This article is the second in a series originating from the main goal of our journal EXCHANGE: the global interaction between Asian, African, Latin American theologies and the European centres of theological research. Like the first chronicle\(^1\) this one will present a personal selection of themes and trends on the basis of the more than 80 journals available in the library of IIMO in Utrecht. With some exceptions we will concentrate on the issues of 1994 and the first half of 1995.

In the socio-economic context of Asian theologies one word seems to prevail in many writings: the globalization of the economy. As if the symptom never had existed! As if, besides nationalistic imperialism, global capitalism was not the originator of the colonial system! In this period of the early 1990's globalization is often described as a new phenomenon.\(^2\) It certainly is no longer the colonial or post-colonial 'east-bound' affair. The 'new tigers' of East and Southeast Asia have the feeling that they are not only the objects, but also among the main actors in this global game. Even in India the topic is discussed by its citizens with some eagerness, and also with some new feeling of national pride. Will political rhetoric make place for economic realities? And will the last be more successful than the former? The pessimistic views of the 1960's, when Gunnar Myrdal published his *Asian Drama: an inquiry into the poverty of nations*, three volumes filled with sad stories of conflicts, corruption and decline, are substituted by new hope based on accounts of 7\% and higher economic growth during the last decade. The Christian reaction to this economic discourse of growth, is often spiced with critical remarks, resulting from the prophetic perspectives of the preferential option for the poor, but also from the religious concern with spirituality in a climate of 'fast growing economies'. We do not meet here the great stories of revolution, but rather the modest proposals for minor though important corrections.

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2 See, however, Felix Wilfred, "No Salvation outside Globalization? Some theological Reflections on a Modern Economic Dogma", *Jeevadhara*, 80-92, where he states that only the word is of rather recent origin, not the reality.
Another major theme in contemporary Asian theological discourse is the inter-religious dialogue. Here, too, no great stories of the synthesis between the great religions of the world, but rather the new interest in popular religion, in spiritual aspects of local cultures and also some anxiety for developments towards fundamentalism in all religions of the world, including christianity. — For the sake of clarity, we arrange our material in geographical order, following five of the main countries of the area.

**Japan’s Pain and Distress**

One of the first products of ‘indigenous’ or ‘local’ theology of Japan in the 1960’s was the *Theology of the Pain of God.*3 It was a highly sophisticated, but also somewhat abstract dialogue between the Buddhist and Christian concepts of pain and suffering. Also the discussions related to the work of Nishida Kitaro and the Kyoto school of philosophy deal with the more theoretical dialogue between Japanese Buddhism and Christian theology and philosophy. As if the more down to earth spirit of the 1990’s also touched upon Japanese theology, we observe now more concrete theological thinking on the suffering of special groups. Several Japanese theological journals pay attention to the position of women, without doubt also in response to the worldwide struggle to improve their position. THE JAPAN CHRISTIAN REVIEW elaborated the theme of women’s issues in its vol. 59 (1993). Shinto, Buddhism and Christianity, all three religions show aspects of sexism, but one of the major scapegoats certainly is the concept of *ie* (family, house, home, also ‘a direct lineage with unbroken continuity from the past, having the concept of a kind of identity spanning every generation’, p. 9-10). Only shamanist religion is dominated by women, serving a clientele mainly consisting of women. Some communities of charismatic Christianity hold healing services, in some aspects resembling shamanism. In the case of Okinawa Christian Evangelical Center, however, there is still a continuation of male leadership and of traditional family values, including the subordination of women (ibid. 76). This same continuation of the gender roles is stressed and questioned by Yamashita Akiko:

I think we can say that in the Japanese Church, two churches are functioning side by side, the men’s (“front”) and the women’s (“back”). Of course a great number of zealous women’s society members will deny they have ever experienced sexual discrimination. In fact they may be the great majority. Completely and utterly devoted to a “back” so big it is outsized,

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