

Innovations in Self-Consciousness. Towards Oneness with the World

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Soon-ok Myong and Byong-soon Chun,
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Abstract: In their article "Innovations in Self-Consciousness. Towards Oneness with the World" Soon-ok Myong and Byong-soon Chun examine the limitations and vulnerabilities of modern civilization. Asia is a multiethnic, multilingual and multicultural territory of over 40 countries and more than 4.4 billion people, that is, almost half of the population of the world. The One Asia community seeks to question a world made up of strong egos that make up businesses, organization and nations, and embrace communal goals, helping Asia and the world to become 'one community.' Thus, the paper suggests ways of self-innovation through forms of transitional consciousness. Although the modern Sapiens is a highly social being, the human tendency to exclusive superiority over all other creatures falls into self-destructive contradictions as civilization evolves. The research seeks to show how the nature of altruistic cooperation and the empathic abilities inherent to humans can be re-activated by expanding our worldview to larger frame. Only then can humankind be called 'sapiens' in the true sense of the word.

Soon-ok MYONG and Byong-soon CHUN

Innovations in Self-Consciousness. Towards Oneness with the World

The most important issues that have elevated tensions and conflicts in many parts of the world have always been related to political and military conflicts, historical disputes, and territorial contentions. In Northeast Asia these days, North Korea's nuclear weapon and missile problems have accumulated for over a decade, and continue to complicate the security situation of Korean peninsula, a crisis in which the interests of the surrounding great powers have been intertwined. This situation shows how problems in Asia, when tracking their contexts, are not confined to Asia. The actions of each country have impact not just on that particular country, but also in other countries engaged in mutual interests, transmitted (Balaam and Dillman). Through the experiences of the contemporary world economic and environmental crisis we are witnessing a global impact, beyond the boundaries of regions and nations. In this age, the tight-dependent structure of the global community that is influenced and influences at various levels, both national and international, is becoming more visible. Paradoxically, at an age when the whole world seems to be more connected than ever by means of media technologies, modern humans seem to be becoming more atomized, hostile, and divisive.

In the gaps and boundaries that conform the physical and ideological landscape of nation-states, many people are suffering under war conflicts, social discrimination and hostile environments. In East Asia, for instance, in spite of the end of Western colonization, or Japanese Imperialism, countries that experienced the various forms of colonial domination continue to suffer from the hurts and conflicts that still remain.

The One Asia Foundation was established on the aspiration of Yoji Sato and his transformation from business man to philanthropist (Seo). Sato's dream has become one of reconciliation. Breaking the barriers of the human 'ego' and embracing a communal understanding of humanity has become the dream of all the members of the One Asia Foundation. During each Convention, Sato appeals and inspires others to the realization of an Asian Community able to break down barriers -institutional barriers among nations and internal barriers among other races and cultures.

The arena of human life is often described as a battlefield, confined within barriers, where people defend their personal interests. The metaphor offers a cross-section of one of the most basic levels of human existence: that of animal instincts. At this level, the human being might feel that crossing the boundaries of the self leaves him/her naked, like any other species among life forms, losing control ability or the protective clothes of the so-called 'civilization.' Indeed, civilization is often viewed as the glorious historical result of human progress. However, despite the expansion of knowledge and technology, uncertainty and anxiety characterize, more than ever before, contemporary human existence. Or is it that humans have always been in crisis. In this respect, the paper seeks ways of self-innovation that aim at overcoming the enormous global crisis of civilization we are facing. From an equitable point of view, the masquerade of 'human greatness' is being overly exaggerated and packaged, and should be be stripped off. The authors explore human characteristics and limitations in terms of evolutionary biology, brain science, and psychoanalysis, and at the same time look at altruistic and cooperative characteristics, which have always been a powerful element in human life

history. The paper presents some practical ways of self-innovation that might help re-shifting human mindsets.

As far as it is known, in the history of the earth, there has never been a civilization as splendid as the present age. Among the many life forms on earth, human beings are the only species to have secured a dominant position as the main civilization agents. However, recent developments such as the massive environmental changes brought about by global warming, are threatening this seemingly absolute power. Humans have been trapped in the swamp of the civilization they have created. From a psychoanalytic perspective, Sigmund Freud stressed the predicament of civilized humanity by stating that "Men cannot live without civilization, but they cannot live happily within it" (cited in Gay 548).

One of the most important problems is the evidence that humanity seems to seriously advance towards extinction. Scholars at the Workshop on Biological Extinction 2017 by Pontifical Academy of Sciences (PAS) have demonstrated by means of geological records that there have been five mass-extinctions in the history of the earth. These were caused by natural phenomena such as the impact of huge asteroids, the arrival of the ice age, massive crustal movements and volcanic eruptions. However, according to scientists, the coming sixth mass-extinction will be attributed to mankind. Preservation opportunities are rapidly closing, as evidenced in the rapid loss of biodiversity taking place over the last few centuries (Ceballos, Ehrlich, Barnosky, García, Pringle, Palmer and Todd 1). The socio-biologist Edward Wilson has warned that the future destiny of mankind depends on whether or not we are able to stop a cataclysm for which our descendants will never forgive us.

Predictions by many authoritative voices indicate that the crisis of human survival is coming to a point of no return. Recently, British physicist Stephen Hawking (*BBC news*) warned that mankind must start leaving earth for other planets within thirty years in order to avoid being wiped out by overpopulation and climate change; he has suggested the colonization of Mars and of the Moon. Moreover, three years earlier, Hawking warned against the fast development of artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and nanotechnology, in what has come to be known as the 'posthuman' era (Hawking in *BBC news*). He feared that since human rate of biological evolution is slower, it will eventually be replaced by artificial intelligence, and warned about the need to create methods so that it does not escape from human control in the future.

Another serious problem created by humankind in the process of civilization is that of economic inequalities and violence. While some people enjoy material affluence, a large number of world populations suffer from famine, poverty, and disasters such as life-threatening wars and conflicts. Today, as a consequence of these calamities, there are fifty million children refugees (UNICEF), and over 2,500 people are facing death in an exodus from Africa to Europe across the Mediterranean every year. According to the report by the Food and Agriculture Organization (2015), nearly 800 million people of the world population, or one in nine people, suffered from hunger between 2014 and 2016. The famine and refugee problems in Africa can be attributed to the shortage of agricultural infrastructure and environmental conditions. But they are also a consequence of long-term conflicts, often having to do with ethnic and territorial divisions as well as a result of past plundering by imperial

conquests. Given the fact that the entire world population could be adequately fed by the total amount of world food produced, the severe inequality of distribution on a global level indicates that the problems in Africa are intensified by human egoism and antagonism. It should also be noted that the problems surrounding Islamic radicalization and the Syrian refugee crisis have been exacerbated by the antagonistic approach toward the Islamic world which has incited Islamic radicals to become more militant.

Where do human cruelty and aggressiveness come from? Why is it that humans, in their desire for material gains, do not hesitate to sacrifice the weak and push them into the swamp of misery? This question calls for a consideration of how humans have become unbecoming of the designation of *Homo sapiens*. Hence, let us examine human foolishness and reflect on the limits of the human species, who seems to have lost a sense of direction.

One of the reasons for the dissonances between humans and nature lies in the different time-rates between the evolution of the human biological body and that of environmental change. From the perspective of evolutionary biology, all creatures are appropriately designed for their own survival and propagation. In other words, the command system embedded in the genes of respective life forms continues through generations. In this respect, humans are no different from other animals. More than 99% of the time of mankind on earth was spent in the Paleolithic, when hunting and gathering were the main means of living (Kwon 120) and the life of *sapiens* was dedicated to surviving in the natural state and fulfilling biological needs. In time, the ability to develop tools to transform the environment as well as sophisticated forms of communication and knowledge transmission revolutionized human lives and cultures, and although *Homo sapiens* biology was designed for environmental adaptation, this capacity to modify the environment has reached levels that paradoxically complicate human existence. In this respect, modern *sapiens* has become a dangerous animal.

One of the most important qualities of the *Homo sapiens* is its power of reasoning leading to rational judgment and decision. Curiosity, willpower, and desire are considered exceptional abilities that difference humans from other living creatures. However, human intellectual power, powerful memory and capacity of anticipation have often been overestimated. There are significant blind spots and flaws in human intellectual abilities. Brain processes are not always reasonable, objective or correct.

According to neurologists and brain scientists, most of what the brain perceives is accompanied by visual illusions that are defined by the disconnection between the physical reality and the subjective perception of an object or event (Martinez-Conde & Macknik). The world we see is the outcome of the brain's interpretation of information transmitted through the electrical signals of neurons from the sensory organs. In visual illusion people may see something that is not there or fail to see something that is there. We tend to believe that, whenever we make a choice, there is always a basis for that choice. Brain scientist Dae-Sik Kim (117-118) demonstrated, for instance, weird actions of the brain such as the fact that it first makes a choice and then justifies it by enumerating the reasons for making that choice. In 2015, Kim had introduced an experiment in which two samples of coffee, made with the same ingredients, were given to taste under a different price. Participants in the experiment

seemed to prefer the more expensive option, associating its higher cost to a better quality. In this experiment, the brain ignored the actual taste and made the judgment and choice on the basis of previous experiences accumulated over time. The brain performs the work of connecting the gap between perception and cognition, solving the discrepancy between data and selection by means of a combination of past and present experiences. Participants gave reasons for preference to justify their selection saying, "this coffee (expensive coffee) is smoother and has a richer lingering flavor than that coffee (cheaper coffee)." But this experiment shows that there is no logical causality in the brain's selection and judgment. Similar happenings are common in everyday life. However, humans continue to be convinced that their brain choices are a result of reason and free choice.

These important limitations of human brain are also materialized in linguistic expression. Ludwig Wittgenstein stressed these limitations of language and its relation to thinking processes in his book *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (2010). According to him, we can only represent linguistically 10% of what we perceive, and all of which we cannot speak, we must pass over in silence. Human lives involve constant social communication; messages that consist on series of choices coded in language and decoded according to the interpretations of another brain, based on its memories and experiences. Viewed in this light, human beings live a considerable part of their lives in illusion and in a world that can only be partially represented in language.

Indeed, the human brain has great vulnerabilities. For instance, rational judgements are given greater value even when research has revealed that many human decisions are often made on intuitive grounds, disregarding rational aspects. This is the reason why people may buy lottery tickets even though they have a rare chance of winning. Also, people are mindful of aircraft accidents that have lower occurrence than more common car accidents. Psychologist Daniel Kahneman has proven that human beings are irrational decision-makers who intervene emotionally in order to avoid risk, rather than relying on their rational thinking. He also found that when people meet situations where they have to solve difficult quizzes, they automatically replace them with easier solutions (Kahneman 110). This tendency towards intuitive automatic thinking reduces the brain work load and thus the use of brain energy (47) but causes errors which can give way to exaggerated overconfidence, causing errors of judgment and action (129-130). Kahneman called this automatic thinking 'fast thinking.' Problems caused by rapid thinking are accompanied by human misjudgments, illusions, stereotypes, and prejudices.

Slow thinking, on the other hand, is a logical and rational thought based on well-established knowledge and objective information (41). Slow thinking is a form of thinking that develops through complex problems in an increasingly civilized environment. Modern people can only be trained in logical and rational thinking through systematic education. The cognitive mechanism operating behind slow thinking requires controlled treatment of information, patience and willing effort.

In a similar way to Kahneman, Walter Cannon has explained that human thinking is dichotomous and simplifies the world in two ways: thought forms that respond to experience and memory, and more unconscious emotional forms. According to the author, dichotomous thinking creates the danger of making boundaries by breaking the context of the phenomenon. In other words, it is effectively

used for discrimination and otherization, promoting the conflict and division of human society. Originally, dichotomous fast thinking is the result of evolution for survival before the introduction of complex reason and logic in human history. At the most basic level of animal desires and instincts, human fight-flight reactions were an important strategy to raise the probability of survival in a situation where quick judgment was needed in the hunting and gathering age. These rapid forms of thinking, formed in the evolutionary process of survival, are still useful in urgent situations. However, the habit is being applied to all kinds of situations in the contemporary situation where the overflow of information leaves little chance for discrimination. It is indeed a convenient way of reducing the consumption of mental energy and avoiding complex logical thinking effort.

Another vulnerability of humans is that they live immersed in intractable desires that range from basic instincts to more sophisticated needs, many of which are fostered by civilization. Natural impulses such as the need to satiate hunger or thirst, or the need to procreate, are common to all living species. However, human desires go beyond basic animal needs, which shift to a stable state when they are met. Jacques Lacan noted that desire is always directed beyond what one already has. The object of desire is continually deferred, which is the reason why desire can be thought of, in language, as a metonymy (Lacan 167). Lacan was the first to theorize that in human communities language is the means that constitutes and expresses the subject (i.e. the socially objective entity capable of accommodating the rules of the other), and sustains or alienates desire. In other words, human beings meet the demands of desire by means of linguistic parameters that Lacan termed the realm of 'the symbolic.' However, human desires can neither be revealed nor fully solved due to the limitations of symbolic realm which, constructed like a language, involves inner psychological forms of memorialized culture. As a yearning for what is lacking, desires arise from the gap and discord between needs and demand. Insofar as humans experience the world as language (often as in temporal narrative connection), their need to communicate their inner sensations, feelings and desires will be fundamentally experienced as a sense of lack and void. That is, human will always be captives of desire. In *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan argues that man's desire is the desire of the Other, meaning that desire is the object of another's desire and is also desire for recognition. However, as Jean Paul Sartre taught us, desires are negotiated in socialization, and the desire of the subject disappears in proportion to the desire craved by the other.

Contemporary human beings live in a society where material desires are encouraged by continuous advertising. Swayed by desires, we live in a world of persistent anxiety; always desiring what we do not have and we perceive in the other. Social networks where people air their private lives contribute to endorse desires. Many theorists after Lacan have encouraged us to break away from commodity fetishism and frivolous desires. But humans seem to be loopholes in many respects (Hofstadter 1979)

Loopholes seem to be part of human genetic codes. If in evolutionary theory, only the fittest entity survives, it would seem that human genes have inbuilt selfish properties targeted towards survival. According to some evolutionary biologists (Dawkins 2006) altruistic behavior is no more than a strategic form of egoism calculated for the benefit of the species. However, other researchers (Wilson 183-188; Hamilton 14-16) insist that altruism is also found in humans at a genetic level, visible for

example in reproductive patterns. To mathematical biologist Martin Nowak the three keywords of evolution are variation, selection, and cooperation (Nowak 22, 45, 63). According to him, the evolution from the history of life to the multicellular animal is the outcome of the cooperation of single cells. Many multicellular animals are still undergoing the evolutionary process of making external cells part of their bodies. The history of cooperation is even found in the competitive domain with the self-sacrifice of bacterial cells bred for feeding other cells, an operation dating back to billion years (Nowak, Highfield).

Evidence in cooperation implies that it has led to a successful evolution of all animal beings, to the human species. Nowak indicated that there are five rules in the evolution of cooperation: direct reciprocity; indirect reciprocity; spatial selection; group selection; kin selection (Nowak 1560-1562). There is also evidence that in many cases, unconditional sacrifice was exercised in human societies without any consideration of profits and losses beyond the general cooperation rules. However, cooperation behavior in human community coexisted with forms of aggression and extreme ferocity.

Human reactions and behavior with regards to cooperation depend on the ability to empathize, raised or buried by parenting circumstances. Jeremy Rifkin claims that people who have been emotionally disconnected from others or have experienced things that cannot be shared with others (i.e. silenced traumas) early on in their lives often suffer from mental illness or reveal antisocial and violent behaviors. In other words, humans can become more aggressive and crueler when they lose their empathic ability. Experiments such as 'obedience to authority' or 'conflict with conscience' (Milgram 371-378) have shown that, in an environment where authoritarian pressures operate, humans become obedient but also disconnected from the suffering and tragedy of others. For a long time in the history of mankind, violence has been viewed as a male characteristic under a male-dominated social structure. However, from a socio-biological point of view, male violence is neither unique to males nor typical of the human species. The superiority of males is not a universal phenomenon, even for nonhuman primates (Smuts 10). Some research has shown that male violence is a social practice that can be attributed to patriarchal structures (Harway and O'Neill 7), and that the male authority guaranteed in such social structures creates the conditions for a sense of power entitlement, making it easy for males to exercise violence (Silverstein 91). Such findings unveil male aggression as a product of the civilization process, fostered under certain conditions. Thus, perhaps humans can be less violent and more altruistic in better institutional and cultural environments.

Studies such as those aforementioned reveal that socio-cultural surroundings are the determinants to the development of human personality. However, the matter can also be viewed from another perspective that contemplates mankind as the agent who has built civilization remodeling social and material conditions. Indeed, the evolution of human consciousness can be seen as constituted in interaction with the external environment, and evidence coming from that environment shows signs which are the result of unfortunate human action. The picture painted by such environmental evidences yields a very negative picture of contemporary mankind.

Historian Yubal Harari has defended the role of history in evaluating human civilization. In *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*, Harari claims that civilization has not evolved in a favorable

way for human beings and other living things. The author suggests ways to enrich human empathy and activate the genes of human cooperation more vigorously, activating the positive nature that is already inherent in everybody. Jeremy Rifkin also believes that humans have three important instincts that are communication, empathy, and sociability (Rifkin). His argument presupposes the interconnectivity of human beings, a matter that can be examined with both scientific and philosophical approaches.

Tracing the reasons as to why every individual has come to exist in this age and moment eventually leads to the questions on the origins of life, mankind, and earth. Temporal and spatial tracking demonstrates that no existence can be independent or disconnected from another from the very beginning. The Soviet astronaut Yuri Gagarin, the first human to travel into outer-space, threw the following statement about the territory of the earth, as his aircraft distanced itself from our planet, he is quoted as saying that the earth is too small for conflict and just enough cooperation. Indeed, humans live in a self-centered world without realizing that they are only part of a small planet which is only part of a much bigger universe. A poem by Korean poet Na Tae-ju brings forth similar ideas: "I am cleaning the yard ... One corner of the earth is becoming beautiful" (92-97). This message makes us aware that the little things we do are not just actions related to the earth but also participate in the workings of the universe. In *Matter, Life and Human*, physicist Hwe Ik Zhang shows how all life forms are related to one another (96-99). According to his theory, the energy from the sun is the source of all forms of life on the earth. He calls 'On-life' a self-sufficient unit of life in the ecosystem between the sun and the earth. Individuals cannot exist without the surrounding life Zhang calls 'Co-life' (midlife), which also exists in the order of 'On-life' (big unit of life). The individual being is a 'small I,' and the surrounding life sphere in the 'middle I,' while the sun and the entire life sphere in the 'large I.' In Zhang's vision of the universe, all lives and matters are recognized as relational entities, connected to our own lives and are part of the 'large I.' Hence, nothing in the universe should be violated thoughtlessly. Indeed, problems and conflicts arise when human ignore this connectivity of living things and think only in terms of the 'I' in the smallest sphere. Zhang's On-life theory is disputed in the academia due to its unclear boundaries between science and philosophy and the problem of its scientific demonstration (Hankyoreh). Nonetheless, it promotes awareness on how to look at life and the world.

Another similar concept is that of 'Interbeing' preached by the Vietnamese monk and a peace activist Thich Nhat Hanh, who emphasizes that all beings originate from causal relationships. Hanh reminds us of that the perception of self, of "me" and of "mine" is an illusion, and that many conflicting issues of human society spring forth from assuming that the self is separate and independent entity. The following poem enlightens us to Hanh's vision: "If you are a poet, you will see clearly that there is a cloud floating in this sheet of paper. Without a cloud, there will be no rain; without rain, the trees cannot grow; and without trees, we cannot make paper. The cloud is essential for the paper to exist. If the cloud is not here, the sheet of paper cannot be here either. So we can say that the cloud and the paper inter-are" (Hanh n.p).

Clouds in the sky and the papers we use almost every day are easily perceived as irrelevant and independent beings. The paper comes from the tree and human action reproduces it in different shapes and colors. However, through the 'On-life' theory and the notion of 'inter-being' Hanh, in a Confucian harmonic way, shows the interconnection between the sky, the cloud, the rain, the tree, the paper and, finally, the poet.

The above views alleviate from captivity the artificially categorized world. All things are not only connected inherently and densely. There is no fixed boundary between objects in the constantly changing world. Such view should help shift our mindset from the individual as 'small I' to the 'large I' of extended being. Similarly, *The Consciousness Revolution* (Laszlo, Graf & Russell) shares a consistent logic for seeing the world as mentioned above. The authors emphasize a 'consciousness of oneness' where human beings see themselves as part of one big world, along with all other things that exist. They also urge us to abandon the dominant world view of materialism, the illusion that material abundance will guarantee happiness. As a product of human civilization, the swamp of materialistic ideology is deep. Thus, a revolutionary transition must take place, replacing individual consciousness by a sort of cosmic awareness.

Another suggestion, brought forth by Nowak, is the need to identify a social model capable of revitalizing indirect reciprocity as way of self-innovation. A way to do this might be by enhancing human strong desire to be socially recognized, since human societies influence and are influenced by their individuals in many ways. Among Nowak's cooperation principles indirect reciprocity, the fourth principle, needs to be noted in terms of the involvement of invisible social forces (Nowak 1560-1562). Indirect reciprocity functions based on mutual respect and trust in the hope that helping behavior might not be rewarded right way but eventually someday. There is also the question of reputation, which functions as a moving force. Global leader of cloud-based software, Alex Laskey, carried an interesting research that shows how social pressure can cause behavioral change. In his experiment, participants in four groups were encouraged to practice energy savings. Three groups were each requested to turn on the fan instead of the air conditioner 'to save money'; 'to save the planet'; and 'to be a good citizen.' A fourth group was just told that "your neighbors are turning on the fan instead of the air conditioner." The most effective was the fourth group, which was informed about their neighbors' saving practices. What encouraged the participants to join in the energy conservation project was not moral or economic incentive but social pressure. This experiment makes us realize that each person becomes the subject of norms of behavior that others may follow as well as an observer and imitator of others. Indeed, human propensity to 'gossiping' may also be seen as playing a role in discovering and delivering new communication models. Social reference, mimicking and maintaining a reputation can be contemplated as models that ultimately help protect against social disconnection and isolation. In this sense, indirect reciprocity can become a driving force for community cooperation, thus revitalizing indirect reciprocity.

Finally, the third suggestion is the practice of mindfulness as a proactive way of awareness in the self-revolution. Distrust, hatred, and conflict, frequently observed in human societies, originate from illusion, stereotypes, and misunderstandings, all of which lead humans to distance and cut off from

each other, building all kind of barriers and walls. American psychologist Ellen Langer introduced the practice of being mindful as a practical way for disabling human made boundaries. Boundaries are built by placing emphasis on likenesses and differences among certain categories, leading easily to dangerous dichotomies as mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion. According to Langer (12-13), categories such as personal preferences are easily accepted and gradually, the repetition of such divisions becomes familiar and extended to more abstract groups such as ethnicity, nationality, religion, ideology, etc. Prejudices and stereotypes are formed without careful thinking in a mindless state of no-awareness. According to Langer, being mindless emits a powerful and negative force with a narrow shrinking self-image. Through her many experiments, she stresses that a state of being mindful exerts a force that allows new information to be accepted flexibly, helping see the world simultaneously from various perspectives as well as looking at it in the present, as something that can be acted upon (68-71). Mindfulness is a process in which we pay attention to the things happening in life with an awoken mind, instead of responding to them in a mechanical and unconscious manner. Mindfulness allows us to be aware of the context of phenomena and to focus on processes and relationships, rather than being blinded by differences and homogeneity. The practice of mindfulness reduces stress and conflict, increasing creativity and work performance, and restoring youth and vitality (99-112). In this way, it contributes to alleviating psychological and social problems that are prevalent in individuals and groups today. These positive results are due to the fact that being mindful helps seeing actual situation happening around us, setting aside false beliefs and misunderstandings, and breaking artificial walls and boundaries. Mindfulness is a mechanism that allows deep concentration on our surrounding context in order to help us become aware of the phenomenological world around us. It is a form of slow thinking that is efficient in terms of suppressing quick thinking and reducing errors and illusions.

As indicated, the authors mentioned above provide some ways to broaden the horizon to the world consciously and cognitively, helping dismantle human barriers. These ways enlighten us to the fact that humans are capable of becoming aware of the artificial reality of barriers and, at the same time, they can become mindful of their infinite potentiality to overcome their limitations. Such is also the purpose of the One Asia Foundation in establishing One Asia communities all over the world. In these communities, values of harmony and coexistence are realized and transferred through intercultural education. Methodologies developed within the One Asia educational framework contemplate ways to overcome language limitations by enhancing emotional communication. They also contribute to overcome the boundaries of personal memory and interpretation as well as egoism, helping students to develop empathy and understanding towards other ethnic groups and other cultures, moving beyond the artificial categories created by the prevalent material civilization.

Chairman Yoji Sato, founder of the One Asia Community has the dream of demolishing three walls: the wall of the Self, the wall of the organization, and the wall of the nation. "Humankind has proceed through all history and finally arrived to the present day while building strong egos, strengthening businesses and organizations, nations and races" (Sato 5). Breaking these walls means to move beyond personal, corporate and national interests in order to embrace communal goals, helping and

cooperating with one another (Sato 17). This means to overcome a "world of egos" and become a "world of people," a "One Community." Sato believes that "If every time the word 'I' is uttered we try to think about the world that is directly experienced by this I, we would no longer be able to doubt that a different way of thinking –a completely different way of thinking- is necessary" (Sato 43). The One Asia conducts activities in order to create new models of cooperation.

Humans are biologically aligned for survival and for the reproduction of the species, having struggled to carry out these missions. At the same time, they could not accomplish these goals without cooperation, negotiation with others, and even self-sacrifice. Although cooperation can be found in many other species, altruism and indirect reciprocity are unique human qualities. Humans are also the only species on earth to have discovered many things and transfer their discoveries to the practical realm of changing their habitats and living environments. In this paper, the term 'self-innovation' is used to name this power to shift from an inertial model that violates the connectivity among living organisms to a model in which all beings are contemplated as interrelated in the biosphere. The paper has argued that this is the only way humans can escape their self-contradictions and destructive ways, eventually becomes a genuine Homo sapiens, that is, a 'wise person.'

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