disposes” is a time-worn adage fraught with meaning. On one hand, it connotes that man, a mortal limited by time and space, is no master of his destiny; but on the other hand, it denotes that he, a free agent endowed with the power of making choices, can dream, hope and make plans to improve his condition of life. The power of human will, although not unlimited, has a definite role in the history-making process.

For many decades, Dr. Young Seek Choue, uncannily creative in thought, has proposed superb ideas for the improvement of the human milieu. At first, he proposed to build schools in his effort to lay a firm foundation of nation-building in the Republic of Korea. God was favorably disposed toward his proposals, one after another, enabling him to provide opportunities for thousands and thousands of students to make preparations for their future careers. Later he proposed to launch a few social movements to modernize Korea, and people readily responded to his calls. And then, he proposed to build new foundations of world peace through the promotion of global familism among the nations.

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Often, God seemed disinclined to favor these proposals. Very often, Dr. Choue had to struggle against seemingly insurmountable odds. Sometimes, the ideas that he proposed at the various international conferences were ahead of his time, too far ahead to produce immediate results. His true intentions were misinterpreted and misunderstood. Unafraid and unfaltering, Dr. Choue has, however, persisted, humbly asking God to embolden his spirit, and in due course, many of his proposals have become a reality.

Herein will be found a selection of Chancellor Choue's proposals for world peace and human welfare since 1965. Despite the long lapse of time since, the proposals edited here have one centripetal theme consistently running throughout the book—the undaunted human will seeking to bring peace on earth. It is true that some of Dr. Choue's proposals reprinted here still remain unrealized. Perhaps, the world does not understand their importance yet. Dr. Choue's proposals to reunite separated families in Korea have been, for instance, blocked by the Pyongyang regime for political reasons.

As the danger of nuclear holocaust increasingly threatens the very survival of humankind on earth, peace is, however, no longer the subject of idle talk among philosophers. Nor is it an option that the world may or may not choose. Rather, it has become the only choice, “the must,” that all peoples on earth should opt for. The world of “ought-to-be”—*Oughtopia*—must be sought individually and collectively; if not, the world will have no future.

Those who are already familiar with Dr. Choue's numerous works on world peace and human welfare in the past will enjoy reading this book, insofar as his proposals presented here sum up the gist of his thoughts. Those who have not read his works in the past will gain many a new

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insight into the predicament of our age. By reading this book, one can trace, step by step, the evolutionary process of this peace-maker's humane, humanitarian ideals and ideas in action.

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World Peace and the Mission of the University

The following text was originally prepared as the keynote address for the Korean and Japanese University Professors' Conference held in June, 1973.

1. Aporia in the Era of Transition

Human history, according to C.E. Black, has followed a three-fold development, namely, from the primitive to the agricultural and then to the modern industrial society. This latest stage, however, is not the terminal phase of our history. Black says that today we are entering a new and unknown fourth stage which history has in store. This transition, in its nature and magnitude, has only two comparable precedents: one was the change man brought to his life by modifying the primitive conditions of his existence, which consisted largely of hunting and gathering activities, into a life based on agriculture; the other was the transition some two hundred years ago from the agricultural to industrial society.

This awareness of transition is indeed pervasive in higher and intellectual circles of the East and West. Much has been written about the signs of change. Peter Drucker's *The Age of Discontinuity*, Warren Wagar's *Human Castle*, Erich Fromm's *The Revolution of Hope*, William Hocking's *The Coming of World Civilization*, and Daniel Bell's *The*

End of Ideology, to name but a few, represent the efforts to capture the nature and direction of the historical change we face now. My own book, *Creation of a Civilized World* (1951), was also an expression of the same concern.

It is not the purpose of this seminar to reflect on the concerns and analyses made by historians and cultural critics of our time. Nor is it my aim here to present a package of neat analysis of this much confused transitional moment, confused by its radical break with tradition, its mingling of the old and the new, a deepening of conflict between good and evil, and the collapse of long-cherished value systems. But let me begin by saying that there is only one word that adequately describes the present state of affairs, and that word is *crisis*. As Pitirim Sorokin put it, ours is an age of crisis.

Etymologically, the word crisis combines two meanings: danger and opportunity. Scientific-technological innovations have in fact given mankind some Promethean blessings in the form of comforts and conveniences, but they also have let out many Pandoran ills. Historical time seems to progress not in circular, lineal, or spiral patterns but rather in the model of a cone, allowing a complex state in which the good and evil and hope and despair continue to appear and disappear simultaneously. The current era is a simulacrum of nearness to the end of the night or to an eschatological ending. The road sign points two directions: utopia or dystopia. That we are faced with danger as well as opportunity makes the present era peculiarly aporic. Let me briefly delve into some of the aporiae that confront us today.

The first aporia is that which was brought about by the advent of a political mass society. Modern society has been transformed from political and economic democracy to a democracy of the masses under majority rule. The re-

sult has been the great political ascension of the masses and the appearance of mass society and mass culture. Today, many enjoy in all spheres of their daily life luxuries and comforts unimagined even by such absolute monarchs as Ch'in Shih Hwang-ti or Louis XIV. The benefits of modern civilization are ever more spreading and trickling down to the bottom. No doubt, a *massification* of culture has been going on for some time.

The political mass society, however, does not have everything good to it. Perhaps no one can resist the assessment that the process of *massification* involves a degradation of quality into quantity. The cultural transition from select minorities to the masses has certainly brought with it a vulgarization of cultural and spiritual life.

Consider for instance the concept of happiness. In the seventeenth century, happiness was viewed in Europe as "the rational satisfaction through the realization of personal integrity," as Leibnitz defined it. In the eighteenth century, it was seen more or less in terms of *aparthia* (giving up desire) or *ataraxia* (departing from suffering); then Bentham's utilitarian definition of happiness reigned a good part of the nineteenth century, followed by the Spencerian view of happiness as pleasure. Now, happiness in the mind of most Westerners seems to be hardly more than a slightly modified version of earlier hedonism or the Spencerian stresses on pleasure.

The age of quantity is characterized by its Gargantuan appetite for the massive and colossal: mass production, mass consumption, mass information, and mass action. The basic principle of democracy is of course majority rule, but this does not necessarily rule out cases for the minority. Yet minority opinion, however just and creative, is often silenced by the oppressive weight of the majority. The

masses tend to be blind and irrational, thus susceptible to manipulation. Vance Packard's *Waste Makers* or Ortega y Gasset's *The Revolt of the Masses* has already warned us against the danger of mass-oriented thinking.

Next is the aporia that stems from the development of science and technology. Scientific-technological development is seldom based on the metaphysical question of why but on the value-excluded thinking that "we do this because it is possible," and that is why it so often finds itself among the dehumanizing forces.

The atomic age has "progressed" into the age of laser beams, electronic optics and human engineering. The evolution of computers, now reaching the level of micro-second or even nano-second performance, puts one's meager imagination to shame. Outer space is also horizontally wide open to us ever since Neal Armstrong made a round-trip to the moon in 1969.

Ought we to repeat the cliché that the progress of science and technology drives mankind further into the abyss of greater anxiety? But this truism derives its paradox from the fact that our world is ever more threatened by the very progress of science and technology, for no other reason than that it has greatly enlarged the mechanism of war. Look at the genealogy of weapons of the moment: from atomic to hydrogen bomb and then to cobalt bomb. Biological and bio-chemical weapons, including whiffs of bacteria, have long reached the level of mass production, bringing us nearer to an Armageddon. The progress of science and technology thus forces upon us a choice between good and evil.

The third is the aporia of multi-polarization. The bipolar world which for some time sustained pseudo-peace under the cold-war formula has given way to a multipolarized

world which characterizes the present post-postwar era. The United States and Soviet Russia are still the two super powers with their huge nuclear stockpiles, but in conventional weaponry China poses as a third pole; in economic power Japan and the European Common Market assert themselves as a fourth or fifth pole. If the OEEC countries develop into a political integration and decide to have their own nuclear deterrent, the world will surely have four power poles; a nuclear Japan would further complicate the situation, necessitating a re-arrangement of world power balance.

If such changes occur, it may look encouraging to some. Smaller countries may find in the situation a good chance to act as free-riders once they are freed from being dragged into wars among the super powers. The principle of self-determination, once dreamt by President Woodrow Wilson, might see a better chance for its realization. Yet changes on that order are unlikely to brighten up the picture; rather, they cast a darker shadow. In a world where a new order still remains to be born, a poly-polarization would place the peace-keeping responsibility on nobody's shoulder and this would make the world even more unstable and dangerous. Also questionable is the ability of smaller countries to restrain themselves in case nuclear proliferation proceeds at the present rate. Will they be able to show the same restraint as shown so far by the two super powers? The entire Asian region, for example, will not find it a pleasant situation if China comes to deploy long-range missiles on a mass scale.

Such circumstances apparently make ours an age of aporia. So far, many have tried to work out solutions and some progress has been made in certain areas; yet the general picture still remains frustrating. It seems that the

more we try to entangle the difficulties the deeper we sink into the quagmire. Where should we set the direction of history if we refuse to be led to its end? Between catastrophe and survival we must determine the guidepost. It is at this point that "world peace" poses itself as an imperative for the whole humanity. But what kind of world peace do we want to have?

2. The Peace We Want

A dictionary definition of peace, according to Webster, is that it is "a tranquil, quiet state free from war." The earliest Chinese reference to the word peace was made in *Chun Chiu Fan Lu*, that reads in part: "wise man lives longer because he is free from poverty without and is calm within; a man of peace never loses middle way." A Korean dictionary offers a variation, saying that peace is a harmonious and quiet state, calm and changeless. In Sanscrit, peace is synonymous with "ahimsa" (non-violence). Some even speak of peace and "eternal repose" in the same breath.

History is full of those idealists who launched a variety of peace movements in order to bring to the world the kind of peace they visualized. The nineteenth century saw many such movements, each based on one or another of peace theories formulated by Dante, William Penn, Hugo Grotius, or Immanuel Kant. In this century, too, efforts towards peace never ceased to come about: the Hague Peace Conference, the League of Nations, and the present United Nations. Hence the intriguing question: why, despite so many movements made in the noble cause of peace, are we still living in a dangerous world, all the

more frightened by the prospect of self-destruction? What has made all the movements futile and unrewarding?

One of the major factors that contributed to the failure of those peace efforts seems to be the fact that the "reality of power" has so completely been neglected or even regarded as a taboo by those peace-minded people. It is more than worth listening to what Karl von Clausewitz, an eighteenth-century Prussian strategist, said: "perfect peace with no conflict whatever is an illusion. The semblance of peace is nothing other than a state of invisible war waged not with arms but in the disguise of diplomatic, cultural, and economic wars among nations. Never in history has peace been realized in its perfect form."

The age of Pax Romana and the nineteenth-century Pax Britannica after the Vienna Conference, both of which go down into history as the two periods in which peace lasted longest, were in fact founded on two imperial powers, Roman and British, which somehow maintained stability within their domains. Peace indeed is unthinkable without some sort of power control. Pax Russo-Americana which, since 1945, has managed to prevent a third world war is largely the product of the power balance between the two super powers.

Our experience with the cold-war period, however, has made it increasingly plain to everybody that power balance or equilibrium alone is far from sufficient in attaining peace in the world. The present civilization is caught up in a phenomenology of change: nothing remains constant; everything is whirling around in high velocities of change. On both planes of quality and quantity, expansion on one side becomes contraction on the other, rendering the notion of balance or equilibrium highly irrelevant. This means that we need something else, some-

thing that would help us make the world a ground for co-prosperity instead of a battlefield of competing powers. We would have to redirect the course of our history by discarding those undesirable residues from past tradition, and seize this moment of transition as a chance to open up a new horizon.

I wish to propose, therefore, that we make the ideal of "productive and progressive peace" our common task and goal. This calls for a rethinking about peace: peace not merely as a state of harmonious stability but rather as a productive foundation upon which we mobilize every bit of our ability and power in order to bring about common progress of humanity. Only on such a foundation will we be able to make best use of what we already have—science and technology, knowledge, organizations, managing skills, and spiritual power—not as tools to continue confrontations, killings, and wars but as a means for common prosperity.

What I am proposing here is that we bring power to cooperate with peace. To wit, power must be called in to serve peace and not the other way round. Power in this sense is not a means for oppression but is the synergy which, together with peace, must go into the making of a new world where all the potentialities and values of the human race come to full blossom. But how can we enlist power on the side of peace?

The key to this question is in our hand. In order to know this, however, we must rediscover the fact that man is the very source of his problems. It is man himself who has achieved the present level of scientific-technological progress, but it also is man himself who has seized the progress for the bad by using it to expand his list of weapons. Power and peace failed to unite because man

has chosen to use power only to pit himself against his brother, man against man. Poverty, ignorance, disharmony and discord—these are the real enemies of mankind but man, instead of fighting these common enemies, has opted for mutual destruction in the name of patriotism or for narrow selfish interests. Thus man was unable to develop a genuine human community, and at so many moments of the past he turned history into a nightmare.

The crucial turning point at which we find ourselves now simply does not allow us to proceed blindly into the close-ended dark tunnel. There will be no future to unfold for mankind if cooperation among nations fails to come by. Cooperation is quintessential to peace. Here cooperation does not mean the submission of the ruled to the ruler by means of coercion; it is productive cooperation to be gained through persuasion and consensus. With such cooperation we wish to put an end to the situation in which the fate of individuals, social classes, and nations is dictated by the strong. What we want to bring about is a new environment in which everybody decides his own fate autonomously and independently. What, then, would be the prerequisites for such a new environment?

Here, let me propose a spiritual revolution, a revolution which calls for the establishment of what I would call new human-centerism. In order to lay ground for the kind of peace we want to have, the productive and progressive peace as I termed it, the whole humanity must be awakened to the need for newer and greater respect for human dignity. There have been, of course, many variations on this theme proposed and circulated among intellectuals time and again—humanism, humanitarianism, or what-nots, all aiming at deliverance of humanity from many forms of estrangement. The emphasis on humanity