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# CONTEMPLATIVES IN ACTION AS INSTRUMENTS OF PEACE

## 冥想作为促进和平的工具

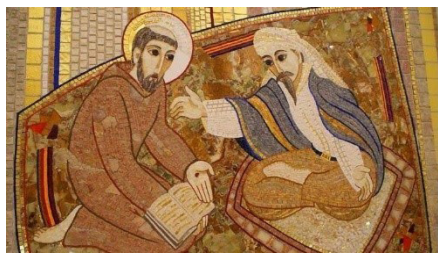
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NATALIE ROSS 娜塔莉·罗斯

### ABSTRACT

What follows is a precis of a larger work that invites us to consider how institutions can be instruments of peace following on from what contemplatives must teach peacemakers. In 2022 the world continues to face a pandemic during the roll out of the United Nations 2030 *Agenda for Sustainable Development* and China's *Belt and Road Initiative* 2049. History has taught us that geographical peace promotion supersedes ideology; the Silk Road attests to that. Peace becomes a matter of survival. The intended audience for this paper is general readers interested in peacemaking. The challenge is for all of us to continue to process what went before, in order to change the future. The infrastructure requires analysis and evaluation and that means, East and West must continue to communicate in specific global ways for an ongoing and effective peace process.

The *Peace Prayer of St Francis* first appeared in a French publication in the early 1900's and though it was attributed to St Francis of Assisi, he likely did not write it. The writer was seeking from textual sources, pure behavioural intent. Such an intent which is received by many people of different political and spiritual origins is like an anamnesis, an empowering recollection. The image of St Francis of Assisi meeting with the Sultan of Egypt has re-inspired many since the release of *Fratelli Tutti* (2020). Perhaps this meeting earlier inspired the writer of the *Prayer of St Francis* during a time when France signed treaties with Fez, and millions were impacted by their complex economic interactions in Africa and Europe? Whilst the 20<sup>th</sup> century author of *the Peace Prayer of St Francis* likely wasn't thinking of scientific instrumentalism, the word entered our lexicon some time before, and the point is the discipline of contemplative action – especially as instrumentalism, becomes the possibility for increasing novel life in the face of adversity. This is a method, that contemplation as a form of instrumentalism is a model for individuals and institutions. But how?



St Francis of Assisi with the Sultan of Egypt

The divide between those with access to technology and those without, is one argument about poverty indicators, but we also need to address the impact of manufacturing and distributing the demand for technology upon the planet. We can juxtapose spiritual instrumentalism with Bob Allen's work on *Technology and Divergence* and begin to get a sense for how such a connection might serve humanity in

addressing the spiritual deserts in our unequal global society. People comprise institutions. Mitigating hubris incorporates processing that where conflict finds individuals are not capable of understanding, the social responsibility of the contemplative individual and the pedagogical role of institutions for peace promotion is to act to give agency to those who don't understand. Such is the case for institutional process which is pedagogical by nature. That involves changing dominant discourse, augmenting language to redirect marginalisation at those who act against peace promotion, and instead valuing spiritual poverty as the dominant discourse. Such methodology requires temperance, not just to transform scientific method, but political, economic, spiritual and pedagogical methods and their impact on land and peoples. The task of the contemplative is to maintain the vigilance to which the *St Francis Peace Prayer* alludes, whilst this temperance involves spiritual practise, and interlocution as an observable phenomena in the world. We can explore what contemplatives teach us about immanent critique by observing, for example, St Ignatius' writings on Discernment.

Mystics have contemplated their place in the world for centuries, and perhaps the spiritual space of 13<sup>th</sup> century Assisi beckoned the heart of the writer in early 20<sup>th</sup> century France as much as Assisi calls us today, especially as regards our connection to land. For whilst the

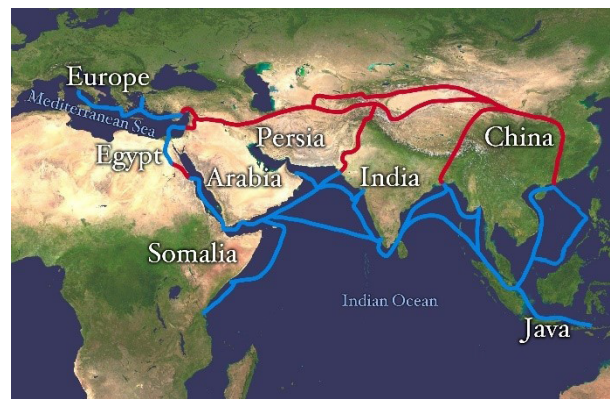
“The social responsibility of the contemplative individual and the pedagogical role of institutions for peace promotion is to act to give agency to those who don't understand. Such is the case for institutional process which is pedagogical by nature.”

Enlightenment may be over historically, we are yet to be enlightened as to how to heal from it. Contemplation is a skill that spans the world, it does not discriminate, even among non-believers. Pope Francis began his pontificate with the publication of *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) which is highly relevant to this discussion. For example, the Silk Road first existed as Taoist commerce which we have forgotten today and the cultural movement of poetry from the corridors of Greece to Iran via the Silk Road brought with it, a developing pedagogical blending of Taoist and Buddhist literary meditation in the Far East when, by the Tang Dynasty, *Gong'an*s were developed by teachers to instil spiritual lessons for students; these signifying prompts beckoned from the listener, a response, via contemplative reflection which hopefully aided the student to be illumined. In the Ignatian spiritual tradition the contemplative space, between the desire for absolute connection, is in the realm of the Holy Spirit who works through each of us. The *Lectio Divina* is a starting point for Jesuits and others, individual and communal discernment offers a contemplative path for personal and institutional change. But inherent in the desire for perfection is the reality that there is no utopia, we are humans, and the wisest of contemplatives is disciplined, yet flexible. Developing contemplative wisdom thus requires pedagogical skills. But what does this look like in political, economic and pedagogical institutional contexts?

Change how you see and see how you change –  
Chinese proverb.

The Silk Road opened doors for more than centuries of poetry used here as an important spiritual segue. Ideological colonization across Asia produced diplomacy that often-perpetuated stagnated institutional behaviour across Asia neglecting the realities of poverty. Competing political ideologies impacted every part of Asia, along the Silk Road and beyond to the

Americas. These ideologies are that which we need to mediate today, but how? Educational systems became proponents of them, rather than tools for peace promotion and prosperity. How can the West communicate with Asia's *Belt and Road Initiative (BRI)*, for example? Especially regarding development on continents like Africa. Both the *2030 Agenda* and the *BRI 2049* need to address economy, climate change, energy, water, health, space, security (terrestrial and maritime, aerospace) ... We need unbiased environmental impact statements, critiques of corporate social responsibility and sustainability across sectors.



The Silk Road

It requires quality control and accountability infrastructure. It must happen multilaterally and be inclusive of civilians not in positions of economic power. But how? The answer is in *quality development* economy, as an instrument for peacemaking. But we need to shift how we value the use of technology, how we engage in risk which is an indicator for change like conflict.

...the new technology was most appropriate for the factor prices and other circumstances of the rich countries doing the inventing. (Allen 2010: 6)

In 2005 Secretary General of the UN, Kofi Annan, instigated reform at the UN which had become complicated, divided. The Office of Internal Oversight Services was established to review mandates older than five years. Boutros Boutros Ghali's *Agenda for Peace* in 1992 was

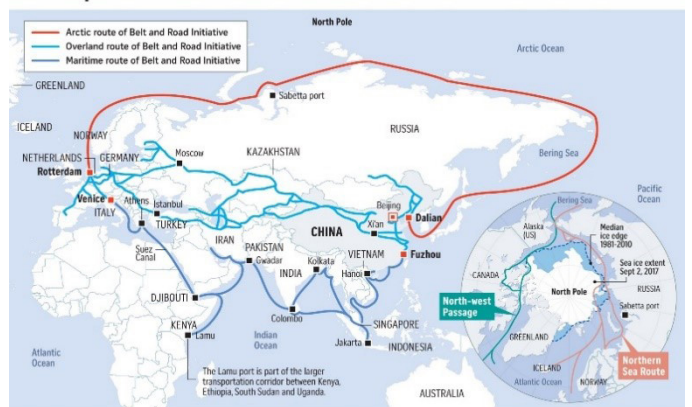
later followed by Kofi Annan's *Millennium Declaration* in 2000 which later developed further the *2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)*. Through the structures that already exist and require reform we must engage in immanent critique. For just as the UN requires further reform, so too do all parties to the UN such as the IMF and World Bank which incorporate the East and West and this involves better communication between grassroots and leaders, clearer evidence and communication of criteria for grassroots to be supported.

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The UN held World Statistics Day in 2020 with the slogan, “Connecting the world with data we can trust” because the UN recognizes one atrocity committed against the vulnerable is statistical bias. The planet needs mathematical reform. It's not just the politics of sovereignty that defines conflict in a world with a global economy.

Data analysts require hordes of reliable, unbiased data. The IMF and World Bank both publish its data for 'citizen economists'. To take the similar goals of the *BRI*, their funding

### China's polar extension to Silk Road



NOTE: September is the end of summer in the North Pole when the frozen lid of sea ice tends to shrink to its smallest. Unlike the Antarctica, there is no land under the frozen Arctic ice. Sources: CHINA'S NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND REFORM COMMISSION, THE ARCTIC INSTITUTE, NATIONAL SNOW AND ICE DATA CENTRE, REUTERS, STRATIS TIMES GRAPHICS

### The Belt and Road Initiative 2013-2049

sources, investment modelling and *Agenda 2030* to a point of peace promotion, both agendas require economic reform assessed in terms of their human and environmental impact. We need to create criteria for global databases to aid in the redirection of economies to transform institutions based on the political, economic, scientific and pedagogical dimensions. The SDGs are a guide. It requires criteria that does not data mine with generalisation but upholds the dignity and identity of cultures and groups represented. This is not one order but a plurality with a goal of peace promotion and human rights. It is not poverty that radicalises.

Customary Humanitarian International Law bind all states in the event of armed conflict. It is recognized by established patterns of peoples on the land where there is no written tradition. Treaties are instruments for international law under the *Vienna Convention of the Law of Treaties* which is ratified by numerous states and is used as an instrument to regulate treaties. Where there are no treaties between states, here, customary law prevails for peacemaking. *The Vienna Convention on the Law of Treaties Between States and International Organisations or Between International Organisations* needs more signatories to ratify it. We have the framework, we need to keep using it, consciously.

The role of the International Law Commission is (among other things), to establish principles for the interpretation of the *Vienna Convention of the Law of Treaties* which provides space for parties to treaties to change via interpretations of customary law. Today there are numerous global problems with the concepts of sovereignty and treaty. What is required is a review of treaties among all states. Firstly, further implementation of Kofi Annan's UN reform through The Office of Internal Oversight Services and scrutiny of data pertaining to the *SDGs* and the *BRI* as they pertain to conventions on air, space, water, sea, land and human rights in those areas. Conciliation commissions and arbitration can be used for this process where customs override nations in conflict. We are custodians, not exploiters. Making Peace means to cease exploitation, to build on what we've begun as a planet that recognizes the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)*.

One point of conflict for treaty makers is the concept of spiritual connection to land. The fact that each human being shares in a common creation binds us to an ideal of humanity recognised in the UDHR. Religious freedom discourse requires appropriate human rights frameworks and criteria to free indigenous spirituality from colonizing ideology that clashes with the creation stories of major established religions, some of which are indigenous anyway. Indigenous people have the potential to express their legal identity through the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues where they can articulate specific customary laws which pertain to people who know their connection to land and their lore. These are not perfect legal systems either, but an instrument for peace promotion from hordes of locations where there is turmoil. Consider the *Convention on the Law of the non-Navigational uses of International Watercourses 1997* and its impact on water in Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, China and other nations close by. How can customary laws be used

in peaceful arbitration that will respect humanity and land?

Conflict signifies a breakdown in interlocution. Where indigenous corporations have engaged the jurisdictions of private international law, *conflict of law* is a broadening area of global arbitration for private investment. Perhaps that connection to land is less sacred, and more a matter for custodianship – sacred knowledge is customary law and subject to patency and intellectual property boundaries which delineate clear identity differences between indigenous groups with connection to land. Those boundaries mediate human and environmental impact statements on development initiatives in politics, science, economics and pedagogy. Today we manage supranational legal systems such as Europe's, in response to treaty conflicts, and in turn these systems must dialogue via international law with the East. We need to further develop the infrastructure for continued action for peace.

We must approach such efforts, inspired by our ongoing anamnesis of St. Francis of Assisi's Peace Prayer. Always remember that "A single sunbeam is enough to drive away many shadows."



NATALIE ROSS, Ph.D

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