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TEACHING JUSTICE AND LIVING PEACE: BODY, SEXUALITY, AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN ASIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITIES¹

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Abstract

This article examines sexuality, a null curriculum in Asian-American faith communities, and explores pedagogical strategies to move the sexuality discourse to the explicit curriculum. The article first describes the current discussion of sexuality in Asian-American communities, then it critically analyzes the Confucian notion of the body, which has far-reaching influence on Asian-American views about sexuality, including those of Christians. The article then focuses on demystification of the body, arguing that demystification is fundamental to Asian-American discussions about sexuality. Finally, it suggests pedagogical strategies for the teaching of sexuality in Asian-American contexts.

In Asian-American communities, religious education for justice and peace is often framed by the discussion of racial and ethnic identity. Because racism is a serious social problem in the United States, it is important for Asian Americans to continue to participate in racial justice movements and discussions of identity politics. Acknowledging the important works that Asian Americans have produced, this article argues that Asian-American religious education should include discussion about sexuality and sexual identity, in connection with ethnic identity thus to squarely address social justice.

In most Asian-American cultures, sexuality is a taboo subject, one that cannot be discussed in public except for discussion about procreation. For example, although Asian Americans have inseparable ethnic and sexual identities within themselves, they are forced to separate the two and to focus solely on their cultural Asianness (Leong 1996, 3–5). Such invisibility of sexuality also contributes to the creation of

¹My primary focus is East Asian communities that are influenced by Confucianism.

homophobia in heterosexual-centered Asian-American communities, and marginalizes sexual minorities. Like heterosexual Asian Americans, sexual minorities are discriminated against due to their Asian race in a racially hierarchical society, including those of LGBTQ communities; however and unlike their counterparts, they face homophobia too. Thus Asian-American sexual minorities are treated as the “other” by both the racial/ethnic Other and the sexual Other (Leong 1996, 3). Therefore and unless one addresses the subject of sexuality, the discussion and movement of peace and justice is plainly incomplete.

Moreover, critically examining Asian-American sexuality in religious education is a timely matter in the contemporary church. Many churches, such as the Anglican communion and the United Methodist Church, are in the midst of controversy about homosexuality. Most of their Asian constituencies often and openly voice their position against homosexuality, threatening split from the communion (Religion and Ethics 2003). Notwithstanding that, there is hardly any study of Asian-American sexuality in theology and religious education. As will be discussed in the following section, even in Asian and Asian-American theology and religious education, there is very little literature on sexuality and homosexuality. This article does so and has a twofold goal: to examine sexuality in Asian-American faith communities and to explore appropriate strategies for teaching sexuality in religious education.

This twofold goal is also a curriculum analysis and development proposal for sexuality education in Asian-American faith communities. The lack of literature and discussion of sexuality in Asian-American communities does not mean that Asian Americans do not have opinions on sexuality. Instead, and as will be discussed in the following section, it creates a null curriculum (Eisner 1985, 97–107), subtle but strong attitudes. To develop appropriate teaching strategies for more open discourse about sexuality and to create an explicit curriculum, it is important to examine the null curriculum of Asian-American sexuality.

Specifically, this article investigates the influence of Confucian notions of the body on sexuality and homophobia, a major content of the null curriculum. I first describe the current discussion of sexuality in Asian-American communities by utilizing resources of Asian-American LGBTQ support groups, such as API Family Pride of San Francisco and other Asian-American studies literature. Then I critically analyze the Confucian notion of the body that has shaped the subject of Asian-American sexuality, including Christian views. I then focus on demystification of the body, arguing that demystification is fundamental to East Asian–American discussions about sexuality.

Finally, I suggest pedagogical strategies for the teaching of sex, body, and sexuality in Asian-American contexts.

THE CURRENT DISCOURSE OF SEXUALITY IN ASIAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITIES: SEXUALITY AS A NULL CURRICULUM

In his book *Educational Imagination*, Elliott Eisner (1985), a noted curriculum theorist, discusses the subject of curriculum in public educational contexts and offers a comprehensive definition of curriculum. Eisner says that each school offers students three different curricula: The explicit curriculum, one that is the actual content, consciously and intentionally presented as the teachings of the school; the implicit curriculum, one that works through its environment, including the way teachers teach and interact with students; and the null curriculum, those ideas and subjects in educational programs that are avoided. By leaving out options and alternatives, the school narrows students' perspectives and the range of their thoughts and action. Thus the explicit curriculum, which is often regarded as the entire curriculum, is only one facet. In fact, Eisner says that the implicit and the null curricula might be more influential with students than is the explicit curriculum (97). Regarding the null curriculum, Maria Harris, who adopted Eisner's theory in religious education says,

This is the curriculum that exists because it does not exist; it is what is left out. But the point of including it is that ignorance or the absence of something is not neutral. It skews the balance of options we might consider, alternatives from which we might choose, or perspectives that help us see. (69)

In Asian-American communities, sexuality is taught through null curricula. Sexuality is a taboo subject, one that is not publicly discussed in Asian-American cultures. This cultural disposition also shapes the research of Asian-American studies and theology on sexuality. According to Dana Takagi, an Asian-American sociologist, the topic of sexuality in general, and homosexuality in particular in the field of Asian-American studies are often treated in whispers (1996, 27). In other words, the topic of sexuality is rarely studied and talked about explicitly, so scholars frequently frame the topic of sexuality in roundabout ways. Kwok Pui Lan, an Asian-American feminist theologian, says that this characteristic is also found in Asian-American feminist theologians' work: "In feminist theological discourse, female sexuality is discussed, for example, in the context of institutional sex tourism and the

exploitation of women's sexual labor. . . . When theologians speak about female sexuality, they usually highlight Asian women's victimization and their oppression as sexual objects" (2004a, 2–3). In sum, sexuality is an almost invisible and silent topic in the research of Asian-American studies and theology.

Such invisibility and silence ironically create certain attitudes among Asian Americans toward sexuality, such as separation, shame, homophobia, and fixed gender roles, major contents of a null curriculum. Here I now will comment on this with three cases.

Case 1

A story from a heterosexual Asian-American woman theologian. One day this past spring, I got a call from a friend who is closely working with a LGBT support group in the San Francisco area. She was wondering whether I could talk with a Korean-American Presbyterian minister who was having difficulty accepting his gay son. Because the father believes that homosexuality is sinful behavior, the support group was looking for a heterosexual Asian-American theologian who would feel comfortable talking about theology, the Bible and sexuality. However, despite my willingness and the efforts of the support group, the meeting between me and the father never happened. It turned out that the father, who belongs to a denomination that does not recognize women's leadership and ordination, flat-out refused to talk with a woman theologian whose authority he could not acknowledge. Later we learned that the father decreed that the family members must keep the son's coming out as a secret, as though it had never happened.

Case 2

A story from a mother of a lesbian daughter. "No matter who she is, how she is, I love her forever because she is my daughter. But whenever I think of her as being a lesbian, I feel sadness in my heart. *I worry that she will be unable to live a normal life and that she always will be viewed as an oddity in our society.* To get married, to give birth, and to raise your children with a father and a mother (because men and women are very different) should be the components that make a healthy family. . . . I went to an all girl's high school. There were some female classmates who loved me during that time. I also loved someone in return. However, because I felt it was not the right thing to do, I managed to change it. We live in this world and so we

still need to follow the laws of this world. Otherwise we will certainly experience ostracism. I still dream of the day when my loving daughter will change” (API Family Pride 2000, 8–9).

Case 3

A story about Truong Loc Minh. Truong Loc Minh, a Vietnamese immigrant, was savagely beaten by a group of young White straight men in Laguna Beach, California, on January 10, 1993. While mainstream media reported the incident as gay-bashing, the Asian media plainly said that the victim was not gay and was beaten because of his race. For example, the *Los Angeles Times* headline announced, “A Shocking Hate Crime: In Orange County an Incident of Gay-Bashing at Its Worst” (editorial, *Los Angeles Times*, January 12, 1993), a Chinese newspaper reported the incident as “Asian Man Bashed at Laguna Beach” (*International Daily*, January 12, 1993).

* * *

These three cases show some of the most common Asian-American attitudes toward sexuality: separation of sexual identity from ethnic identity; shame; heterosexuality as normative, coupled with homophobia.

Because the topic of sexuality cannot be discussed in public realms, Asian Americans have a strong tendency to separate sexual identity and ethnic identity. This separation, according to Kwok Pui Lan, sometimes leads to greater tolerance for LGBT behaviors as long as they are kept out of the public eyes (2004b). However, it also makes it harder for LGBT members to come out to their Asian American families and friends. For example, according to Connie Chan, who conducted ethnographical research on the coming out process and identity development of Asian-American gays and lesbians, only 5 out of 95 of her interviewees came out to their parents and families (19). Even when they come out, a general attitude of their parents is the separation of their gay/lesbian children’s heritage from their sexuality. That is, parents often accept their child as an Asian child, but pretend that they are not gay or lesbian (Hom 1996, 37–49; Wat 1996, 72–80). This is the attitude that the father in Case 1 exhibited; it also was suggested in the Chinese newspaper’s headline about Truong Loc Minh. In sum, parents typically pretend that their children have never come out, and they try hard to keep the “secret” from their extended families and communities (API Family Pride 2000, 25).

If sexuality, especially homosexual identity, becomes a public topic, those who are involved in the issue, especially the family, feels shame because it has failed to live up to the norm of the community. Asian-American cultures frequently are communal cultures, so communal harmony is one of the highest virtues. Unlike individualistic societies that value each person's independence, the value of the individual in Asian communal societies depends on how well a person adopts communal norms, those that promote social harmony (Hofstede 1991, 51). In communal societies, attachments, relatedness, connectedness, oneness, and dependency between people are more important than independence and individuality. For example, Koreans, as one of the most communal people in the world (Hofstede 1980), find themselves adrift when they fail to adjust to the community to which they belong. Because everyone needs one another, this need makes people vulnerable when facing separation (Jae Un Kim 1991, 115). Therefore, by not bringing up a taboo subject such as sexuality and by not making public a family member's homosexuality, Asian-American parents and families try hard to meet perceived social expectations.

Moreover, in Asian-American communities, discussing sexuality in public and exposing one's own homosexuality can be seen as a sign of westernization (Hom 1996, 39). Although Asian Americans embrace certain levels of Americanization as they assimilate to the dominant culture, extreme westernization or Americanization—such as being openly gay, let alone being open about sexuality—can result in a loss of one's own cultural identity. This results in shame. Russell Leong talks about American popular media culture's commercialism, and makes an ancillary point:

Popular ideas around Asian American homosexuality have been confounded with broader notions of exotic Asian or "oriental" sexuality, especially in popular culture, film, and media. The pornography industry for instance, in producing homosexual or heterosexual printed and film material on Asians and Asian Americans, configures our most visible racial features—skin, hair, complexion, and size—in sexual terms for the primary consumption of the white male voyeur. Not surprisingly, some Asian Americans themselves view same sex sexuality as a sign of western decadence. (Leong 1996, 3)

In short, when Asian Americans view themselves as sexual objects of the dominant culture,² they feel shame and associate sexuality and

²Gale Yee (2003) argues that such a portrait is motivated by dominant culture's racist anxiety and the fear of foreigners.

homosexuality with Western decadence. Such a feeling of shame perpetuates already supra-homophobic beliefs and cultures of Asian Americans (Takagi 1996, 25).

This association of homosexuality with Western decadence is also closely related to strict gender role expectations (Chan 1989, 19). As the mother in Case 2 believes, the normal life for an Asian-American woman is “to get married, to give birth, and to raise children.” In other words, women belong to the domestic world, and men to the rest of the world. Because Asian Americans separate the public and the private, they also make a clear demarcation between domestic and outside worlds: keeping the two separate and each world orderly is critical for universal harmony. Disturbing the harmony by crossing or erasing boundaries is perceived as another form of westernization. This role reversal is deemed a serious problem because patrilineal and patriarchal Asian traditions believe that female sexuality is dangerous, and that women’s bodies are inferior to those of men (Brock and Thistlethwaite 1996, 38–39).

CONFUCIAN BODY POLITICS AS A ROOT OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST SEXUAL MINORITIES AND WOMEN: AN ANALYSIS OF THE NULL CURRICULUM

Because most of the patrilineal and patriarchal Asian traditions, especially Confucian traditions, associate homosexuality with the notion of female sexuality and body image, it is crucial to review how women’s bodies and sexuality are understood in Asian-American communities; what is the nature of body politics in Asian-American communities; how such body politics influence the Asian American church’s teachings about sexuality. Looking at these issues segues to fundamental pedagogical guidelines, especially for the development of explicit curricula for Asian-American churches.

Female Sexuality and Body Politics

On June 20, 2003, under the title of “Like a Virgin, Young Women Undergo Surgery to ‘Restore’ Virginity,” 20/20 of the ABC News network reported that every year, hundreds of young, scared Asian-American women visit plastic surgeons for hymen restoration before their marriage (Sherr 2003, ABC News). For instance, even today in Islamic cultures, women’s virginity is critical for the honor of family.

Some young brides—those that fail to maintain family honor by remaining virgins until marriage—are publicly humiliated or even killed by families. As an Asian, 20/20's report did not surprise me; however what shocked me was that among those young women seeking hymen reconstruction surgery, are great numbers of Korean and Chinese-American women who grew up in the United States or Canada.

Both China and Korea are heavily influenced by patrilineal and patriarchal Confucian values. Thus women's bodies are the property of male members of their household based on the principle called *namjongjubi*: "Men should be respected; women should be lowered." As the owner of property, the male family members, especially the head of the family, should teach women and girls proper behaviors such as the purity of the body. Specifically, women in Confucian families are educated in the principles of *samjongjiui* (Women's Three Virtues of Obedience) and *chilchuchiach* (Seven Eligible Grounds for Divorce). According to the principle of *samjongjiui*, a woman must obey her father when she is young; her husband when she is married; her son when she is widowed. This rule requires absolute obedience of women to men throughout their lives. If a woman violates this rule, punishment is severe. For example, if a married woman violates one of the following rules, her husband can divorce her: (1) If she behaves disobediently to her parents-in-law; (2) if she fails to give birth to a son; (3) if she is talkative; (4) if she commits adultery; (5) if she is jealous of her husband's concubine; (6) if she carries a malignant disease; (7) if she commits theft (Young Jung Kim 1976, 52–53).

Under this system, women's sexuality and chastity belong to her family, and women have to live under severe sexual suppression because losing one's virginity brings shame and humiliation to the entire family, and thus hurts the social advancement of male members of one's family (Chung 1988, 140). Accordingly, a young Confucian girl's expression of sexual desire and passion becomes the object of family's fear, so the family mandates restrictions on movement.

Moreover, families expect daughters to maintain sexual purity even after the marriage. For example, before the marriage ceremony, it is a Korean and Korean-American tradition that the mother of the bride gives a silver knife to the daughter. The silver knife symbolizes sexual purity. In the past Korean women used the knife to protect themselves from a rapist (by hurting the rapist or by killing themselves if they are raped) or to kill their sexual desire through mutilating their own body when they are widowed. Although such a practice is no longer expected, a Korean or Korean-American mother still will ask

her daughter to maintain sexual purity. Because many young *American* women of Confucian heritage seek hymen restoration surgery, this arguably is a continuation of the patriarchal notion of women's bodies as patriarchal property.

On the other hand, nothing like this is expected of Asian and Asian-American men: "whereas a man is allowed more freedom to express his sexual passion, a woman's sexuality is narrowly defined by the familiar context" (Kwok 2004a). According to Brock and Thistlewaite (40–51), this patriarchal notion of women's bodies and sexuality explains why the sex-industry is thriving in Japan, a Confucian society. As a source of physical pleasure, sex shops and prostitutes give men greater pleasures because the experience is divorced from the rubrics of men's otherwise ordinary, formally structured, and highly restrictive relationships.

This notion of female sexuality and body also explains why most Asian-American communities are homophobic. Gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered individuals challenge the harmony of a community that is based on hierarchal patriarchy. In a culture where men's bodies and sexuality are regarded as superior to those of women, any non-traditional form of sexuality is a danger to this well-established social system.

Ritualized Body Politics

If women's bodies and sexuality are inferior and dangerous, what is the nature of men's body politics in Confucian cultures? Because it is a taboo subject, there is not much literature. Notwithstanding that, men's bodies are discussed as a vehicle for the achievement of universal harmony.

The purpose of becoming human in Confucian societies is to participate in the achievement of universal harmony. Confucians try to achieve harmony through a community of educated moral men called *gentlemen*. A gentleman is expected to do two fundamental things: first, he is to cultivate himself at any cost, including that of his own life. The other is to live for the well-being of others so that he can bring peace and order to society (Mencius 1970, VII.B.32). To become a true human, a gentleman should not only cultivate himself, but he should live for the well-being of others. Self-realization without social participation is regarded as egotistical (Confucius 1979, I.14). Each person is obligated to recognize the existence of others and to serve the public good. In other words, a gentleman should cultivate to the utmost the principles of his nature. Wishing to better himself, he thereby better

others (Confucius 1979, VI.30). This communal endeavor of being human is clearly reflected in the Chinese letter *jen* (仁 benevolence). *Jen* is composed of the character for person (人), next to the character for two (二). Here the “two” is crucial, for it symbolizes that each human is quintessentially social or more than one.

To develop social harmony, it is important for members of Confucian society to live according to socially approved rites. Confucians call this “ritualization of the body,” and consider it as the framework for development of the person (Tu 1985, 172). The body, despite its structural limitation, is the most fundamental instrument to be a human being because the self as a concrete living reality is inseparable from the body. It is the proper home for mind, soul, and spirit. Confucians believe that social solidarity and universal harmony begin from performing routine functions, such as learning to stand, sit, walk, and eat according to socially approved and accepted rites or the ritualization of the body (Confucius 1979, XII.1). If people fail to live up to the expectations of the community, they cannot live in harmony with those around them. Through the ritualization of the body, all members of society learn proper and fitting deportment. So the ritualization of the body helps a person to be an active participant in the community.

A body conceived through ritualization is not a private possession; rather it is a major vehicle and tool to achieve and maintain social harmony. Tu Wei-Ming (1996) articulates this notion of non-private body as follows:

We do not own our bodies; we become our bodies and through that process of becoming we learn to fully realize ourselves as concrete living human beings. Three salient features should be noted here:

1. the body is a vehicle by which, we, as Heaven’s co-creators, participate in the great transformation as responsive and responsible agents;
2. the body is an attainment by which we, as beneficiaries of Heaven, Earth, and the myriad things, sustain and enrich nature as filial children and conscientious guardians;
3. the body is a conduit through which we communicate with all modalities of being in order to realize the ultimate meaning of life in ordinary human existence. (1996)

So the main purpose of the human body is for communal service, not for private pleasure such as sexual activities. In this context, it can be understood why Confucian cultures emphasize sexuality as a taboo subject. Even though it talks about the body extensively, the only aspect

of sex that is mentioned is that of procreation and women's purity. In this ritualized body politics, there is no room for a homosexual body, one that is perceived as used for private pleasure instead of the maintenance of social order and harmony. Because the social harmony is achieved solely through moral men or gentlemen, women's bodies can disrupt men's greater work; that is, unless families maintain women's purity.

Spiritualized Body Politics of Asian-American Churches

One of the most difficult tasks about this article was the lack of theological literature on Asian and Asian-American sexuality. Among over one hundred theologians working for ATS member schools, only a handful of scholars such as Kwok Pui Lan, Rita Nakashima Brock, and Jeffrey Kuan (all heterosexual Asian-American theologians), are currently researching sexuality. Moreover, in the field of religious education, there has been no significant research on sexuality in Asian-American contexts, and hence this article is one of the first of its kind. Although I originally intended to write an article that critically analyzes the Asian-American theological discourse of sexuality from a pedagogical perspective, there simply were not enough resources for this. So this article is written in a fashion to explore the issue of sexuality itself in the Asian-America context, heavily relying on Asian-American studies literature.

I say this because it shows where Asian-American theology and churches stand in their discourse of sexuality. As in Asian-American communities, sexuality is a taboo subject in Asian-American theologies and churches. Kwok Pui Lan opines that the lack of interest and research on sexuality is because of the long-lived influence of 19th-century mores and Western missionary theology: "Many of these churches were established by Western missionaries, steeped in the Victorian sexual codes and the cult of female domesticity" (2004a). Arguably, when Asian cultural values and Victorian sexual codes met in Asian churches and Asian-American churches, it created a more rigid atmosphere of sexuality, an attitude strongly present in Asian-American churches. For example, in the United Methodist Church in which I have clergy membership, the largest ethnic group besides Caucasians is Korean (about 400 congregations). However, none of these churches participates in Reconciling Ministries Network, "a national grassroots organization that exists to enable full participation of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities in the life

of the United Methodist Church” (RMN Mission Statement). In fact, out of over 200 reconciling congregations and campus ministry groups, there is only one Asian-American congregation, which is located in San Francisco. This is an instance where culture and Christianity become mutual malformers (Lee 2004a, 20). This also might be the reason why even liberal Asian-American theologians seldom discuss sexuality or they limit discussion largely to body politics, Mary’s virginity, or sex tourism (Kwok 2004a). Regarding body politics, Asian-American churches pretty much focus solely on Paul’s Body of Christ. Ironically, this Pauline-Asian Body of Christ is very distant from that of Paul in two senses: first, although Paul specifically addressed issues related to body, sex, and sexuality (e.g., 1 Corinthians 7), most Asian-American churches avoid discussion of sexuality itself and focus on the morality of Paul’s writings. The fact that Paul talked about homosexuality, for example, conceivably would force Asian churches to discuss sexuality; however, it still is hard to find Asian-American churches talking about sexuality and homosexuality, largely because the first topic is embarrassing and the latter brings shame.

Second, when Paul used the analogy of the Body of Christ as an ideal image of Christian existence, he presented a radical and counter-cultural notion of the body to Hellenistic society and that of the faithful (Martin 1995, 68). According to Dale Martin, the conflict between the strong and the weak in the early church was rooted in the Hellenistic view of the body, a pinion of social harmony based on hierarchy (163). The Hellenistic body ideology consists of two fundamental beliefs: (1) there is hierarchy in the human body; (2) there is cardinal continuity between human body and social body, and therefore, hierarchy is part of the natural social order (Martin 1995, 21). Some Greeks believed that parts of human bodies like the head were more important than other parts, and that the social body, a macrocosm of the human body, evidences similar qualities. Hence inequality and hierarchy are necessary elements of the social order. Tampering with this system could bring disaster to cosmic harmony, so the hierarchical boundaries between free and slave, between male and female, and between Greeks and non-Greeks, should be maintained.

Martin argues that this conception of the body is exactly what those upper-class members brought to the Corinthian church (70). On the other hand, the lower-class members, the weak at Corinth’s church, those who were attracted to a Christian gospel that proclaimed God’s love for all and one that challenged the existing social order, refused the continuation of social hierarchy by the upper-class members within

the church (Martin 1995, 86). Consequently, conflicts between the two groups were inevitable.

Paul envisioned a new community and opposed the hierarchical worldview of the upper-class members: He clearly and unambiguously took the side of the weak. He urged the higher-status Christians to change their attitudes in ways to support the position of the lower-status Christians. In other words, Paul advocated what upper-class ideology fears the most: Disruption of the hierarchical social order/body. He explicitly and implicitly emphasized that the Christian community is a new community in which no one seeks one's own honor, but, rather, one associates with the lowly and gives honor to others: "Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly; do not claim to be wiser than you are" (Romans 12:16 NRSV). It is an alternative, counterculture community in which all existing social cultural, religious, gender divisions, and differences should be overcome (Schüssler-Fiorenza 1983, 218).

Despite the fact that Paul's notion of Body of Christ was a radical and countercultural one that challenged the existing hierarchical social order, most Asian-American churches interpret the Body of Christ as a desirable fellowship *between* Christians or in-group members in the same community. Social accountability for non-Christians and outside members is rarely emphasized. As a result, a lack of interest in social justice typifies many Asian-American churches (Lee 2004b, 109). This also explains why an Asian-American presence is almost invisible in most LGBT ministries.

In sum, the body politics discussed in Asian-American churches are, unlike Paul's writings and intentions, highly spiritualized. The actual physical and sexual bodies of people sitting in the pews are rarely talked about. Instead focus is on the spiritualized body of Christ, a theological nebulosity that ignores the world in which it is situated.

FROM NULL CURRICULUM TO EXPLICIT CURRICULUM: PEDAGOGICAL STRATEGIES FOR THE TEACHING OF SEX, BODY, AND SEXUALITY IN ASIAN-AMERICAN CONTEXTS

Based on the prior analysis of null curriculum, I define the Asian-American approach to sexuality and body as a mystified one. It separates human sexuality from racial and ethnic identities, as though the two can actually be separate in people. Moreover, humans by definition

are tremendously sexual or else humankind would have stopped existing long ago. Homosexuality has been part of this sexual landscape from the get-go. Thus it is an intellectual oddity that Asian Americans pretend as though sexuality and homosexuality are foreign to their communal self-understanding.

So too, the uncritical Christian acceptance or tolerance of antiquated views about women's bodies and sexuality is startling and embarrassing because many women otherwise are leaders in business, academia, and politics. Portraying only men's bodies positively hurts both men and women's development, socially, psychologically, and spiritually; it makes it appear as though there is something wrong with over half of the world's population, when there straightforwardly is not. It also effectively encourages men to be oafish and women to be demur.

People need to form their identity, taking seriously the broad spectrum of human experience as mediated by women, men, gays, straights, bisexuals, and transgendered individuals. Moreover, Asian-American churches—those that spiritualize body politics disregarding real people and the sexuality that Paul talked about and that people in the pews struggle with—hereby present a smallish view of the cosmos that God loves (John 3:16). All these mystified assumptions and pretensions need to be demystified through religious education. Otherwise sexuality will always remain part of the null curriculum, not the explicit curriculum. Therefore I suggest the following.

First, a new definition of religious education is necessary. In most Asian-American churches, religious education is identified with Sunday school for children that study explicitly Christian contents and the Bible. The problem is that a fluency is seldom developed between the black and white of the Bible and the modern world. To broaden the scope of their understanding of religious education is necessary if we are to address sexuality as a part of religious education. For this, Thomas Groome's (1991) outline of religious education's spiritual chemistry is on the mark (11–14). Groome defines Christian religious education as an ontological and political activity, as well as a transcendental one. As we deal with the whole being of the people living in a real life context with sexual desires, understanding religious education in this way is crucial. With a broad definition of Christian religious education, people can see that who they are, what they are, where and how they live . . . that these are all part of religious education.

Second, the meaning and scope of curriculum also need to be redefined. If we want to address identity formation, which is crucial for ethnic minorities in the United States as a part of religious education,

it is necessary for Asian-American churches to redefine the concept of curriculum. In most Asian-American churches, curriculum has been understood as what Maria Harris calls explicit curriculum, one that basically teaches information in the Bible and little more. However, as real people struggling with real life issues, such as racism, sexism, and sexuality, it is important for Asian-American Christians to have critical perspectives on how to live justly in a racially and sexually hierarchical society like that of America. Especially because sexuality is an uncomfortable subject for most Asian Americans, addressing the topic in different ways beyond the Bible study textbooks is important. As Harris says, the church does not have a curriculum but is a curriculum itself (1989, 63). Fellowship meetings, informal gatherings, small group meetings, and so on need to be understood as curricula.

Third, challenging patriarchy and misogyny is an integral part of religious education in Asian-American communities. As examined in this article, misogyny is the foundational ideology of homophobia in Asian-American cultures. Without promoting women's full humanity and rights, there will be no justice for sexual minorities, and vice versa. Often in Asian-American justice education, anti-sexism is considered less important than the quest against racism. The stereotypical rhetoric is that, although the women's issue is important, it is not as urgent as racial justice, and thus the formula *urgency vs. importance*. The same rhetoric is used to justify the lack of concern about homophobia relative to sexism in Asian-American communities. However if we are serious about justice and peace, these issues should be dealt with side by side, not one after another. Without justice for the most marginalized people in the community, there is no complete justice.

Fourth, I suggest that different interpretations of Paul's Body of Christ should be introduced to Asian-American churches. As mentioned earlier, Paul's phraseology is understood in an extremely spiritualized way by Asian-American Christians. Here also the context, real life struggles, views of sexuality and sexual activities, and other conflicts of the early church should be introduced to Asian-American churches. Because Asian-American churches use the Body of Christ as an ideal image of the church, studying this notion from a different perspective is particularly important. The study also can bring the topic of sexuality and homosexuality to the surface more naturally because Paul's letters explicitly mention them.

Fifth, to bring the subject of sexuality and sexual identity (i.e., sexual personhood as not separate from ethnic identity) to Asian Americans, Asian-American churches need to be more creative in

terms of teaching materials. I personally find that using popular media is very helpful because of its explicit use of sexual themes. Particularly, Margaret Cho's stand-up comedy show, *I Am the One that I Want* is excellent for Asian-American contexts. Cho, a Korean-American woman, was a star in "All American Girl," a sitcom that featured TV's first Asian-American family. In her film, Cho addresses sexuality as a part of who she is, and she also talks about why her TV show lasted only one season (ABC 1994–1995 season): she was not "Asian enough" by ABC TV's standard. Some popular media are already dealing with ethnic and sexual identity issues in more integrated ways. Such texts may give new insights to Asian-American religious education.

Sixth, for a specific pedagogical process of body, sex, and sexuality education in Asian-American faith communities, that is, to move sexuality discourse from null curriculum to explicit curriculum, I find Robert Kegan's work very helpful and insightful. Kegan, a constructive developmental psychologist and an educator, suggests that through an ongoing (evolutionary in Kegan's term) interaction with others and our physical/cognitive/cultural environments, human beings develop an authentic sense of who they are, and construct their truth accordingly. Concretely, Kegan suggests a three-way meaning-making process: Confirmation, Contradiction, and Continuity (1982, 113–132). Confirmation is when a particular environment corresponds and supports the meaning-making system that people already have. When new experiences, events, and opinions conflict with these worldviews, people are then challenged to transform their current meaning-making system. Kegan calls this contradiction. When people face contradictory events and contexts, they either emotionally isolate themselves to maintain their existing framework, a process that Kegan deems unhealthy, or else they incorporate new meaning through which they conjoin both "old" and "new" realities. Kegan says that continuity is this process of incorporation. This threefold dynamic provides insights for religious education for justice and peace, including sexuality education in Asian-American communities.

The dynamic of confirmation makes it critical for educators to meet people where they are and to acknowledge their current meaning-making system. This means that in sexuality education for Asian-Americans, it is important to be sensitive about about people's dis-ease and to analyze the long-lived Asian-American taboo toward discussion about sexuality. If educators rush to contradiction emphasizing discussion without affirmation and analysis, many Asian Americans will

perceive the educational event itself as criticism of their own being and culture.

The dynamic of contradiction suggests that educators need to create moments for students to critically reflect on their current meaning-making systems. In Asian-American sexuality education, challenging students to revisit ideological foundations of Asian body politics might be one example. However, and due to the nature of the topic, educators particularly need to be creative about this process. In my own praxis, I find it helpful to use Asian-American films that present sexuality as an issue. Through stories in films, educators can help students to be less reactive, simultaneously inviting them to critically reflect on their current views of sexuality; to offer different perspectives and interpretations; and encourage them to wrestle with old and new ideas.

The dynamics of continuity help students to integrate their old and new worldviews and to cultivate a new meaning-making system. This continuity helps students see that their new perspectives are in continuity with old ones. In Asian-American sexuality education, this means that students do not have to separate racial/ethnic identity from sexual identity. Both are integral parts of who they are. They do not have to abandon their Asian cultural heritage to challenge homophobia. They can be a Christian and a Confucian at the same time.

Separation of sexual identity from Asian-American identity and mystifying real people's issues by using religious language, add another form of subordination to the heap of inequalities that Asian Americans already experience. So for the church to pay explicit attention to sexuality and homosexuality is long past due and is a matter of justice. Justice is nebulized when Asian religious education emphasizes justice and peace, while ignoring sexual minorities and the inferior status decreed to women. After all, the human (and thus theological) record plainly states that we all are sexual beings whether we admit it or not.

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