

International Conferences of Eastern and Western Scientists Interested in Helping the World

by Professor Arthur Ellison

Since Autumn 1985 (when I retired from my university job) I have been invited to attend no fewer than four big international conferences arranged by organisations from the East with the aim for most of examining traditional Eastern philosophical/religious/spiritual views and teachings in the light of insights from both East and West.

The series for me started with The First International Islamic Medical Conference in Cairo in September 1985. In this conference the Muslims were looking for modern Western scientific evidence confirming the truth of the Koran. My paper was on 'Near Death, Lucid Dreaming and Out-of-Body Experiences' rather vaguely referred to in the Koran. Much of the conference was concerned with papers on embryology, modern scientific research agreeing quite remarkably well with the descriptions to be found in the Koran - written long before microscopes existed.

The second conference was held in Cologne November 1985: The International Scientists' Congress - New Consciousness for a New Future, organised by the Cologne branch of the Brahma Kumaris World Spiritual University (B.K.W.S.U.). I met here some very enlightened American academics.

The third conference was in January 1986 in Bombay: The World Congress for the Synthesis of Science and Religion, organised by the Bhaktivedanta Institute (an arm of The International Society for Krishna Consciousness - the Hare Krishna organisation). The Dalai Lama and Ministers of the Indian Government attended. A press conference was also held in Delhi. Visits were made by the guest Western scientists to Elephanta Island and to see the Speaker of the Indian Parliament. Also we visited Vrindavan - the birth place of Sri Krishna - being taken to some of a very large number of temples by bicycle rickshaw. The following day we visited Agra to see the Taj Mahal and the Red Fort. At the end of this conference I became the guest of the B.K.W.S.U. who invited me to visit their headquarters on Mount Abu. This involved a flight in the early morning to Ahmedabad and a trip of some hours by car through the characteristic countryside of Rajasthan. After two-and-a-half days, during which I talked at some length with the two ladies who led the organisation, saw every aspect of their extensive headquarters and attended meditations in the very early morning (when it was very cold), I returned by the same route (car and 'plane) to Delhi, for the trip home. The car had mechanical trouble and I shall never forget that trip through the very crowded streets of Ahmedabad in darkness, catching the 'plane with one minute to spare before take-off.

My latest conference was in November 1986 in Washington D.C. as the guest of the International Cultural Foundation (an arm of the Unification Church). This was their Fifteenth International Conference on the Unity of the Sciences. The Rev. Sun Myung Moon supports other magnificent work of this kind - for example, the Professors' World Peace Academy. The I.C.U.S. divided for most of its work into seven committees dealing with the following topics: Unifying Principles in Science, The Value of Human Life, Towards Ecumenism in World Philosophy, The Relationship between Science and the Arts and its Relevance to Cultural Transformation, Problems of Third World Development: the Case of Africa, Eastern Approaches to Knowledge and Values: with an emphasis on 'Qi', and Global 2000 Revisited:

Reassessing Man's Impact on Spaceship Earth. I served on the committee concerned with 'Qi' (or 'Ki') and my fellow paper writers and discussers included professors from Australia, Morea, Thailand, California, Canada, Sri Lanka, U.S.A., the Philippines, Japan and the People's Republic of China. We had simultaneous translation: Japanese/English and vice versa.

All these conferences included some of the world's most distinguished scientists, total attendances numbering hundreds for each. To answer a question which I know will immediately arise in the mind of the reader may I finally say that there was no overt attempt to persuade anyone to accept any particular religious or philosophical view: the aims were only the helping of humanity through the increase of knowledge and understanding.