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“An Intercultural Interpretation of Integral Human Development and Chinese Wisdom Traditions: Implications to End-of-Life Care”

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Introduction

- ***Ageing trend in HK: above 65 - 32% rise by 2041***
- ***Culture & values of Confucianism, Buddhism & Daoism***
- ***Empowering end-of-Life care from Despair to Hope***
- ***Adopting the concept of “Integral Human Development” (IHD) from Catholic social teaching and its interpretation of Chinese wisdom traditions***

圓融生命發展

Spirituality of Integral Human Development
for Ageing in Hong Kong:



Research Objective

To enrich the theological reflection of Spirituality of Ageing in Hong Kong as a process of Integral Human Development from an intercultural and interfaith approach.

Research Questions

- What is the Spirituality of Integral Human Development, and how may it be understood and interpreted in the HK's Ageing journey?
- How the intercultural and interfaith belief/practice enable the Spiritual journey of Ageing in HK?

Methods

- A qualitative inquiry with narrative analysis
- Focus on personal narrative, identity and self based on repertoire of stories and voices
- Semi-structured interview designed to cover relevant contents

2020 - 2023 Progress

Stage 1: Design the conceptual framework and research

Stage 2: Commence the research fieldwork and analyse data for findings

Stage 3: Review and complete the final research

Empowering end-of-life care: Despair to Hope through IHD

Objectives:

- ***Qualitative study of inter-disciplinary service providers and caretakers for end-of-life care***
- ***Adopting concept of Spirituality of Ageing, Integral Human Development & Intercultural***
- ***Contributing new element to integral ageing and end-of-life in an intercultural context of Hong Kong***

Focus of presentation

- ***Core Concepts***
- ***Integral Human Development and the Chinese interpretation***
- ***Insight and significance***
- ***Implications to end-of-life care***

*Spirituality
of Ageing:
to End-of-Life*


*Integral Human
Development:
Relevance to
End-of-Life*

*Intercultural
Dimension:
Fulfilled Life*

Core Concepts

Spirituality of Ageing

*The existential constructs of **spirituality and personal meaning** in helping older adults to **transcend old age** and sustain wellbeing is important to help elders identify their individual **sources of spirituality** and empower them to provide **meaningful interpretations of their lives.***



*Spirituality
of Ageing
towards
End-of-Life*

- *Koenig (1988): **spiritual factors** increase near death*
- *McKinlay (2004): **ultimate meaning** of life, self-transcendence, **intimacy** with God & others, from fear to **hope***
- *John Cottingham (2012): ageing is a **process of “finding” identity** in lifetime & full integration of whole self*
- *Gerard Hughes, S.J. (1999): Ignatian spirituality - face the inevitability of death. **Finding God in all things** in fragility*


Catholic Social Teaching IHD: ***Relevance to End-of-Life***

- ***Cardinal Turkson (Director of Dicastery Promoting IHD):***

“At **later life**, we’ve experienced all things still longing for an **integral life** which can bring us spirit and joy in the process of **progress, development and maturity**”

- ***Pope Francis:***

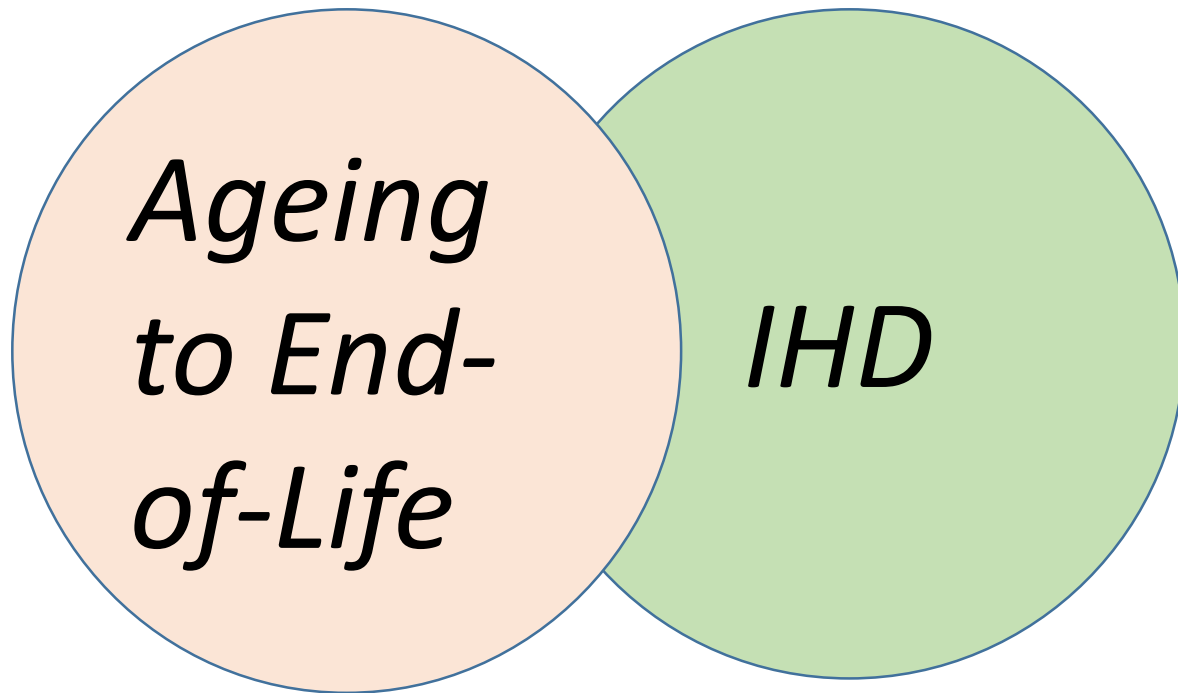
“Elderly as “**Bearers of memory**” and “**witnesses to the culture**” of society”



*Integral
Human
Development*

- *Human development integrates **different dimensions**: theological, spiritual, psychological, sociological, political, economic and ecological*
- ***Holistic development** of the human person, covering **all aspects of life**: social, economic, political, cultural, personal, and spiritual*
- ***“Integral”** is the **key** to the whole concept of IHD especially in appreciating the process of **ageing & development in later stage of life***

Relevance of IHD to Ageing & End-of-Life



- *Becoming Process*
- *Everything is connected*
- *Quality of life*
- *Integral & Wholeness*

***Intercultural Dimension:
IHD interpreted in
Chinese cultural traditions***

“Integral” Chinese roots

Etymological analysis

- **Chinese translation of “Integral” 圓融: entrenched in ancient Chinese culture, Buddhism & Confucianism**
- **Yuan 圓: (round, circle) Buddhist: nature, water, fire, wind covering all**
- **Rong 融: (dissolve, assimilated) interconnected, fully assimilated**
- **Yuanrong 圓融: fullness of Buddhism in letting all things go, fully interconnected & assimilated in nature**

IHD concept Chinese translation

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- ***Chinese concept implies an **all-rounded** way of **self-actualization** through a sound relationship with **self, the others, the world and nature*****
- ***Full & harmonious fulfilment of life as individual, society and nature, integrated in **personal & spiritual** ways of living***
- ***Reconcile & transcend contradictions and conflicts***

***“Yuanrong”*: commonly used in Chinese traditions**

- ***Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism interacting & connecting one another***
- ***“Yuanrong”*: commonly used interchangeably in Confucianism, Buddhism, Daoism, esp. Song and Ming Dynasties between 11th to 17th century**
- ***Confucianism absorbed important elements from Daoism and Buddhism developing “Neo-Confucianism”***

Spiritual interpretation of “Integral” in Confucianism

- *Confucian Scholar Tu Weiming: advocate “**Spiritual humanism**” in Confucianism to describe spiritual dimension of Confucian humanism*
- *Integrated vision for humanity in 21th C: **self, community, nature, heaven***
- *Spiritual humanism: fruitful interaction of self & community, sustainable harmonious relationship of human species & nature, mutuality between **human heart & way of heaven***

***Insights from Intercultural
dimension of IHD***

Insights from Intercultural dimension of IHD

- ***Reconcile Suffering and Tension in Ageing process***
- ***Process of Becoming & Experiencing***
- ***Everything is Connected in Harmony***
- ***Familial & Intergenerational Harmony***
- ***God vs Heaven & Humanity***

***Significance to End-of-Life
- when IHD & Chinese Yuanrong
placed together interculturally***

Ageing to End-of-Life: transcend suffering and struggle

- ***Reality of disequilibrium, productivity, human nature...the neglected, marginalized***
- ***IHD & Yuanrong: connecting positive & negative experiences of life like struggle, pain, suffering, despair in life***
- ***Discover hope when connecting with God, heaven, humanity.....***

Spiritual Strength to Wholeness

- ***Transcend through Spirituality of IHD & Yuanrong***
- ***Christianity: connect self, reconcile past, return to the Creator & respond to divine calling***
- ***Confucianism: Spiritual Humanism, humanity and heaven***
- ***Buddhism: letting go, compassion of self & others***

Significance of Intercultural dimension of IHD

- ***IHD & Yuanrong: reveal ultimate meaning in life stories, conflicts, tensions, relationship with self, others, God, heaven***
- ***Empowerment from intercultural Spiritual dimension***
- ***Insights to develop an Integral & holistic Ageing in later life***

Summary

- *Spirituality of Ageing towards End-of-Life in relation to Catholic teaching of IHD*
- *Intercultural richness - IHD from the West be enriched and interpreted in Chinese culture & lens of Confucianism, Buddhism & Daoism*
- *Insights to End-of-Life Care*

Implications to social work, health care spiritual care & policy makers

- ***Elderly in End-of-Life: appreciate values for IHD & inner spiritual needs, reconcile shadows & transcend fragility***
- ***Caretakers/Companions in End-of-Life: appreciate spiritual needs of the elderly behind their physical challenges***
- ***Policy makers: more holistic & intercultural understanding of spiritual needs of elderly & caretakers***

Potential Contributions in end-of-life: from Suffering to Hope

- ***Meaning of an Integral Ageing/end-of-life in intercultural context***
- ***New perspective in reconciling ageing challenges, find meaning & generating hope through IHD***
- ***Knowledge & Practice from research integrating theology, culture & spirituality in ageing in HK***

Thank You