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Confucian Ethics in Retrospect and Prospect

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Edited by
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Introduction

Vincent Shen

The original Chinese term for “Confucianism“ was “*rujia*” (儒家), a term which first appeared only late in the “*Records of the Grand Historian*” (completed around 100BCE) of Sima Qian (司馬遷 145-86BCE) in the former Han Dynasty. Nevertheless, it was formed as a school already in the pre-Qin era. Historically speaking, *ru* (儒) were those people who served, in the Spring and Autumn period in ancient China, as officials of middle range related to education and public rites. In the later Spring and Autumn period, they lost their office and earned their livelihood as teachers of rites and ritual coordinators. “Confucius“, the latinization of Kong Fuzi (Master Kong), refers to Kong Qiu 孔丘, also know as, Zhongni 仲尼, who served more or less the same function, though he was most influential because of teaching the largest number of students (3000 students according to the legend), having systematically organized his teaching materials, and, most importantly, laying a philosophical foundation for rituals and Chinese civilization by their transcendental derivation from *ren* to *yi* to *li*.

Confucius (551-479BC), seen as the founder of classical Confucianism, was followed in its second phase by his grand son Zisi (493-406BC), to be developed by Mencius (371-289BC), and in the third phases by Xunzi (298-238BC). Xunzi’s idea of Heaven as Nature and his combination of *li* (ritual) with *fa* (law), was followed by most Confucians in Han Dynasty to serve emperors and to reinforce political stability of the state. Dong Zhongshu (c179-c104BC) was responsible for making Confucianism the state ideology of Han Dynasty. Unfortunately, since the end of later Han Dynasty, Confucianism became dormant and less influential for intellectuals who were led away first by Neo-Daoism and then by Chinese Mahayana Buddhism.

After Centuries of silence, Confucianism began to revive in the North Sung Dynasty as “Neo-Confucianism“, which developed through three lines of thought. First, from the five masters of North Sung Dynasty, such as Zhou Dunyi (1017-1073AD), Zhang Zai (1020-1077) Shao Yung (1011-1077AD), Cheng Hao (also known as Cheng Mingdao 1032-1085) and Cheng Yi (also known as Cheng Yichuan 1033-1107), to Zhu Xi in the South Song Dynasty; this line could be called the Neo-Confucianism of the Realist Type. Second, from Lu Xiangshan (1139-1193) to Wang Yangming (1472-1529); this line could be called Neo-Confucianism of the Idealist type. Third, thinkers from late Ming Dynasty to mid Qing Dynasty, such as Wang Fuzhi (1619-1692) Yan Yuan (1635-1704), Li Gong (1659-1733), Dai Zhen (1723-1777), etc.; this line constituted Neo-Confucianism of the Naturalist type.

This is only a very schematic presentation of Confucianism in Chinese History, abstracted from its very rich historical, philosophical and everyday meanings for the Chinese people. Indeed, Confucianism, both as a way of life and as a system of ideas, has been developing for some 26 Centuries, and is still developing in China, East Asia and even throughout the world. It has long been spreading in Europe, North and South Americas, Africa, Australia, and other parts of the world. This is not only because of the increasing Chinese Diaspora and cultural exchange, but also from the local interest of all these areas. It is worth mentioning that, recently in China, the idea of “governance by virtue” of Jiang Zheming, former President of China, and the guiding policy of “Building Up a Harmonious Society” proposed by Hu Jintao, current President of China, both belong to the Confucian political program. In today’s context of globalization, there is always a need to delve into the depth of Confucian thought and practice, not only for the purpose of understanding the cultures in the areas under its influence, but also for drawing resources of spiritual values that might be helpful for solving problems in today’s world. For these reasons Confucianism is always an important subject for East Asian Studies and China Studies in North America, and it is not surprising to see the recent emergence of a group of distinguished American scholars, like Robert Neville, John Berthrong and others, who call themselves “Boston Confucians”.

American and Asian scholars gathered for the purpose of mutual understanding and deeper perception of what is at stake for Confucianism today, as to its method, history and fundamental values. Some highly respected and internationally renowned academic institutions organized the International Conference on “Confucianism: Retrospect and Prospect” which took place at the Department of East Asian Studies, University of Toronto, September 2-3, 2005. I’m most grateful to the co-sponsors of this conference: the Department of East Asian Studies, University of Toronto, represented by Professor Andre Schmid; the University of Toronto at Scarborough, represented by Professor Kown-loi Shun; National Taiwan University’s Center for Study on East Asian Civilizations represented by Professor Chun-chieh Huang; the Department of Philosophy of Singapore University, represented by Professor Alan K. L. Chan; and the Council for Research in Philosophy and Value, Washington D.C., represented by Professor George McLean.

This volume is the outcome of the synergy of this conference whose papers are divided into two parts. Those in the first part are related to Confucian Ethics in Historical Context; those in the second part are related to Confucian Ethics in Comparative Context and in Prospect.

The first part covers all major phases of the development of Confucianism. It starts with Professor Antonio Cua’s keynote speech on the virtues of *Junzi*. Using an analytical method and ethical theories, his paper presents a very comprehensive discussion of the virtues of Confucian paradigmatic individual, the *Junzi*, consisting of such interdependent

cardinal virtues as *ren*, *li*, and *yi*, and their dependent supportive or constitutive virtues. Professor Yuet-keung Lo's paper on "Teacher-Disciple, or Friends? – An Historico-Exegetical Approach to the *Analects*" discusses with subtlety the concept of *peng* (friend/disciple) in the *Analects*, integrating both philological and hermeneutic considerations. Professor Johanna Liu's presentation, "Music [*yue*] in Classical Confucianism: On the Recently Discovered *Xing Zi Ming Chu*", unfolds the rich meaning of the Confucian philosophy of music on three levels: sounds, aesthetics and self-cultivation/personality transformation, based on her analysis of the recently discovered bamboo slips text "*Xing Zi Ming Chu*" (Human Nature comes from Mandate). Professor Anh Tuan Nuyen's paper "Is Mencius a Moral Internalist?" argues, using the analytic method, that Mencius should not be considered only an internalist, for he takes into account also external factors. Professor Kim-chong Chong's "Xunzi and the Essentialist Mode of Thinking about Human Nature", in critically analyzing Professor Antonio Cua's consequentialist approach to Xunzi's theory of human nature as evil, makes it clear that Xunzi does not hold an essentialist theory of human nature.

As to the period of the Dynasties Wei and Jin, a period quite often neglected by Confucian scholars, we have fortunately an excellent paper presented by Professor Alan Chan, titled "Do Sages Have Emotions?" This discusses both historically and philosophically the concepts of *xin* (nature) and *qing* (feelings) of He Yan, Wang Bi and Guo Xiang under the influence of Daoism. This unfolds the philosophical and historical meaning of the proposition "The sage is forgetful of his own feelings" till its influence on the theory of emotion of Chen Hao in the North Song Dynasty. This paper leads us into the period of Neo-Confucianism developed in the Dynasties of Song and Ming. In this volume we have included Professor Huang Yong's "Neo-Confucian Political Philosophy: The Cheng Brothers on *li* (Propriety) as Political, Psychological and Metaphysical", and Professor Curie Virag's "Locating the moral self: emotions and human agency in Song Neo-Confucian thought" that discusses the concept of "*qing*" (feeling, emotions) in Zhu Xi's moral psychology. As to contemporary Confucianism, this volume included Professor Wing-cheuk Chan's "On Mou Tsong-san's Idealist Confucianism", updating us with the most recent development of Modern New Confucianism.

The second part of the book, related to Confucian Ethics in Comparative Context and its Prospect, consists either in bringing Confucianism to the larger context of comparison with Buddhism, such as Professor Yan Jinfen's "Between the Good and the Right: The Middle Way in Neo-Confucian and Mahayana Moral Philosophy", and to the context of East Asia. Korean Confucianism is represented by Professor Chen-feng Tsai's "Chong Yagyong's Four Books Learning," while Japanese Confucianism is represented by Professor Chun-chieh Huang's "Itô Jinsai on Confucius' *Analects*: A Type of Confucian Hermeneutics in East Asia". Included here also is Professor Cecilia Wee's paper that compares

Confucius with the Western thinker, Montaigne, entitled “Confucius on *li* and Montaigne on *Coustume*: A Reflection on Customary Practices and Personal Autonomy.” This part ends up with my “Globalization and Confucianism: Confucian Virtues of *Shu* and Generosity to the Other” which opens Confucianism to the future opened by the process of globalization.

It is also worthy of note that several philosophical methods are used in this book to discuss Confucianism, such as the analytic method and ethical theories used by Antonio Cua, Anh Tuan Nuyen, and Kim-chong Chong; the phenomenological and hermeneutic methods with postmodern reflections by Vincent Shen and Johanna Liu; philological and exegetical methods used by Yuet-keung Lo; the comparative method and methods of intellectual history used by Chun-chieh Huang, Tsai Chen-feng and Cecelia Wee. Despite the variety of methods, most of the papers presented here are concerned with ethical and axiological (such as aesthetic) dimensions of Confucianism. We may say therefore that methodology and ethics of Confucianism are the two major concerns of this volume.

I want to thank all the co-sponsors and authors of papers presented in the conference and published in this volume. It is their wisdom and their generosity that constitute the essence of this volume. In particular, I want to thank Professor George McLean, who has generously co-sponsored this conference by being willing to publish this volume. His wisdom and virtues have always given me an exemplar image of junzi, the Confucian paradigmatic individual. Also my special thanks go to Miss Hu Yeping, who’s careful arrangement and technical support have rendered an excellent assistance in the whole process of publication of this book.

At the end of this preface, I wish to note especially how sad it is for those who know Professor Antonio Cua that he passed away on March 27, 2007. This indeed was a great loss for the entire community of scholars in Chinese philosophy and Asian Studies. Antonio Cua was an inspiring teacher, a great scholar, an eminent philosopher, and most importantly, a junzi in the Confucian sense. The editors of this volume and the publisher would dedicate in his memory their efforts in publishing this volume.

Part I

Confucian Ethics in Historical Context

Chapter I

Virtues of *Junzi*

Antonio S. Cua (*Ke Xiongwen* 柯雄文)

INTRODUCTION

It is an honor and a privilege to present this keynote address. I am grateful to Professor Vincent Shen and the organizing committee of the International Conference on Confucianism for providing me this opportunity to present a portion of my recent work on Confucian ethics, focusing on the idea of *junzi* 君子 -- one of the main topics of interest in my early years of teaching. The other topic pertains to the logical character of Confucian dialogues. The *Lunyu* 論語 was my main subject of exploration. Subsequently, I devoted much effort in developing a Confucian moral philosophy, my writings range from the study of human nature, rituals, reasoning and argumentation, structure of basic Confucian concepts to the unity of knowledge and action. As I advance in years, I often thought of returning to Confucius's conception of *junzi*, because it seems to me that this conception offers a way to contribute to the recent revival of virtue ethics and, more importantly, the conception has inherent import, quite apart from its relevance to current problems and issues in moral philosophy or normative ethics. Building and expanding on some of my previous studies of *junzi* and Confucian ethics, I just completed a long manuscript entitled "The Virtues of *Junzi*." This paper draws from about a third of that text.

Throughout the *Lunyu*, we find frequent occurrence of certain terms such as *ren* 仁 (benevolence, humaneness), *li* 禮 (rules of proper conduct, ritual, rites), and *yi* 義 (rightness, righteousness, fittingness), indicating Confucius's ongoing concern with the cultivation of fundamental virtues.¹ The unsystematic character of Confucius's ethical thought in part reflects his emphasis on the concrete and the particular. Confucius made extensive use of notion of *junzi*, instead of principles, for explaining ethical virtues and instruction. Plausibly, Confucius's notion of *junzi* reflects his concern for flexibility in coping with changing circumstances. In this light, Confucius's ethical thought, unlike that of Mencius (Mengzi 孟子) or

¹ See Cua, "Reflections on the Structure of Confucian Ethics," *Philosophy East and West* 21, No. 2: 125-40, incorporated in *Dimensions of Moral Creativity* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978), chap. 4. For an extensive discussion of the conceptual framework of Confucian ethics, see *Moral Vision and Tradition: Essays in Chinese Ethics* (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1998), Essay 13.

Xunzi 荀子, is best characterized as an ethics of *junzi* or paradigmatic individuals.² In this paper I present a reconstruction of some principal aspects of Confucius's conception of *junzi*. I shall offer a way for sorting out the virtues in the *Lunyu*, with special emphasis on *ren* 仁 and *yi* 義 as a virtue of flexibility.

At the outset, let us note some different translations of *junzi*: “superior man“ (Legge, Chan, Bodde, Dubs), “gentleman“ (Waley, Lau, Watson), and “noble man or person” (Giles, Fingarette, Schwartz, de Bary)³. Since there is no English equivalent, *junzi* is best left untranslated. In any case, for Confucius, as well as Mencius and Xunzi, *junzi* expresses an ideal of a cultivated, ethical character. Although more explanation is needed to avoid misleading interpretations, the various translations of *junzi* may be viewed as valuable attempts to bring forth the translator's own appraisal of the salient features of this ideal of ethical character in a way that will be intelligible to English readers. Thus, we may regard *junzi* as a sort of *emphatic* term that, in context, serves to accentuate certain ethically desirable and commendable virtues (*meide* 美德) or qualities of an ideal person, in short, ethical excellences.

In general *junzi* is a paradigmatic individual who sets the tone and quality of the life of ordinary moral agents. A *junzi* is a person who embodies *ren*, and *yi*, and *li*. Every person may strive to become a *junzi* in the sense of a guiding paradigmatic individual, rather than a *xiaoren* (small-minded person). There are of course degrees of personal ethical achievement, depending on the situation, character, ability, and opportunity of moral agents.

BASIC INTERDEPENDENT AND DEPENDENT VIRTUES: REN 仁, LI 禮, AND YI 義

Concern with the basic interdependent virtues of *ren*, *yi*, and *li* also involves particular dependent virtues such as filiality (*xiao* 孝),

² Cua, *Dimensions of Moral Creativity*, chap. 2-4.

³ Wing-tsit Chan, trans., *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1963); Arthur Waley, trans. *The Analects of Confucius* (New York: The Modern Library, 1938); D. C. Lau (trans). *Confucius: The Analects (Lun yü)* (Middlesex, England: Penguin, 1979); Burton Watson (trans), *Hsiün Tzu: Basic Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963). Lionel Giles, *Sayings of Confucius* (London: John Murray, 1907); Herbert Fingarette, *Confucius: The Secular as Sacred* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972); Benjamin Schwartz, *The World of Thought in Ancient China* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985); and Wm. Theodore de Bary, *The Trouble with Confucianism* (Cambridge, Mass and London, UK: Harvard University Press, 1991).

magnanimity (*kuan* 寬), trustworthiness (*xin* 信), and courage (*yong* 勇). These particular virtues are called dependent virtues in the sense that their ethical significance depends on connection with the basic, interdependent, cardinal virtues (henceforth, cardinals). Dependent virtues are not subordinate or logical derivatives of the basic virtues.⁴ The ethical significance of the particular dependent virtues is determined by *ren* and *yi*, since these are criteria of moral virtues.⁵ Of course, when *li* is invested with an ennobling function, it entails the presence of *ren* and *yi*.⁶ As Chen Daqi 陳大齊 maintains, what Confucius meant by *de* 德, in the sense of excellence or virtue, has to do with the product of the intersection of *ren* and *yi*. Thus both *ren* and *yi* may be said to be the constituent elements of *de*.⁷

⁴ The distinction between basic and dependent virtues is not the distinction between basic and subordinate virtues mistakenly attributed to me by Schoper, citing my earlier paper “Hsün Tzu and the Unity of Virtues” (Cua 1987). See Jonathan W. Schoper, “Virtues in Xunzi’s Thought” in *Virtue, Nature, and Moral Agency in the Xunzi*, edited by T. C. Kline and Philip J. Ivanhoe (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2000). For elaboration of the relation between basic, interdependent virtues and dependent virtues, see my *Moral Vision and Tradition*, Essay 13.

⁵ In *Dimensions of Moral Creativity*, I considered *ren* as an internal criterion of morality and *li* as the external criterion. Since the application of *li* as rules of propriety is determined by *yi*, *yi* can also be regarded as an internal criterion, as it is an exercise of judgment concerning the applicability of *li*. Moreover, “just as *jen* [*ren*] cannot be practiced without *li*, or the cultural setting, *jen* cannot be realized without *i* [*yi*], or the judgment of the relevance of *jen* and *li* in concrete situations of moral performance” (Cua 1978, 51-57, 67-69). In *Moral Vision and Tradition*, based on a modification of Chen Daqi’s work on *Lunyu*, I discussed the criteria for determining the central or fundamental concepts in the *Lunyu*. See Chen Daqi, *Kongzi xueshuo* 孔子學說 (Taipei: Zhengzhong, 1977).

⁶ See my “The Concept of *Li* in Confucian Moral Theory” in *Understanding the Chinese Mind: The Philosophical Roots*, edited by Robert E. Allinson (Hong Kong: Oxford University Press, 1989). For a more extensive account, see my *Moral Vision and Tradition*, Essay 13.

⁷ Chen Daqi elaborates *ren* and *yi* as constituents of *de* 德: “The core of *ren* is *ai* 愛 (affectionate concern), thus *ai* as the main concern of *ren*. The fundamental nature of *yi* is appropriateness (*yi** 宜), thus appropriateness is the main concern of *yi*. Consider *xin* 信 (trustworthiness or being true to one’s words). Because of affectionate concern for people, one will not allow people to be deceived. One’s words must be suited to the action, and action must be suited to the words. This is the core of *ren*. In order to abide by fairness (*zhongken* 中肯), and for the sake of obtaining good results, one should adhere to *xin* only if such adherence is appropriate and should not adhere to *xin* if such adherence is inappropriate. This is the fundamental nature of *yi*.” Chen goes on

For forestalling misunderstanding, let us note that dependent virtues are virtues, as they reflect personal merits, although their ethical significance is determined by their connection with one or more basic interdependent virtues (henceforth, cardinals). At issue is their ethical significance, not their value status as deserving of praise in appropriate non-ethical contexts. Also, their value status may be appreciated in the light of their function as specifications of the concrete significance of the cardinals, which are basically abstract general concepts. To borrow Xunzi's distinction, the cardinals, *ren*, *yi*, and *li*, are *gongming* 共名, or generic terms, and dependent virtues are *bieming* 別名 or specific terms, that is, terms that specify the concrete significance of the cardinals in particular contexts of discourse.⁸

For elaboration, we may appropriate Chen Daqi's distinction between complete or whole virtues (*quande* 全德) and partial virtues (*piande* 偏德). Cardinals (*ren*, *yi*, and *li*) are fundamental virtues. They may be said to be *quan* 全 or complete in the sense that their ethical value is intrinsic, rather than extrinsic. In this sense, *quande* 全德 are complete or whole (*quan* 全) virtues. Moreover, these cardinals are relevant to all situations of human life as our actions have always effects on others. On the other hand, *piande* 偏德 or partial virtues are so-called, because their ethical significance are limited, not only in their application to circumstances, but also insofar as their ethical value depends on connection

to distinguish *ren* and *yi* from particular virtues by way of the distinction between complete virtues (*quande* 全德) from partial or incomplete virtues (*piande* 偏德). The former are said to be "perfect virtues free from any defects whatsoever. If a virtue has the *ren* element but does not possess the *yi* element, it can only be called a partial virtue" (Chen *Kongzi xueshuo* 孔子學說, 230). Chen's distinction is quite different from my distinction between basic interdependent and dependent virtues, for at issue is not completeness or possession of both *ren* and *yi*, but the ethical significance of particular virtues. In other words, in the absence of the connection to *ren* and *yi*, particular virtues may have non-ethical values and may well be commendable from the prudential point of view, provided of course, they are not exercised contrary to *ren* and *yi*. As I will discuss shortly, Chen's distinction is valuable for elaborating my own.

⁸ For further discussion, see my *Ethical Argumentation: A Study in Hsün Tzu's Moral Epistemology* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), 42-43, *passim*; and "The Problem of Conceptual Unity in Hsün Tzu and Li Kou's Solution," *Philosophy East and West* 39, No. 2 (1989): 115-34; incorporated in *Human Nature, Ritual, and History: Studies in Xunzi and Chinese Philosophy*. (Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 2005). Note that Chen Daqi employs the same distinction in distinguishing "whole" and "partial virtues."

with the cardinals. Here, again, we may invoke Xunzi's distinction between *dao* as a whole and its various *pian* 偏 or aspects. Xunzi is critical of some thinkers, not because they espoused faulty or irrational doctrines, but because they comprehend only partial aspects of the *Dao*. Mozi 墨子, for example, rightly appreciates the importance of uniformity, but he fails to attend to the value of diversity; Songzi 宋子 rightly appreciates the value of having few desires, but he fails to see the value of having many desires.⁹ Says Xunzi, "*Dao* embodies constancy, but encompasses all changes. A single corner is insufficient to exhaust its nature."¹⁰

In the *Lunyu*, we do find some of Confucius's remarks that mention both cardinals and dependent virtues in the same contexts, for example, *ren* 仁, *zhi* 知 (knowledge, wisdom), and *yong* 勇 (boldness or courage) in 14.28; *gong* 恭 (respectfulness), *zhong* (loyalty), *jing* 敬 (reverence), and *yi* 義 in 16.10; *li* 禮 and *zhong* 忠 in 3.19; *li* 禮, *yi* 義, and *xin* 信 (trustworthiness) in 13.4 and 15.18. Once it was reported that the Master taught four subjects: *wen* 文 (culture, cultural refinement), *xing* 行 (conduct of life), *zhong* 忠, and *xin* 信 (7.25).

For heuristic purposes, we may regard dependent virtues as belonging to two different clusters. One cluster consists of those that are closely related to one basic, cardinal virtue rather than another. Another cluster consists of "overlapping" dependent virtues in the sense that they seem especially germane to the practice of one or more cardinals. For convenience, let us introduce the distinction between supportive and constitutive virtues. Supportive virtues are virtues that are genial or helpful, though not necessary, to the development of the cardinals such as *ren*, *yi*, and *li*. Constitutive virtues, on the other hand, are those that are both supportive and constitutive of the quality of the cardinals actualized. In general, virtues can be admired and can also inspire ideal achievement when they are viewed as constitutive features of an achieved state of a person. However, detached from the governing guide of moral ideals, virtues are mere objects of praise that may not possess a transforming significance for moral agents.

Again the distinction between supportive and constitutive dependent virtues is not intended as a dichotomy. Depending on the character and temperament, what is merely a supportive trait in one person may be a constitutive virtue for another. *kuan* 寬 (magnanimity, generosity, broadmindedness), for example, may be constitutive for a person of mild temperament, but merely supportive for another who has an inordinate

⁹ <墨子有見以齊，無見以畸。宋子有見以少，無見以多>. See *Tianlun pian* 天論篇, 381.

¹⁰ <夫道者體常而盡變，一隅不足以舉之>, *Jiebi pian* 解蔽篇, 478. See also *Tianlun pian* 天論篇, 381.

self-confidence in the practice of *ren*. In the discussion below, although on occasion I propose a specific interpretation, the classificatory question is an open to alternatives. Moreover, the distinction is offered in a tentative spirit. Perhaps, on closer analysis, the distinction may have only a practical, not theoretical value, i.e., helpful to individual agent's reflection on how best to constitute his or her character, on which dispositions are the most congenial for development in the light of individual temperament and circumstance

Constitutive virtues are those that are integral parts of the state of *ren* achieved, and thus may be termed "integral virtues." Below I discuss briefly *junzi*'s basic qualities of character as embodying a concern with the Confucian cardinals and some supportive and constitutive virtues as a preliminary to dealing with Confucius's idea of the flexibility or adaptability of *junzi*.

REN 仁 AND DEPENDENT VIRTUES

Ren, in the broad sense, is Confucius's *dao* 道, his vision of the good, an *ideal theme* of concern for humanity. The term "ideal theme" is an appropriation of the notion of theme familiar in various linguistic contexts. Unlike ideal norms, ideal themes do not provide precepts, rules, directives, or principles for action.¹¹ They are ideal points of orientation that have an import for committed agents. Such terms as development, clarification, and expansion are thus quite at home in discussing ideal themes. Whereas in the case of ideal norms, terms such as application, compliance and extension are more appropriate.

Ren is like a theme in literary or musical composition, amenable to polymorphous, creative expressions, depending on the committed person's interpretation of the significance of the ideal for his or her life. Fundamentally, *ren* is the love of fellow humans (12.22), or affectionate concern for the well-being of humanity. Commitment to *ren* involves benevolence, that is, desire to do good to other as well as to "study the good of others."¹² As Confucius says: "The *junzi* helps others to realize their (ethically) praiseworthy qualities (*mei* 美); he does not help them to realize their bad qualities (*e* 惡). The small man does the opposite" (12.16).¹³ Contributory to and constitutive of the realization of *ren*, is the development of particular dependent, constitutive virtues such as *zhong* 忠

¹¹ For the distinction between ideal norm and ideal theme, see my *Dimensions of Moral Creativity*, chap. 8.

¹² See Francis Hutcheson, *An Inquiry Concerning Moral Good and Evil*, 158. This is Part II of *An Inquiry into the Original of Our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue; in Two Treatises* (London: J. and J. Knapton, et al, 1729); 158.

¹³ In this translation, I read *mei* as *meide* 美德, ethically admirable qualities or virtues.

and *shu* 恕. *Zhong* and *shu* are perhaps the most important constitutive or integral virtues of *ren*.¹⁴

Zhong 忠 is often translated as “loyalty, devotion,” sometimes, “doing one’s best.”¹⁵ For constructive interpretation, all these renderings may be used for indicating a unified conception if we adopt, say, Josiah Royce’s preliminary definition of “loyalty”: “The willing and practical and thoroughgoing devotion of a person to a cause.”¹⁶ “Thoroughgoing devotion to a cause” implies constancy (*heng* 恒) and doing one’s best to realize the cause or object of one’s devotion, that is, in doing one’s utmost with one’s whole heart and mind (*jinxin* 盡心) to realize the object of commitment (*jinzi* 盡己).¹⁷

As a self-regarding virtue, *zhong* implies a commitment to a self-governing standard for conduct. The object of one’s devotion may be another person. For example, when Fan Chi 樊遲 asked about *ren*, Confucius replied: “While at home maintain your respectful attitude (*gong* 恭); in handling affairs, be reverend (*jing* 敬); in dealing with others, be *zhong* 忠” (13.19). The object of *zhong* may be a person in a superior position. Thus, in one sense, to be *zhong* is to be loyal to someone superior

¹⁴ The interpretation proposed below is a reconstruction that makes no claim to being faithful to the original text. It draws some materials from two papers: “Confucian Vision and the Human Community,” *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 11, No. 3 (1984): 226-38; and “Reasonable Persons and the Good: Reflections on an Aspect of Weiss’ Ethical Thought,” in *Philosophy of Paul Weiss*, Library of Living Philosophers, edited by Lewis E. Hahn (LaSalle, IL: Open Court, 1995). Here I discuss *zhong* and *shu* as distinct, supportive and constitutive virtues of *ren*. This interpretation does not deal with *zhong-shu* as a pair, thus leaving open the interpretative issue. For a brief critical survey of different interpretations of *zhong* and *shu* as a related pair, see D. S. Nivison, “*Zhong* and *Shu* (Loyalty, Reciprocity).” *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*, edited by A. S. Cua (New York and London: Routledge, 2003). See also Nivison, “Golden Rule Arguments in Chinese Moral Philosophy” in D. S. Nivison, *The Ways of Confucianism: Investigations in Chinese Philosophy*, edited by Bryan W. Van Norden (La Salle, IL: Open Court, 1996).

¹⁵ See Lau, *Confucius*, Introduction, xv. Note that Confucius occasionally paired *zhong* and *xin* 信 (trustworthiness). *Xin* is also an important dependent virtue. For an informative, historical survey, see Kwong-loi Shun, “*Zhong* and *Xin*” in *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy*.

¹⁶ Adopting this definition implies no commitment to Royce’s conception of “loyalty to loyalty” as a supreme good. See Josiah Royce, *The Philosophy of Loyalty* (New York: Macmillan, 1920), 16-17.

¹⁷ Zhu Xi, *Sishu jizhu* 四書集註 (Hong Kong: Taipingyang, 1980), 23.

in the social, political hierarchy, especially to a ruler (2.20, 3.10, 12.14),¹⁸ for example, “The ruler should employ the services of his subjects in accordance with rites (*li* 禮). A subject should serve his ruler by *zhong*.” Notably, *zhong* also occurs in non-hierarchical sense (1.4, 7.23, 13.19, 16.10). When Zigong 子貢 asked about friendship, Confucius replied: “Advise them in the spirit of *zhong* and tactfully guide them” (12.23). It is important to note that the object of *zhong* is people in general; it is not confined to either one’s superior or equal.¹⁹ As a *ren*-dependent virtue, *zhong* is not a blind devotion to persons or matters of concern. Even a ruler’s conduct is also subject to criticism by subordinates (e.g., 13.15, 13.23). In Xunzi’s words, the standard for great conduct is to follow the *dao*, rather than the ruler and to follow *yi* 義 rather than the wishes of one’s father.”²⁰

Let us now turn to *shu* 恕, which expresses the idea of consideration of others. Viewed separately or together, *zhong* and *shu* involve reflection and judgment. *Zhong* expresses loyalty to and conscientious regard for the moral standard or the ideal of *ren*, i.e., an attitude of sincerity and seriousness in one’s commitment to *ren*; *shu* more especially pertains to other-regarding conduct. A commitment to *ren* is a commitment to realizing *ren* in the personal relations between oneself and another. *Shu* may be said to be “the golden rule” that governs the exemplification of the *ren* attitude. Zigong asked, “Is there a single word which can serve as a guide to conduct throughout one’s life?” The master said, “It is perhaps the word ‘*shu*.’ Do not impose on others what you yourself do not desire (*yu* 欲) (15:24).”²¹

In other words, to be guided by *shu* is to use “oneself as a measure in gauging the desires of others” -- an idea expressed in *Lunyu* 4.30 and 6.15.²² In both formulations, what is crucial is the notion of *yu* 欲 or

¹⁸ Presumably, these passages are partly the basis for Nivison’s view that *zhong* be construed as “loyalty” as expressing the standard governing the conduct of an inferior to a superior or to an equal.

¹⁹ For this reason, Chen Daqi endorses Zhu Xi’s interpretation of *zhong* as *jinzi* 盡己. This interpretation is plausible when we draw attention to its ethical basis in *ren*. See Chen, *Kongzi xueshuo*, 236-37.

²⁰ *Zidao pian* 子道篇, 651: <從道不從君，從義不從父>.

²¹ See also 5.12: “Zigong said, ‘While I do not wish others to impose on me, I also wish not to impose on others.’ “<子貢曰：「我不欲人之加諸我也，吾亦欲無加諸人。」> For similar translation in Modern Chinese, see Mao Zishui 毛子水, *Lunyu jinzhuzhu jinyi* 論語今註今譯 (Taipei: Shangwu, 1977), 248.

²² This is Lau’s gloss. Lau continues: “It interesting to note that when Tzu-kung [Zigong] remarked that if he did not wish others to impose on him neither did he wish to impose on others. Confucius’ comment was that this was beyond his ability.” See Lau, *Confucius*, 135n7.

desire. It is misleading to say that *shu* concerns the nature of desire in the ordinary sense, for it has more to do with the manner of satisfaction than with the nature of occurrent desires. A plausible explication of *shu* thus requires a distinction between occurrent and reflective desires. Thus what I desire now may, on reflection, be something I ought not to desire.

Zhong and *shu* may be said to be a method of reflection on occurrent desires, for assessing their appropriateness in the context of human relations. In this way, the exercise of *shu* presupposes a capacity of self-reflection and self-evaluation. To pay heed to *shu* is to deal earnestly with the question: Do I want my present desire to be satisfied as I want other's analogous desires to be satisfied in a way that comports with *ren*? The wanting here is a reflective desire. Thus a deliberate consideration on the character of occurrent desires has consequences in terms of the moral character of one's acts. *Shu* as moral regard has a practical import only when the agent has subjected his occurrent desires to reflective evaluation in the light of *ren*.

Recall that the vision of *ren* or the good is an indeterminate ideal theme, and as such it is subject to diverse, concrete specifications within the lives of committed agents. At any given time, a reasonable agent would make such a specification based on a partial knowledge of the significance of the holistic vision.²³ The ideal of impartiality implicit in the notion of *shu*, as opposed to partiality of the knowledge of the good, serves as a reminder of one's imperfection or incompleteness of ethical knowledge. By construing the negative formulation of *shu* ("What I do not desire, I ought not to impose on others"²⁴) as a counsel of modesty and humility, we can appreciate its importance by attending to a characteristic of reasonable persons.²⁵ Modesty pertains to the moderation of one's claims or demands upon others. One ordinary sense of 'reasonable' indicates that a reasonable person will refrain from making excessive or extravagant demands on others.²⁶ More importantly, in the light of the vision of *dao* or ideal of the good human life, we would expect reasonable, committed persons to be

²³ For a discussion of the Confucian notion of reasonableness as contrasted with rationality, see my *The Unity of Knowledge and Action: A Study in Wang Yang-ming's Moral Psychology* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1982); chap. 4; and more generally, my "Ideals and Values: A Study in Rescher's Moral Vision." in *Praxis and Reason: Studies in the Philosophy of Nicholas Rescher*, edited by Robert Almeder (Washington, DC: University Press of America, 1982).

²⁴ See *Lunyu* 12.12 and 15:23.

²⁵ See Robert Allinson, "The Confucian Golden Rule: A Negative Formulation," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 12, no. 3 (1985); and my "Reasonable Persons and the Good: Reflections on an Aspect of Weiss' Ethical Thought."

²⁶ Kurt Baier, *The Moral Point of View* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1958), 316.

modest in making their demands and requests, because no one possesses the knowledge of all possible, concrete, and appropriate specifications of the significance of the good for individual human life.

Let us consider briefly some other *ren*-dependent virtues. On one occasion responding to a question about *ren*, Confucius said that a man of *ren* practices five things: “*Gong* 恭 (respectfulness), *kuan* 寬 (magnanimity, generosity, open-mindedness), *xin* 信 (trustworthiness, being true to one’s words), *min* 敏 (agility, adroitness), and *hui* 惠 (beneficence)” (17.6). I suppose that *kuan* and *hui* are dependent, constitutive virtues of *ren* 仁, for *ren* is basically expressed in love, or affectionate concern (*ai* 愛). Similarly, warm-heartedness (*wen* 溫) is also *ren*-dependent, constitutive virtue (1.10). *Ren* as an affectionate concern for others would also be expressed in loving-kindness (*ci* 慈) (2.20), in some contexts, would be expressed in *kuan* 寬. *Hui* 惠 or beneficence is also an expression of *ren* concern. *Xin* seems to be another constitutive virtue of *ren*, as indicated in the pairing of *zhong* 忠 and *xin* 信 (1.8, 1.9, 9.21, 15.19). For instance, when Zizhang 子張 asked about conduct (*xing* 行), Confucius replied: “Make *zhong* and *xin* your master guides” (15.6). As *zhong* involves doing one’s best on behalf of the object of loyalty, *min* 敏 (adroitness or agility) would be a virtue of resourcefulness in handling affairs on behalf of the object of loyalty. While *gong* 恭 is a dependent, supportive virtue of *li* 禮, it is also a supportive virtue of *ren* when the spirit of *ren* informs its expression according to *li*. As Confucius remarked: “If a man has no *ren*, what has he to do with *li*” (3.3). Moreover, as involving *rang* 讓, *gong* would be merely supportive as in the case of the agent’s refusal to yield (*rang* 讓) to his teacher in the practice of *ren* (15.36). As we shall see, *jing* 敬 (reverence) is a constitutive virtue of both *ren* and *li*, since it is an essential attitude required in filial conduct (*xiao* 孝) -- a foundation for the practice of *ren* (1.2; 2.7).

At this point let us interpose by briefly attending to *keji* 克己 and *yong* 勇 as *overlapping*, constitutive virtues of *ren*, *li*, and *yi*. When Yan Yuan 顏淵 asked about *ren*, Confucius said: “To return to the observance of the *li* through self-control (*keji* 克己) constitutes *ren*” (12.1).

Elsewhere, Confucius also remarked, “If a man has no concern for *ren* 仁, what has he to do with *li* 禮?” (3.3). These two sayings show the interdependence of *ren* and *li*. Self-control is constitutive of the practice of *ren* as it involves overcoming emotions and desires that may well hamper the *ren*-performance. The *li*, as delimiting the proper boundary for the pursuit of self-satisfaction, are the means for self-control. In the case of *yi*, self-control regarding self-serving desires is indispensable to its exercise.

Yong 勇, as an aretaic or virtue term, is perhaps best rendered as “courage” -- the quality of character that shows itself in facing danger

undaunted despite fear or lack of confidence.²⁷ *Yong* is clearly a dependent virtue of *ren*, for “the *ren* person certainly possesses *yong*, but a *yong* person does not necessarily possess *ren* (14.4).²⁸ Moreover, the person would even sacrifice his life in order to realize *ren* (15.10). Likewise, *yong* is a dependent virtue of *li*; for its ethical significance depends on its connection with *li*. It is an open question whether *yong* is a constitutive virtue of *li*. Arguably, a person committed to the observance of *li*, in some context, may need *yong* to act in the absence of knowledge of the detail rituals involved. Here the agent may need *yong* in the sense of boldness or audacity, a sense of venture, risking embarrassment or humiliation, or even shame.²⁹ In the case of *yi*, *yong* is clearly a dependent, constitutive virtue. For example, when Zilu 子路 asked: “Does the *junzi* cherish *yong*?” The Master said: “For the *junzi*, it is *yi* that is considered supreme. Possessed of *yong* but devoid of *yi*, a *junzi* will make trouble, but a small man will be a brigand” (17.23). *Yong* is constitutive of *yi* seems evident in this passage: “To see *yi* (the right thing to do) and leave it undone shows a lack of *yong*” (2.24). At any rate, *yong* requires learning (17.8), knowledge, and judgment, which inform the exercise of *yi*.

DEPENDENT VIRTUES OF LI 禮

Fundamentally, an action conforming to a ritual requirement of *li* has its ethical significance, because such an action is performed in the light of a concern for *ren*. Without a regard for *ren*, ritual observances would amount to mere formal gestures vacuous of moral substance. Notably, in addition to imposing restraint on human behavior, as Xunzi points out, the *li* also support the satisfaction of desires (*geiren zhi qiu* 給人之求) within the defined boundaries of proper conduct.³⁰ And when a *junzi*'s compliance with *li* is informed by the spirit of *ren*, *li* has also an *ennobling* quality, exemplifying the *junzi*'s respect for *li* as an ideal, *ren* embedded tradition.³¹ This attitude toward *li* signifies also a respect for the reality of the situation,

²⁷ Other renderings of *yong* are possible in different contexts, e.g., “bravery, boldness, being daring, audacity, fearlessness.” One passage (14.28) clearly says that a *yong* person has no fear (*yongzhe buju* 勇者不懼). (See also 9.29.) I leave the translation issue open, since my discussion deals only with the relation of *yong* to *ren*, *li*, and *yi*.

²⁸ *Lunyu*, 14.4: <仁者必有勇，勇者不必有仁>.

²⁹ For the Confucian conception of shame, see my “Ethical Significance of Shame: Insights of Aristotle and Xunzi,” *Philosophy East and West* 53, no 2 (2003): 147-202; incorporated in *Human Nature, Ritual, and History*.

³⁰ *Lilun pian* 禮論篇, 417.

³¹ For a discussion of the three functions of *li*, see my “The Concept of *Li* in Confucian Moral Theory” (1989). More extensive discussion of *li* and its connection with *ren* and *yi* is given in my *Moral Vision and Tradition*, Essay 13.

the background and possibility that furnish the context for successful moral performance. The Confucian emphasis on *li* is one justification for the Confucian homage to the concrete. If we accept this stress on *li*, some sort of *convention* for identifying the normative import of action seems an essential element in any moral theory. Granted the importance of ethical convention or tradition, attention to the aesthetic and religious dimensions of *li* will also lead us to an appreciation of valuable facets of human life in different cultures and civilizations.³²

Perhaps the most important dependent virtues of *Li* are *gong* 恭 and *jing* 敬. Both terms pertain to expression of respect for others. For distinguishing *gong* from *jing*, we may say that the former pertains primarily to outward appearance, the latter to one's inner attitude. As Zhu Xi 朱熹 put it: “*Gong*'s principal focus is appearance (*rong* 容), *jing* on human affairs. *Gong* is seen in outward expression (*wai* 外), *jing* focuses on what is within (*zhong* 中).”³³ This explanation is supported by Confucius's remark that among the nine things that occupy *junzi*'s thought is “to think of appearing respectful (*gong* 恭) when it comes to demeanor (*mao si gong* 貌思恭)” and “to think of being reverend when attending to human affairs (*shi si jing* 事思敬)” (16.10). Differently put, *gong* pertains to one's bearing or deportment. *Jing*, however, pertains to virtuous conduct, more specially to one's inner attitude. The idea is also present in the *Yijing* 易經: “Being straight means correctness, and being square means *yi* 義 (righteousness). The *junzi* 君子 applies *jing* 敬 to straighten the internal life (*nei* 內) and *yi* to square the external life (*wai* 外). As *jing* and *yi* are established, one's virtue will not be an isolated instance.”³⁴

³² See my “The Ethical and Religious Dimensions of *Li*,” *Review of Metaphysics* 55:3 (2002): 501-49; incorporated in *Human Nature, Ritual, and History*. A shorter version of the same title appeared in *Confucian Spirituality*, Vol. 1, edited by Weiming Tu and Mary Evelyn Tucker (New York: Crossroads 2003), 252-288. For the notion of Confucian ethical tradition,” see *Moral Vision and Tradition*, Essay 12.

³³ Zhu Xi, *Sishu jizhu*, 91.

³⁴ Zhou Yi 周易, 坤文言: <直其正也。方其義也。君子敬以直內。義以方外。敬義立而德不孤。> Chan renders *jing* as “seriousness” (*Source Book*, 264). *Jing*, rendered as “reverence” in the sense of “deep respect” for something or someone is a serious, attentive state of mind. This point is consistent with Graham's remark that the word *jing* 敬, as used by the Cheng brothers (Cheng Hao 程顥 and Cheng Yi 程頤), “cannot be translated by ‘reverence’; and Bruce's “seriousness” is utterly inadequate, although accusation can be made against Bruce, it is difficult to find a better alternative. The two aspects of *ching* are interdependent; to collect oneself, be attentive to the person or thing implies that one respects him or takes it seriously; and to be respectful implies that one is collected and attentive. But there is no English

Another important *li*-dependent virtue is *rang* 讓, which can be rendered in two different ways: “to decline politely (*tuici* 推辭),” and *rang*, as in Mencius’s *cirang zhi xin* 辭讓之心 -- the seed of the virtue of *li* -- has to do with “yielding.”³⁵ In both cases, *rang* may be considered as an example of concern with *gong* 恭. One should yield to others in some circumstances, say, in dealing with one’s parents or elders, as one may respectfully decline their request. In the either case, as we shall see later, the exercise of reasonable judgment in accordance with *yi* 義 is a crucial determinant.

Perhaps the most prominent dependent and constitutive *li*-dependent virtue is *wen* 文 (culture, cultural refinement). *Wen* is reported to be one of the four subjects of Confucius’s teachings (7.25). For Confucius, the *junzi* who is “widely versed in culture but brought back to essentials by the *li* can, I suppose, be relied upon not to turn against what he stood for” (6.27). Although the *li* is fundamentally a code of formal rules of proper conduct, apart from its connection with *ren*, it has an aesthetic aspect. Learning is for the sake of self-improvement, not for the sake of impressing other people (14.24). Xunzi would add, “The *junzi* uses learning to beautify his own person (*mei qi shen* 美其身).”³⁶ Implicit in the idea of *wen* is the beautification of character in the light of cultural refinement. The idea of *wen*, in the light of the connection of *li* with *ren*, in effect, appertains to the ennobling character of persons. Alternatively, *wen* expresses the ennobling function of *li*.³⁷ In this light, the *junzi* is a “beautiful” person, as his life and conduct exemplify the “beauty of virtue” in an eminent way, reminiscent of the common concern with “the beauty of virtue and the deformity of vice” among the British Moralists of the eighteenth century.

As a dependent virtue of *li*, a regard for *wen*, as Xunzi would put it, is “to honor the roots” of human existence.³⁸ However, exaggerated emphasis on *wen* without regard to *zhi* 質 has dubious ethical value. Confucius said, “When there is a preponderance of [native] substance (*zhi* 質) over acquired refinement (*wen* 文), the result will be churlishness. Only a well-balanced admixture of the two do we have a *junzi*” (6.18).³⁹

word which covers both, and the only course seems to use “reverence” for one and a different word for the other.” See A. C. Graham, *Two Chinese Philosophers: Ch’eng Ming-Tao and Ch’eng Yi-ch’uan* (London: Lund Humphries, 1958), 69.

³⁵ *Mengzi*, 2A6.

³⁶ 勸學篇, 19: <君子學也以美其身>.

³⁷ See Note 31 above.

³⁸ *Lilun pian* 禮論篇, 424: <*Guiben zhiwei wen* 貴本之謂文>.

³⁹ *Lunyu*, 6.18: <子曰: 「質勝文則野, 文勝質則史。文質彬彬, 然後君子。」>. See also *Lunyu* 12.19.

YI 義 AS THE VIRTUE OF FLEXIBILITY

The well-balanced admixture of native substance (*zhi* 質) and cultural refinement (*wen* 文) does not indicate the ideal, for fundamentally *yi* 義 is the substance (*zhi* 質) of the ethical life (15.18). *Yi* is the Confucian virtue of flexibility. According to Confucius, the *junzi*, in his dealings with the world, “is not invariably for or against anything. He is on the side of *yi* 義 (4.10).⁴⁰ Recall also Confucius’s autobiographical remark: “I have no preconceptions about the permissible or impermissible (*wu ke wu buke* 無可無不可)” (18.8). Freedom from predilection, prejudice, inflexibility, and egotism is said to be characteristic of Confucius.⁴¹ These qualities may also be ascribed to the *junzi*, qualities which are necessary to maintain his freedom of thought and action in advance of encounter with particular problematic situations, although Confucius, perhaps out of modesty, disclaimed being a *junzi* (14.28).⁴²

If *yi* is “to square with” the external life of the *junzi*, then its primary function is to deal with matters external to the individuals, seen as demands or requirements that need to be made compatible with their inner life and concern. These external demands may appear in the form of duties imposed by custom or tradition, along with institutional rules and regulations, more generally, demands for compliance with *li* as a set of formal prescriptions for proper behavior. This sense of *yi*, which is functionally equivalent to *li*, is often rendered as “duty.” The *Liji* 禮記, for example, mentioned ten duties of human relationships (*renyi* 人義), such as “The father’s loving-kindness (*fuci* 父慈) the son’s filial piety (*zixiao* 子孝), gentleness on the part of elder brother (*xiongliang* 兄良), and obedience (*dishun* 弟順) of the younger brother.”⁴³

⁴⁰ 子曰：「君子之於天下也，無適也，無莫也，義之於比。」

⁴¹ *Lunyu*, 9.4: “There were four things the Master refused to have anything to do with: he refused to entertain conjectures or to insist on certainty; he refused to be inflexible or to be egotistical.” (<子絕四，毋意，毋必，毋固，毋我。>).

⁴² The same remark in 9.29. On another occasion, Confucius said, “In the knowledge of letters and the arts, I may perhaps compare myself with other men. But as for the character of a *junzi* who carries out in his personal conduct what he professes -- that is something to which I have not yet attained” (7.32).

⁴³ Wang Mengou 王夢鷗, *Liji jinzhū jinyi* 禮記今註今譯, 2 vols. (Taipei: Shangwu, 1977), 1:301. For a critical discussion of the virtues associated with the five human relationships, see my “*Li* and Moral Justification: A Study in the *Li Chi*,” *Philosophy East and West* 33, No. 1 (1983): 1-16” ; or “Human Relationships and the Virtues” in *Human Nature, Ritual, and History*, 63-67.

The *Li*, as a corpus of rules of proper conduct, can be quite complex and burdensome even for the committed persons. The vastness of the rules staggers our imagination. A chapter (*Liqi* 禮器) in the *Liji* alluded to three hundred “great” or important rules (*dali* 大禮) and three thousand rules of lesser importance (*xiaoli* 小禮), but points out that “they all lead to the same thing.” *Yi* 義, in the sense of rightness, appropriateness or fittingness, would be the basis of modification of *li*. Moreover, the relevance of the *li* to the present, particularly exigent situation, is a matter of reasoned judgment based on his sense of appropriateness or *yi* and appreciation of the regulative, supportive, and ennobling functions of *li*.⁴⁴ Wherefore, the *li* are subject to revision or even elimination.

In sum, concern for *yi* is generally a concern for right conduct, which is deemed fitting or appropriate to a particular situation. However, one problematic area of conduct, to use Xunzi’s expression, is our fondness for profit or personal gain (*haoli* 好利). In Confucius’s words, “The *junzi* understands what constitutes right conduct (*yi* 義); the small-minded man understands what is profitable” (4.16). In situations where we are tempted to do what promotes our personal gain, Confucius would counsel that “when you see something that is likely to promote personal gain, you must think of right conduct (*jian de siyi* 見得思義)” (14.12; 16.10), that is, whether the contemplated, self-serving act is the right thing to do. This contrast between *yi* and self-serving benefit suggests the Confucian distinction between morality and egoism.⁴⁵ Perhaps for this reason, *yi* is sometimes translated as “moral” or “morality.”

DEPENDENT VIRTUES OF YI 義

Let us consider some of the dependent virtues of *yi* as a virtue of flexibility. The idea of *kuan* 寬, with respect to its cognitive purport, expresses a concern with the “largeness” of mind, with catholicity and neutrality, which are the main supportive and constitutive virtues of *yi*. Earlier, we mentioned *kuan*, as a dependent, constitutive virtue of *ren* 仁. There *kuan* is concerned more with magnanimity, generosity, or liberality.

⁴⁴ For the notion of *yi* 義 as appropriateness (*yi* 宜), see *Zhongyong* 中庸, section 20 in Chan, *Source Book*, 104. For this notion of *yi* and its general significance as ruling on the relevance of moral rules to particular circumstances, see my “Concept of Paradigmatic Individuals in the Ethics of Confucius” (1971), 44-46; elaborated in *Dimensions of Moral Creativity*, chaps. 5 and 6. Similar interpretation may be found in Cheng Chung-ying, “Yi as a Universal Principle of Specific Application in Confucian Morality,” *Philosophy East and West* 22 (1972); Lau, *Confucius*, Introduction, 49-50; and Chen Daqi, *Kongzi xueshuo* (1977), chap. 3.

⁴⁵ See *Dimensions of Moral Creativity*, 67-69.

For elaborating the complex notion of *kuan* as a constitutive virtue of both *ren* 仁 and *yi* 義, we may appropriate Xunzi's conception of three desirable qualities of participants in argumentation. Xunzi says of the argumentative discourse of the scholars and *junzi*: "With a humane mind (*renxin* 仁心) he explains his ideas to others, with a learning mind (*xuexin* 學心) he listens to their words, and with an impartial mind (*gongxin* 公心) he makes his judgment."⁴⁶

A different way of indicating the virtue of *kuan*, in the light of Xunzi's remark and his distinction between generic (*gong* 共名) and specific terms (*bieming* 別名), is to say that *kuan* is a generic term (*gongming* 共名) for a composite virtue, which may be concretely specified in three virtues: humane mind (*renxin* 仁心), learning mind (學心), and impartial mind or fair-mindedness (*gongxin* 公心). In the context of the exercise of *yi* 義, *renxin* expresses a concern with the harmful effects of one's conduct on others. More especially in speech, *renxin* would council the agent to be vigilant (*shen* 慎) in using words that may hurt others' feelings. Says Xunzi, "Hurtful words engender wounds deeper than those inflicted by spears or halberds."⁴⁷

As *gongxin* 公心, impartiality or fair-mindedness, is a specific virtue of *kuan* 寬, characteristic of the *junzi*'s neutrality and catholicity, we shall attend to *xuexin* 學心, the learning mind (*xuexin*), which for Xunzi, in discourse, is the virtue of receptivity, i.e., the ability to listen to others without prepossession or prejudgment. In *Lunyu*, Confucius frequently stresses on the importance of extensive study or learning (*boxue* 博學) and application (6.27, 1.1). As Confucius said, "Learning without thinking is labor lost. Thinking without learning is perilous" (2.15).⁴⁸ Confucius did not seem to council deep thinking in situations that require effective decision. "Thinking thrice" (5.20), for instance, may result in the separation of learning or knowledge from action.

Another supportive and constitutive virtue of *yi* is *shen* 慎, caution in speech and conduct, which is essential to the exercise of *gongxin* or impartiality, as well as *renxin*. *Gang* 剛 or *gangyi* 剛毅 (13.27) is also an important supportive and constitutive virtue of *yi*, for resoluteness in commitment to *yi* and the decisiveness in judgment according to *yi* is an indispensable prerequisite to its exercise. So also, like *shen*, *gang* is a supportive and constitutive virtue of *ren* 仁.

⁴⁶ See *Zhengming pian* 正名篇, 524.

⁴⁷ *Rongru pian* 榮辱篇, 55: "Shangren zhi yan, shenyu maoji (傷人之言深於矛戟)."

⁴⁸ Legge's translation of 2.15: <學而不思則罔, 思而不學則殆>. For other passages on thinking and learning, see 15.31, 15.32.

Perhaps, the most important supportive and constitutive virtue of both *ren* and *yi* is *yong* 勇 (courage). Confucius said, “The determined scholar and the man of *ren* will not seek to live at the expense of *ren*. They will even sacrifice their lives in order to realize *ren*” (15.10).⁴⁹ In connection with *ren*, *yong* is *the courage to be*. In the context that requires the exercise of *yi* 義, *yong* is *the courage to do* the right thing. In sum, *yong* is an overlapping, dependent, constitutive virtue of both *ren* and *yi*.

The foregoing discussion presents a map of the virtues of *junzi*, consisting of cardinal, interdependent virtues such as *ren*, *li*, and *yi*, and their dependent supportive and/or constitutive virtues. The distinction between interdependent and dependent virtues is a heuristic device for sorting out the virtues. I make no claim as to completeness or to a sharp division of dependent virtues as belonging to one cardinal rather than another, for as I have pointed out, there are overlapping dependent virtues of *ren* and *yi* such as *yong* 勇 and *kuan* 寬.

There is a complementary way of grouping the dependent virtues suggested by *Zhongyong* 中庸, section 27: honoring moral character (*zun dexing* 尊德性) and following the path of inquiry and learning (*dao xuewen* 道問學), much reminiscent of Aristotle’s distinction of virtues of character, and virtues of intellect in *Nicomachean Ethics*.

Dependent virtues of *ren* and *li* are essentially the virtues of character, and those of *yi*, virtues of the intellect. Notably the virtues of the intellect are complementary to the virtues of character, and they comprise a few virtues not particularly emphasized by Aristotle, but the idea of *phronimos* or man of practical wisdom seems implicit in the idea of the exercise of *yi*, which may be elaborated by Xunzi’s conception of *zhilü* 知慮 or wise and well-informed deliberation, a topic I discussed elsewhere.⁵⁰

CONCLUSION

For concluding this study of the virtues of *junzi*, let me briefly remark on some problems that call for further exploration.⁵¹ In our map for

⁴⁹ This is a revised Legge’s translation of 15. 9: <子曰：「志士仁人，無求生以害仁，有殺身以成仁。」 >

⁵⁰ See my “The Possibility of Ethical Knowledge: Reflections on a Theme in the *Hsün Tzu*” in Hans Lenk and Gregor Paul (eds.), *Epistemological Issues in Ancient Chinese Philosophy* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1993); incorporated in *Human Nature, Ritual, and History*, Essay 6.

⁵¹ In my Keynote Address to the Eleventh Conference of the International Society for Chinese Philosophy held in Taipei in 1999, I mentioned other problems: “What is the role of the developing tradition as the background of Confucian ethics? To what extent can the ideal of *dao* or *ren* be concretely specified in a conceptual framework comprising *ren*, *li*, and *yi*? How are these fundamental notions to be further shaped to accommodate the evolving

the virtues of *junzi*, in the distinction between basic, cardinal, interdependent virtues and dependent, supportive/constitutive virtues, it may be said that the unity of virtues is presupposed without argument. This is a difficult issue that deserves extensive discussion. In studying this issue in Xunzi's moral philosophy reported in two papers in the 1980s, I proposed what I called the completion thesis. Concisely stated, this thesis is that *ren*, *li*, and *yi* are interdependent concepts, for an adequate explication of one must involve the other concept.⁵² This thesis pertains to *ideal* unity of virtues, since *ren*, in the broad sense, is an ideal theme. Given the interdependence of these cardinals, the ideality of *ren* will also pervade through the ennobling function of *li* and the exercise of *yi* as exemplified in *renxin* 仁心 or humane mind. Converting the ideality of the unity of virtues into the actuality of the practice of the virtues is not a theoretical task. In spirit, our thesis on the interdependence of the cardinals is akin to that of J. L. Ackrill and Elizabeth Telfer in their defense of the Aristotelian unity of virtues as an *ideal unity of virtues*, rather than empirical thesis.⁵³ It is a task for Confucian normative ethicists to inquire into the respects in which our thesis needs to be recast in the light of actual experiences of the conflict of virtues. When such a task is successfully carried out, we may have to revise our thesis into a "limited thesis of the unity of virtues."⁵⁴

Also, for developing an adequate Confucian ethics of virtue, there is the crucial task of elaborating both its theoretical and practical significance, and presently, of dealing with difficult problems attendant to our discussion of *yi* as a virtue of flexibility, e.g., such problems as the role or status of ethical rules and principles, and the possible contribution of Confucian ethics as an ethics of character or *junzi* to contemporary virtue ethics, as well as to deontology and consequentialism.⁵⁵

normative problems in the ethical life today and tomorrow, problems that are quickly acquiring greater transcultural and global significance? In the context of inter-traditional and/or intercultural ethical conflict, what degree of success can one expect from the employment of my proposed ground rules or transcultural principles of adjudication, such principles as non-prescriptivity or cultural integrity, mutuality, procedural justice, rectification, and reconsideration? (See *Moral Vision and Tradition*, Essay 14.). Perhaps additional or other principles will do a better job in conflict resolution." See my "Problems of Chinese Moral Philosophy," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 27, No. 3 (2000): 269-85.

⁵² See *Human Nature, Ritual, and History*, Essays 4 and 5.

⁵³ Elizabeth Telfer, "The Unity of Moral Virtues in Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*," *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* (1989-90): 35-48.

⁵⁴ See Neera-Kapur Badhwar, "The Limited Unity of Virtue," *Nous* 30/3 (1996): 306-29.

⁵⁵ Keynote speech delivered at the International Conference on Confucianism: Retrospect and Prospect, the University of Toronto, September 1, 2005.

GLOSSARY

biande 偏德
 boxue 博學
 Chen Daqi 陳大齊
 ci 慈
 cirang zhi xin 辭讓之心
 bieming 別名
 dali 大禮
 dao 道
 dao xuewen 道問學
 de 德
 dishun 弟順
 e 惡
 Fan Chi 樊遲
 fuci 父慈
 gang 剛
 gangyi 剛毅
 geiren zhi qiu 給人之求
 gong 恭
 gongming 共名
 gongxin 公心
 haoli 好利
 heng 恒
 hui 惠
 jian de siyi 見得思義
 jinji 盡己
 jing 敬
 jinxin 盡心
 junzi 君子
 keji 克己
 kuan 寬
 li 禮
 Liji 禮記
 Liqi 禮器
 Lunyu 論語
 mei 美
 meide 美德

mei qi shen 美其身
 Mengzi 孟子
 min 敏
 pian 偏
 quande 全德
 rang 讓
 ren 仁
 renxin 仁心
 renyi 人義
 shen 慎
 shu 恕
 tuici 推辭
 wen 文
 wen 溫
 wu ke wu buke 無可無不可
 xiao 孝
 xiaoli 小禮
 xiaoren 小人
 xin 信
 xing 行
 xiongliang 兄良
 xuexin 學心
 Xunzi 荀子
 Yan Yuan 顏淵
 yi 義
 yi 宜
Yijing 易經
 yong 勇
 yu 欲
 zhi 知
 zhi 質
 zhong 忠
Zhongyong 中庸
 Zigong 子貢
 Zilu 子路
 zhilú 知慮
 zixiao 子孝
 Zizhang 子張
 zun dexing 尊德性

Chapter II

Teacher-Disciple, or Friends? – An Historico-Exegetical Approach to the *Analects**

Yuet Keung Lo

INTRODUCTION

The crucial importance of cultural and historical, as opposed to philosophical, specificity in hermeneutical exercises cannot be overemphasized. This is especially true when we try to explicate passages or components in the *Analects* that are not intrinsically philosophical. Even though the commentators of the *Analects* we shall discuss in this article were not historians in a strict sense, we should do well to bear in mind Croce's dictum that the historian's definition of his problem is necessarily and quite properly a reflection of the concerns of his own time, because, as will be demonstrated, these commentators also formulated their understanding of the *Analects* through the lens of their own lived experiences under unique cultural and historical circumstances.

This article seeks to examine a deceptively self-evident term in the *Analects*. It is the term *peng* 朋 (usually translated as "friend"), which appears in the first chapter of the first book in the *Analects*. While *peng* does not have any intrinsic philosophical import and its meaning appears to be immediately clear at least to the modern reader, it had attracted the attention of many a commentator in the long history of exegesis of the *Analects*. According to prevalent interpretations of the first chapter in the book, part of the topic seems to be simply a banal sentiment about friendship. However, our discussion will reveal that *peng* originally means "disciple" and the meaning of "friend" developed only under the changing circumstances and ideological demands of later history. This article thus argues that the precise meaning of *peng* has to be situated in the specific cultural and historical circumstances which the commentator has to confront as a living reality. Only in this way can the reader of the *Analects* and its commentaries grasp the centrality of the teacher-disciples relation in what Confucianism was all about and how this central relation would come to inform Tang (618-906) and post-Tang commentaries and inspire

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Confucians of later times to unravel some of the invigorating meanings hidden in the simple term *peng*.

For the sake of convenience, let us begin our discussion by quoting the chapter in question. *Analects* 1.1 reads,

The Master said, “Is it not a pleasure, having learned something, to try it out at due intervals? Is it not a joy to have friends come from afar? Is it not gentlemanly not to take offence when others fail to appreciate your abilities?¹
子曰學而時習之，不亦悅乎？有朋自遠方來，不亦樂乎？人不知而不慍，不亦君子乎？”

In this tripartite chapter Confucius appears to be describing three different kinds of emotive experience. Here, Confucius may very well be talking about his personal experiences, which he probably regards as having a general significance, or he may be simply describing the various objective situations or spiritual goals that are accessible to all. The three emotive states seem to reflect three kinds of inner experience in escalating levels that correspond to one’s progress in spiritual cultivation. Learning and the regular practice of what is learned requires only the effort of the learner, and the twofold endeavor gives him pleasure. When the learner’s “friends” come from afar presumably to discuss and exchange learning with him, bonding and communion of some sort is necessitated between both parties, and the joy resulting from this relationship and exchange appears to be more profound than the simple pleasure the learner can enjoy all by himself from learning and practicing on his own. But companionship is a double-edged sword. When the bonding and communion can be consummated, profound joy ensues. Such consummation, however, is by no means a guarantee, and the learner’s true worth may not be fully appreciated. When such a disheartening scenario becomes reality, if the learner is capable of not allowing the chagrin and frustration to upset his inner tranquility, or to undermine his faith in himself, he is then considered a gentleman, and that inner tranquility is the mark of truly sophisticated self-cultivation.²

¹ D.C. Lau, tr., *The Analects* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1979), p.59. It should be pointed out that commentators on the *Analects* do not divide the chapters (*zhang* 章) of each of the twenty books of the classic in the same way, but for the sake of convenience, all citations to the *Analects* in this essay refer to Lau’s chapter divisions.

² The two readings given here are not meant to be exhaustive. For example, Zheng Ruxie 鄭汝諧 (fl.12th century) takes this first chapter of the entire classic to be “the gateway to the Confucian Way” (*rudao zhi yao* 入道之要) and argues that the levels of experience outlined there are criteria by which a disciple’s self-cultivation can be gauged. See Zheng’s *Lunyu yiyuan* 論語意

FAMILIARIZING THE “FRIEND” -- BAO XIAN AND HAN EXEGETES

While *Analects* 1.1 may be of philosophical import, our discussion actually is focused on the meaning of the term *peng* in this chapter. In D.C. Lau's translation *peng* is translated as “friends;” in fact, no translator has rendered the term differently. However, if we look at the earliest commentary we have today dating back to the Western Han period (206 B.C.E.-8 C.E.), we will find a quite different interpretation. Bao Xian 包咸 (6 B.C.E.-65 C.E.), the author of this commentary, was cited by He Yan 何晏 (190-249) in his *Lunyu jijie* 論語集解 (Collected Commentaries on the *Analects*) as saying that “*peng* refers to people who share the same gate 同門曰朋.”³ Bao's gloss is of profound significance upon close examination.

原, in *Qinding Siku quanshu* 欽定四庫全書, Wenyuange 文淵閣 edition (Ji'nan: Qilu shushe and Tainan: Zhuangyan wenhua shiye, 1996), *juan* 1, 199:113 (viz., volume 199, page 133). As this article shows, hermeneutics is always open to new readings.

³ Huang Kan 皇侃, *Lunyu jijie yishu* 論語集解義疏, 2 vols. (Taipei: Guangwen shuju, 1991, 2nd edition), 1:2. Bao Xian was born during the reign of the last emperor of the Western Han and died in the first century of the Eastern Han during the reign of Emperor Ming 明帝. When he was young he studied the *Odes* and *Analects* with a *boshi* 博士 scholar named Youshi Xijun 右師細君 in the Western Han capital Chang'an 長安. Since he studied the Lu 魯 version of the *Odes*, it is highly probable that he also studied the Lu version of the *Analects*, even though Zhang Yu 張禹 (d. 5 BCE) had already integrated the three existing versions, including the Lu version, of the *Analects* and completed his variorum version, called *Zhanghou lun* 張侯論. When Emperor Guangwu 光武帝 resumed the Han rule as the founder of the Eastern Han, he invited Bao Xian to tutor the heir-apparent on the *Analects*, and Bao wrote a *zhangju* 章句 commentary on the work while in this capacity. Bao Xian's commentary was sanctioned by the government and accepted as one of the official commentaries on the *Analects*. This must be the same commentary that was incorporated in He Yan's *Collected Commentaries* when it was compiled in the early third century. Bao Xian's son, Bao Fu 福, also tutored Emperor He 和帝 (r. 89-105) on the *Analects*. See Bao's biography in Fan Ye 范曄 (398-445), *HouHan shu* 後漢書, 12 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1973, 2nd reprint), *juan* 卷 79b, 9:2570.

Bao Xian was the only commentator who glossed the term *peng* in He Yan's *Collected Commentaries*. But this of course does not mean that Bao Xian was indeed the only commentator from the Han period who had actually glossed the term. It is entirely possible that other commentators had something to say about it as well, but since Bao's gloss was selected, there was no need to cite any other similar annotation.

First of all, the term *peng* appears nine times in eight different chapters in the *Analects*.⁴ Interestingly, except for its singular appearance in *Analects* 1.1 as a monosyllabic graph, the other seven occurrences of *peng* are all coupled with another monosyllabic graph *you* (友), which means “friend,” such that the reader is presented with what appears to be a binome *pengyou* 朋友. However, the term *pengyou* did not appear in most of the non-Confucian texts from the pre-Han period.⁵ Its use as an unmistakable binome meaning “friend” did not appear until the third century B.C.E. in texts such as *Xunzi* 荀子 and *Hanfeizi* 韓非子. On the other hand, Han-dynasty commentators usually made the effort to indicate that *peng* and *you* were two graphs of distinctive meanings when they glossed *pengyou* in pre-Han Confucian canonical texts such like the *Book of Changes* 易經, *Odes* 詩經 or *Zhouli* 周禮.⁶ Now, it is no coincidence that Bao Xian glossed only the first instance of *peng*, which appears in *Analects* 1.1, because with this clear understanding of *peng* being a distinct concept, his readers were, in effect, warned not to take *pengyou* as a binome when they encountered it in the later books of the *Analects*.

Bao’s interpretation was anything but idiosyncratic. For him, *Analects* 1.1. appears to be the best place to tell his readers that *peng* has its distinctive meaning that can easily be conflated with that of *you* even though the two terms should not be confused.⁷ In reality, people in the Han

⁴ See *Analects* 1.1, 1.4, 1.7, 4.26, 5.26 (twice), 10.22, 10.23, and 13.28.

⁵ The *Documents of Zhou* (*Zhoushu* 周書), a text from the Zhou dynasty which preceded the time of Confucius, was quoted to say that “The ruler takes precedence over the minister, parents take precedence over brothers; brothers take precedence over friends; friends take precedence over one’s wife and children 先君而後臣, 先父母而後兄弟, 先兄弟而後交友, 先交友而後妻子.” Clearly, the term *you* 友, not *peng*, was used to denote what we call “friend”. See Liu Xiang 劉向 compiled, Wang Qingquan 黃清泉 annotated, *Xinyi Lienüzhuan* 新譯列女傳 (Taipei: Sanmin shuju, 1996), *juan* 5, p.243.

⁶ For instance, Zheng Xuan glosses on *peng* and *you* (discussed in the main text). Less often, Han commentators would seem to take *pengyou* as a compound word, which they glossed as “various officials” (*qunchen* 群臣) or “various officials who shared the same ambition” (*qunchen tongzhihaozhe* 群臣同志好者). See Mao’s commentary 毛傳 on the *Odes*, in Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764-1949), *Shisanjing zhushu* 十三經注疏, 8 vols. (Taipei: Yiwen yinshuguan, 1976, 6th edition), *juan* 17.2, 2:605, 616.

⁷ Perhaps one of the most convincing pieces of evidence for *peng* and *you* as two distinct concepts can be found in the *Analects* itself, where the two terms appear independently in different passages. For the appearances of *you*, see 8.5, 9.25, 12.23, 12.24, 15.10, 16.4, 16.5, and 19.15. It is no coincidence that the appearance of *you* far outnumbers that of *peng*, as *you* deals with a much wider circle of human relationships.

dynasty had a consensual understanding of the paired concepts of *peng* 朋 and *you* 友, which they glossed as follows:

People who share the same gate are called *peng*, and people who entertain the same ambition are called *you* 同門曰朋，同志曰友。⁸

The gloss itself even became a common expression in everyday life during Han times. According to Xu Yan 徐彥 (fl. early seventh century) of the Tang dynasty, the expression was also included in a children's primer on Chinese graphs called *Cangjie pian* 倉頡篇.⁹ In the infamous episode of Han history which subjected the great historian Sima Qian 司馬遷 (b. 145 B.C.E.) to the humiliation of castration, Emperor Wu 武帝 (r. 141-87 B.C.E.) was puzzled as to why the historian would want to risk his life to speak out for Li Ling 李陵 (d. 74 B.C.E.), who had surrendered to the Xiongnu 匈奴 even though the disgraced general was a mere acquaintance to him. In asking Sima Qian the reason the emperor had reminded the historian, "Li Ling was not a *peng* who shared the same gate with you, nor was he a *you* who entertained the same ambition as yours 李陵非汝同門之朋，同志之友."¹⁰ The emperor's statement is self-evident. It seems clear that *you*, in this context, should mean "like-minded friends." More importantly, it is certain that *peng* and *you* were two distinct and different categories of social relationship in Han times.

But just what are these "people who share the same gate"? A gloss by the renowned Han exegete Zheng Xuan 鄭玄 (129-200) provides the most unequivocal explanation for us. In glossing a line in the *Zhouli*, Zheng says,

People who study with the same teacher are called fellow disciples (*peng*) 同師曰朋, and people who entertain the same ambition are called like-minded friends (*you*) 同志曰友。¹¹

⁸ The definitions can be found in a number of canonical and commentarial sources including the *Liji* 禮記, Zheng Xuan's 鄭玄 (129-200) commentary on the *Zhouli* 周禮 as well as He Xiu's 何休 (129-182) commentary on the *Gongyang zhuan* 公羊傳. See main text below.

⁹ Xu Yan, *Chunqiu Gongyang zhushu* 春秋公羊注疏. See Ruan Yuan, *Shisanjing zhushu*, Ding 4, juan 25, 7:322.

¹⁰ The quotation was cited by Xu Yan in his *Chunqiu Gongyang zhushu*. See Ruan Yuan, *Shisanjing zhushu*, Ding 4, juan 25, 7:322. It cannot be found in Sima Qian's *Shiji* 史記 or Ban Gu's *Hanshu* 漢書 we have today.

¹¹ See *Zhouli zhushu* 周禮注疏 in Ruan Yuan, *Shisanjing zhushu*, juan 10, 3:159.

With Zheng Xuan's convenient helping hand, it would seem that the "gate" that people share refers to the "gate" of the quarter where learning takes place under the guidance of a common teacher, and understandably this "gate" belongs to the teacher. Indeed, Confucius himself had mentioned this "gate" and claimed it as his (*qiu zhi men* 丘之門).¹² Although we do not know exactly what kind of physical setting Confucius had set up for his teaching purposes, we do know that his disciples were called *menren* 門人, people who "belonged" to "his gate."¹³

Huang Kan 皇侃 (485-545) elaborated Bao Xian's interpretation with admirable clarity in his *Lunyu jijie yishu* 論語集解義疏 (Subcommentaries on the *Analects*). He said,

[People who] share the same teacher are called *peng* whereas [people who] hold fast to the same ambition are called friends. *Peng* is synonymous with "comrade" (*dang*); *peng* are people who form a comradeship at the gate of a [common] teacher.¹⁴
同處師門曰朋，同執一志爲友。朋猶黨也，共爲黨類在師門也。

As if he were afraid that the term *men* 門 (gate) in Bao's gloss might be misunderstood, Huang Kan made a special effort to make it clear that the "gate" referred to the teacher's gate (*shimen* 師門). Thus, on Huang's authority, we know for certain that *peng* means "fellow disciples" in Bao Xian's commentary.¹⁵

¹² *Analects* 11.15. In this chapter, Confucius also commented that his disciple Zilu 子路 had already ascended the hall of his teaching quarters even though he might have yet to enter the inner room. The hall and inner room may not be mere analogy here; they probably have some realistic reference to the actual physical setting of Confucius's teaching environment. Similarly, the gate (*men*) also took on a metaphorical meaning to refer to Confucius's academy of teaching.

¹³ The term *menren* appears four times in three different chapters in the *Analects*. See *Analects* 4.15, 7.29, 11.11 and 11.15.

¹⁴ Huang Kan, *Lunyu jijie yishu*, 1:4. Huang Kan's gloss of *peng* as *dang* actually was based on at least two Han sources: Xu Shen's 許慎 (fl. second century) *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 (Preface dated 121) and Ban Gu's 班固 (32-92) *Baihu tong* 白虎通. For the citation on *Shuowen*, see n.9. For *Baihu tong*, see Chen Li 陳立 (1809-1869), *Baihu tong shuzheng* 白虎通疏證, 2 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1994), *juan* 8, 1:376.

¹⁵ In point of fact, Huang Kan's interpretation is not unexceptionable. Another viable explanation did not come until the seventeenth century. See main text below.

In oracle bone and bronze inscriptions, the graph for *peng* signifies two strings of cowry shells tied together, which were originally used as decorative ornaments and became tokens of currency no later than Zhou times.¹⁶ It is not clear how the graph eventually took on the meaning of “fellow disciple.” In fact, when Xu Shen 許慎 (fl. second century) compiled the *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字, his magnum opus on the “original meanings” of some 9,000 Chinese graphs, he seemed clueless as well. He glossed *peng* as follows:

It is the iconic graph in Ancient Script for the word “phoenix.” When the phoenix takes flight, as many as ten thousands birds would follow in its wake. Thus, the graph became a loan word for “fellowship” (*peng-dang*).¹⁷
古文鳳，象形，鳳飛，群鳥從以萬數，故以爲朋黨字。

While Xu Shen may be doing plain guesswork, his etiological conjecture about the graph *peng* is based on a mythologization of the virtue of the phoenix that can attract a large following. The conjecture seems to reveal that in the minds of Han-dynasty people *peng* implied a fellowship around a common figure or leader, much like a large flock of birds trailing behind the phoenix. As such, *peng* and *you*, when mentioned separately in Han literature, usually refer to two different, if not entirely distinct, categories of people, the former being fellow disciples while the latter being like-minded friends.¹⁸ So, even though Xu Shen was less than certain about the exact meaning of *peng*, he was perfectly confident about his gloss for *you* when he simply defined it conventionally as “people who entertain the same ambition.”¹⁹ In the context of *Analects* 1.1, Confucius would appear to be the mythological phoenix,²⁰ and his fellow disciples would be the multitude of birds that flocked around him.

¹⁶ Yu Xingwu 于省吾 ed., *Jiagu wenzi gulin* 甲骨文字詁林, 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999, 2nd reprint), 4:3285-3289.

¹⁷ Duan Yucai 段玉裁 (1735-1815), *Shuowen jiezi zhu* 說文解字注 (Taipei: Lantai shuju, 1974, 4th edition), Chapter 4A, p.150.

¹⁸ Zheng Xuan in his interpretation of one poem from the *Odes* glosses the term *pengyou* as “the various officials who shared the same ambition 群臣同志好者也.” See *Shijing zhushu* 詩經注疏, in Ruan Yuan, *Shisanjing zhushu*, *juan* 17b, 2:605. Here, *pengyou* was taken to be a binome and its semantic value was placed on *you* rather than *peng*. This only goes to show that when used independently, *peng* has its unique meaning. In fact, in Han sources, *you* or *youren* 友人 is invariably the choice of diction when the intended meaning is “friend” or “friendship” and this is also the case with the *Analects* itself.

¹⁹ Duan Yucai, *Shuowen jiezi zhu*, Chapter 3B, p.117.

²⁰ Curiously enough, Jieyu 接輿, the madman from Chu 楚狂, who was presumably Confucius’s contemporary, also compared Confucius to a phoenix

It goes without saying that there are different levels of friendship. People who know each other may be simply casual acquaintances. Then there are people who are truly good friends, but they do not necessarily study with the same teacher, assuming that they have such an opportunity to study in the first place. Bao Xian seemed acutely aware of such nuances in different kinds of friendship when he made a special note about *peng* in his commentary on *Analects* 1.1. In fact, he might even consider such nuances to be of fundamental significance. As we all know, Confucius was most probably the first person who actually offered education on a regular basis to anyone who was earnest enough to study with him.²¹ In his time it was probably not very common for someone to have the fortune and opportunity to pursue the path of learning under the tutelage of some learned person. When people came to study under Confucius, they of course became his disciples, but at the same time the disciples created a mutual relationship among themselves that might have never been. They were fellow disciples of one common master, and there should be a name to signify such a newfound relationship, for Confucius seems to have been known to be particularly concerned about the proper naming of things (*zhengming* 正名).²² The term *peng* might not have been the natural choice. It is certainly

that was trying to seek appreciation from a wise lord. See *Analects* 18.5. In a now lost passage from the book of *Zhuangzi* 莊子, Lao Zi 老子 was also reported to have described Confucius as a “phoenix” (*feng* 鳳) when he saw the master being surrounded by five disciples. See Ouyang Xun 歐陽詢, *Yiwen lieju* 藝文類聚 2 vols. (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe, 1982), 2:1558. Most interestingly, Confucius appears to have alluded to himself as a phoenix (*fenghuang* 鳳凰). See Takigawa Kamtarō 瀧川龜太郎, *Shiki kaichū kōshō* 史記會注考證 (Taipei: Hongye shuju, 1977, 2nd edition), *juan* 47, p.737.

²¹ Prior to Confucius, there would have been Masters of crafts such as ritual, music, archery, charioteering, writing and arithmetic (which were classified as the so-called Six Arts 六藝) and the like. Confucius himself, for instance, had studied the zither with Shi Xiangzi 師襄子. See Takigawa Kamtarō, *Shiki kaichū kōshō*, *juan* 47, pp.736-737. Even earlier, in the mid-seventh century, Zhan Qin 展禽 (aka Liu Xiahui 柳下惠, who was once a judge (*shishi* 士師) in Confucius’s home state Lu, apparently accepted students to study under him, and they were addressed as his disciples (*menren* 門人). See Huang Qingchuan, *Xinyi Lienü zhuan*, *juan* 2, p.107. Liu Xiahui is mentioned in *Analects* 18.2. There might or might not have been some term of address for fellow students who studied with the same master. Yet, even if there was such a term of address, it need not necessarily have been *peng*. As we have mentioned, *peng* did not appear very often in texts prior to Confucius and was not used to mean “disciple.” I thank Bryan Van Norden for calling my attention to the master-disciple relation that had existed before Confucius’s time.

²² Some scholars have questioned whether Confucius did hold a theory of proper naming of things or sometimes called rectification of names. Arthur

not our first choice in modern Chinese today. But *peng* did end up being that signifier in Confucius's time. In any case, Bao Xian was evidently interested in highlighting the fact that *peng* was the term that signified this new interpersonal relationship emerging in the Han society.

It appears that Bao Xian's commentary was motivated by two hermeneutical considerations. First, Bao was driven by such a keen historical sense that he wanted to highlight the term *peng* as the signifier for a newfound human relationship that came into being with Confucius's unprecedented offering of education to the common people. Second, Bao's historical interest was not purely academic. It was actually sparked by the historical reality in Han times when the transmission of Confucian classics became an event of central importance in the scholarly and political arenas. The textual transmission necessitated a number of "schools" that specialized in each of the Five Confucian Classics. Each school was formed under the tutelage of a master who had inherited the teachings on a given classic from a lineage of transmission. The teachings on a given classic a disciple inherited from any given school were relatively unique and thus different from other lineages of scholarship on the same classic.²³ Vis-à-vis such a new phenomenon in the scholarly arena, the term *shimen* (literally, teacher's gate) began to appear for the first time in the first century during the early years of the Eastern Han -- exactly the same time when Bao Xian wrote his commentary on the *Analects*.²⁴ By highlighting the term *peng* in

Waley, for instance, has offered arguments against the historical reliability of *Analects* 13.3 where the term *zhengming* originates. See Waley, *The Analects of Confucius* (New York: Vintage Book, 1938), pp.21-22. Recently, Bryan Van Norden attempted to further strengthen Waley's argument. See his "The *Dao* of Kongzi," manuscript, pp.9-11. While this is certainly not the place to tackle this thorny issue in detail, I would just say that Waley's and Van Norden's arguments are by no means conclusive. Even if the historical reliability of *Analects* 13.3 is in fact questionable, it does not mean that Confucius did not entertain some belief in the proper naming of things. In fact, in *Analects* 6.25 where Confucius evidently appears to have a keen awareness of the proper naming of things in that the name of a thing should match what it is in reality. And by their own admissions, Waley and Van Norden recognize Book 6 as one of the "core books" of the *Analects*. See Bryan W. Van Norden ed., *Confucius and the Analects: New Essays* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p.18.

²³ Fan Ye's comments on the "Biographies of Confucian Scholars" 儒林傳 in the *HouHan shu*, *juan* 109b, 9:2588.

²⁴ See, for example, the "Biography of Huan Rong" 桓榮傳 and "Biography of Liu Ban" 劉般傳 in the *HouHan shu*, *juan* 37 and *juan* 39 respectively, 5:1292 and 5:1304. The term *shimen* does not appear in the standard histories of the Western Han dynasty such as Sima Qian's *Shiji*, Ban Gu's *Hanshu* or Xun Yue's 荀悅 (148-209) *QianHan ji* 前漢紀. Neither does it appear in primary sources of other genres on the Western Han.

his commentary, Bao perhaps could remind his readers who had joined a community of fellow disciples of drawing parallels between themselves and the disciples of Confucius. Thus they could follow the models of fellow discipleship in the *Analects* in negotiating their own newfound relationships under a common teacher.²⁵

In this connection, it is instructive to point out that the Han government had a peculiar interest in formulating the norms for a variety of cardinal interpersonal relationships. In the year of 79 during the reign of Emperor Zhang 章帝 in the Eastern Han, namely fourteen years after Bao Xian had passed away, a council was called by the emperor to discuss the meanings and interpretations of the Five Classics among Confucian scholars at the White Tiger Hall, and the result of the deliberation was compiled by Ban Gu (32-92) 班固 in a book titled *Baihu tongyi* 白虎通義. Many issues were discussed in the conference, and there was a special discussion on the issue of interpersonal relationships under the topic of *san'gang liuji* 三綱六紀 (Three Bonds and Six Threads). Of the so-called "Six Threads," one of them is *peng-you* (朋友).

While the relationships between classmates and friends may seem too mundane to merit any political attention for any government today, it was certainly not the case in Han times. The *Baihu tongyi* defines *peng* and *you* severally: "*Peng* means 'fellowship' (*dang* 黨) and *you* means 'being caring' (*you* 有)." Then, interestingly, the definition cites two lines from the *Liji* 禮記 for textual support. These two lines, which have been mentioned earlier in our discussion, had virtually become common knowledge in the Han period. Again, they read, "People who share the same gate are called fellow disciples and people who entertain the same ambition are called friends."²⁶ And in outlining the obligations between fellow disciples and those between friends, the *Baihu tongyi* cites only three passages for textual support and they all come from the *Analects*.²⁷ As the *Analects* was a primer for ethics for young children in the Han dynasty, we can understand why this was so, and perhaps it was for this very same

²⁵ In his commentary on *Analects* 19.3 in which two of Confucius's disciples, Zixia and Zizhang, discuss personal relationships, Bao Xian makes a special note that "in interacting with friends, we should follow Zixia's advice whereas in interacting of acquaintances, we should follow Zizhang's advice 友交當如子夏，泛交當如子張." It is important to point out that Bao does not mention *peng* in his note.

²⁶ Chen Li, *Baihu tong shuzheng*, *juan* 8, 1:376. My translation of *you* as "being caring" follows Wang Niansun's 王念孫 (1744-1832) annotation, which was included in Chen Li's commentary and can be found in 1:377.

²⁷ Chen Li, *Baihu tong shuzheng*, *juan* 8, 1:377-378. The three *Analects* passages are 5.26, 10.22, and 11.22. For some reason, Ban Gu's exposition focused only on the obligations that were deemed common to friends and fellow disciples; it did not single out those unique to fellow disciples.

reason why Bao Xian highlighted the term *peng* in his commentary. In conclusion, we can say that Bao Xian's commentary appeared to be firmly grounded in his scholarly interest in the historicity of details in the *Analects* as well as in the everyday reality of his own time. In all likelihood, his interpretation represented the view on this simple term in late Western and early Eastern Han.

We shall never know how Bao Xian actually understood *Analects* 1.1 since his gloss on *peng* was the only snippet He Yan selected from his original commentary on this chapter. Did Bao, for example, think Confucius was talking about his personal experience and moral achievement, or did he understand what the Master said to be the outcomes of various kinds of self-cultivation accessible to all? Given his gloss on *peng*, however, it is probable that Bao would prefer a reading that was specific to the particular historical personage Confucius, rather than one that would appeal to the significance of self-cultivation as a universal practice. By sheer luck, we have a piece of evidence from the same period that corroborates with Bao's possible interpretation. And it was recorded in Ban Gu's *Baihu tongyi*, a text that was compiled after Bao Xian's commentary had been officially endorsed by the Han government. The text mentions that there exists a threefold relationship between teacher and disciple. A teacher can be a friend (*pengyou* 朋友) to his disciple; he can also command respect from his disciples like a father figure; still, a teacher can act like a lord to his disciple who will learn from him the way of being a subordinate.²⁸ In arguing for the friendship (*pengyou zhi dao* 朋友之道) between teacher and disciple, Ban Gu cited *Analects* 1.1 as his evidence. It is clear, then, that he, like Bao Xian, understood the term *peng* in *Analects* 1.1 as the disciples from the same "gate" whom were considered "friends" as well. And according to Ban Gu's judgment, the "gate" belonged to Confucius, who treated his disciples as "friends." When his disciples, having been done studying with him, came back for a visit, Confucius would find great joy in their company. Evidently, Ban Gu understood *Analects* 1.1 to be Confucius's articulation of the various experiences he had personally undergone in his self-cultivation.

RESCUING THE TEACHER -- HAN YU AND LIU CHANG

No doubt He Yan endorsed Bao Xian's gloss of *peng* as he made a special effort to include it in his *Collected Commentaries*. As a matter of fact, Bao's gloss continued to be followed for at least another seven or eight hundred years, during which time Buddhism had come to China, gained a firm foothold and made thousands of converts even among the literati. It

²⁸ Chen Li, *Baihu tong shuzheng*, juan 6, 1:258. In the "Xueji" 學記 chapter of the *Liji*, we also learn that "a teacher is someone from whom one learns how to be a lord" (師也者, 所以學為君也). See *Liji zhushu* 禮記注疏 in Ruan Yuan, *Shisanjing zhushu*, juan 36, 5:654.

has even been argued that as Buddhism gained widespread influence across all social strata in the Tang period, China, in this sense, became virtually a Buddhist state.²⁹ Buddhism was everywhere in evidence, physically and spiritually. Everyone accepted the Buddhist religion as an integral part of their lives and the reality they lived with. Chan literature provides one of the best records that demonstrate how Buddhist masters commanded the respect of people from all walks of life when they delivered sermons or simply entertained queries from visitors in their monasteries. While monks trekked all over the country, they did not do so for missionary purposes. On the contrary, Chan records show that people flocked to the monasteries in order to seek instructions. In fact, even scholars who aspired to learning would leave their urban dwellings and come into the mountains to study in the monasteries. This is especially true when the Tang empire was approaching its demise and during the seventy-three years (907-979) of political disunity following the Tang dynasty.

The flocking of scholars to Buddhist monasteries indicates that the Confucian teacher was losing his cultural and spiritual authority. By the time of the famous Confucian scholar Han Yu 韓愈 (768-824), scholars who aspired to learning were actually ashamed of seeking instruction from a Confucian teacher. The situation had deteriorated so deplorably that Han Yu felt obliged to compose an essay to condemn it. In his essay titled "Discourse on Teachers" ("Shishuo" 師說), he averred that "students of ancient times all had their teachers, for it is only through the teacher that the Way is transmitted, learning imparted, and doubts dispelled" (傳道、授業、解惑). But looking at what was happening around him, he lamented,

Alas, the teaching of the Way has long been neglected! Hard it is, then, to expect men to be without doubts. The sages of antiquity far excelled ordinary men, and yet they sought teachers and questioned them. But the common people of today, though they are equally far from the level of the sages, count it a shame to study with a teacher.... The sort of teacher who only gives a child a book and teaches him to punctuate and read is not what I call a transmitter of the Way and a dispeller of doubts....among the families of scholar-officials if you speak of a teacher or a disciple everyone gathers around and begins to laugh....³⁰

²⁹ Charles Hartman, *Han Yü and the T'ang Search for Unity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), p.5. See also Stanley Weinstein, *Buddhism under the T'ang* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

³⁰ There is a complete translation of the essay in Wm. Theodore de Bary, Wing-tsit Chan, and Burton Watson compiled, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, Vol. 1. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), pp.374-375. Our citation comes from p.375.

In Han Yu's mind, as the cultural authority of the Confucian teacher eroded, the respect for the Confucian Way would inevitably fall into oblivion. For this reason he wrote another essay titled "What is the True Way?" ("Yuan Dao" 原道) in which he asserted that everything that was best in Chinese civilization was indeed indebted to Confucianism and that this glorious civilization had only begun to degenerate with the rise and flourishing of Taoism and Buddhism in China.³¹ Although classical Taoism (he cited the *Zhuangzi* in his criticism) was mentioned in the essay, Han Yu's diatribe was in fact primarily targeted at Buddhism. Thus at the end of his essay he concluded that "unless [Buddhism] is suppressed, the Way will not prevail; unless [these men of Buddhism] are stopped, the Way will not be practiced. Let their priests be turned into ordinary men again, let their books be burned and their temples converted into homes. Let the Way of our former kings be made clear to lead them.... Then all will be well."³² Han Yu's petition to the authorities to exterminate Buddhism was passionate and unmistakable.

When Han Yu asserted that one of the duties of the teacher was to transmit the Way, he implied that the Way indeed could be transmitted. And in his essay he actually claimed that there was a lineage of the transmission of the Confucian Way which began with Yao 堯 and was passed down to Shun 舜, who succeeded to his throne as well. Then after an uninterrupted succession of several sage-kings, the Duke of Zhou 周公 transmitted the Way to Confucius, who then taught it to Mencius. But when Mencius died the Way was no longer handed down. It is well known that Han Yu's invention of such a lineage of transmission of the Way was inspired by Chan Buddhism in his time. Nevertheless, for this ingenious exploit, he was usually considered, in retrospect, the forerunner of *daoxue* 道學 (Dao Learning), or what is often known as Neo-Confucianism that was later developed in the Song period. While the invention of a Confucian lineage itself might be borrowed from the Buddhists, Han Yu should be credited for his astute observation of the crucial connection between the disruption and resumption of the transmission of the Way and the reassertion of the cultural and spiritual authority of the Confucian teacher. In order to be able to resume the transmission of the Way, due respect should be paid to the Confucian teacher again. Indeed, if we read the tenor of his essay carefully, it seems clear that Han Yu was inclined to consider himself the long-awaited person who would be able to carry on the transmission of the Confucian Way from Mencius. In so doing, Han Yu, in effect, created a dual

³¹ A complete translation of the essay can be found in Wm. Theodore de Bary and Irene Bloom compiled, *Sources of Chinese Tradition: From Earliest Times to 1600*, Vol. 1. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999, 2nd edition), pp.569-573. The title of the essay is translated as "Essentials of the Moral Way."

³² Translation is modified from de Bary et al., *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, Vol.1, p.379.

origin of the idea of lineage for a new kind of Confucianism (Neo-Confucianism) to be developed in the Song. To wit, Han Yu gave birth to the idea of a school of thought as a lineage has its roots both in the influence of Chan Buddhism and also in the idea of a lineage from Confucius the teacher to his later disciples. As regards scholars who aspired to inherit and carry on with the Confucian Way, Han Yu recommended that they reinterpret the Way according to their own understanding. In his commentary on *Analects* 2.11³³ he said,

Scholars in the past all said [the meaning of this passage is thus:] “to investigate and interpret literary writings, starting with the old and then proceeding to the new.” But this is rote learning, and [its mastery] does not qualify one to be a teacher.³⁴ I say “old” means “the Way of antiquity” and “new” means “one’s own innovative interpretations that can serve as a new paradigm.”³⁵

先儒皆謂尋繹文翰，由古及新，此是記問治學，不足為人師也。吾謂古者古之道也，新謂己之新意可為新法。

It is amply clear that Han Yu disparaged rote learning and blind adherence to the Way, which were exactly what the teachers taught in his time. To him, the Confucian Way can only be made viable with innovative interpretations that build upon the collective wisdom from the past. Indeed personal creative insights should outweigh the unthinking observance of the Way. It is no coincidence that Han Yu sometimes changed the original graphs in the *Analects* to suit his own reading of the text.³⁶ And he often cited interpretations from He Yan’s *Collected Commentaries* and subjected them to his scathing critiques. Typically, he would bluntly point out, without explanations, that these earlier commentaries were wrong and then put forth his own interpretations.³⁷ Compared to Bao Xian’s historicist approach, Han Yu’s hermeneutics strove to free its imagination from the

³³ Han Yu wrote a commentary on the *Analects* in ten scrolls called *Lunyu zhu* 論語注, but it was long lost. However, Han Yu had another commentary in two scrolls which he co-authored with Li Ao 李翱 (772-841). This short commentary, titled *Lunyu bijie* 論語筆解, is still extant today and is cited in our essay.

³⁴ This line actually comes from the “Xueji” chapter of the *Liji*, see *Liji zhushu* in Ruan Yuan, *Shisanjing zhushu*, juan 36, 5:655.

³⁵ Han Yu and Li Ao, *Lunyu bijie*, in *Qinding Siku quanshu*, juan shang 卷上, 196:5.

³⁶ See, for instance, his commentary on *Analects* 2.2, 5.12, and 11.19. Han Yu’s typical reason was that the original graph was a misprint.

³⁷ Charles Hartman has correctly pointed out that Han Yu’s writings generally adopted a martial tone. See his *Han Yü and the T’ang Search for Unity*, p.5.

constraints of concrete historicity. It is most ironic that while Confucius described himself as someone who “transmitted but did not innovate,”³⁸ Han Yu, in his valiant attempt to revive the Confucian Way, insisted on innovation. In fact, he argued that traditional commentators got it all wrong when they said Confucius was being modest in saying that he was a mere transmitter.³⁹ In any case, it can be argued that Han’s highly interpretive commentary on the *Analects* foreshadowed Song-dynasty (960-1279) style exegesis on Confucian classics, which was routinely condemned as subjective by Qing-dynasty (1644-1911) classicists.

In spite of Han Yu’s protest against Buddhism and his attempt to rally support for the reassertion of the authority of the Confucian teacher, the situation did not improve when the Northern Song opened a new page in Chinese history. Shi Jie 石介 (1005-1045) continued to deprecate scholars who felt ashamed to seek instructions from Confucian teachers; he considered this to be their “big blind spot” (後世恥於求師，學者之大蔽也).⁴⁰ The spiritual authority of the Buddhist masters did not seem to diminish in any way. A little known but extremely telling episode from the early Northern Song (960-1127) best illustrates the perceived superiority in the Chinese mind of Buddhism over Confucianism in spiritual matters. Once, Emperor Taizong 太宗 (r.976-997) told his prime minister Zhao Pu 趙普 (922-992) that His Majesty was attracted to the teachings of Buddhism for its “subtle words and fundamental principles” (*weiyang zongzhi* 微言宗旨). At the same time, the emperor also emphasized that in ruling the country it would be ludicrous to follow the example of Emperor Wu of Liang 梁武帝 (r. 502-549), who, sometimes known as China’s Aśoka, was infamous for his lifelong dedication to Buddhism. He, for instance, “sold” himself three times to the monasteries and was eventually compelled to redeem himself by donating millions of cash to the Buddhist establishment. Traditionally, Chinese historians unanimously blamed Emperor Wu of Liang for the ultimate downfall of his regime. Zhao Pu’s response to Taizong emperor’s remark is particularly worthy of note. He said, “Your Majesty governs the world with the Way of Yao and Shun, and cultivates the mind in light of the teachings of the Buddha. Lofty and

³⁸ *Analects* 7.1.

³⁹ *Lunyu bijie, juan shang*, in *Qinding Siku quanshu*, 196:9. Han Yu seems to be arguing that Confucius was actually lamenting in *Analects* 7.1 that he could not find anyone worthy enough to receive the Way from him.

⁴⁰ See Shi Jie’s essay “Discourse on Teachers” 師說 in his *Culai Shi xiangsheng wenji* 徂徠石先生文集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), pp.258-259. The essay only survives in fragmentary form today, but it is clear that Shi Jie wrote it in the style of Han Yu, whom he revered.

profound, your sagely wisdom penetrates into the principles of Truth 陛下以堯舜之道治世，以浮屠之教修心，聖智高遠，洞悟真理。”⁴¹

It is clear from this exchange that both the emperor and his highest-ranking official shared the view that Confucianism and Buddhism each, as it were, had their own philosophical precinct, with the former guiding the governance of the state and the latter enlightening the minds of sentient beings. The two precincts were considered philosophically distinct, and the possibility of integrating the two seemed to be out of the question for either the emperor or the prime minister. In light of this episode, we can fully appreciate a famous slogan attributed to Zhao Pu, which says, “One can govern all under Heaven with just one half of the *Analects*” (半部論語治天下).⁴² Whether or not the *Analects* had the alleged magical power, it was definitely considered to be a book whose primary efficacy lay in bringing order to the world.

With this general understanding of the Confucian doctrine, it is no wonder, then, that Buddhism continued to dominate in the early years of the Northern Song insofar as spiritual matters were concerned. The spiritual authority of the Confucian teacher demanded to be recovered more than ever. In fact, Luo Congyan 羅從彥 (1072-1135), who reported the episode between Emperor Taizong and Zhao Pu from about a hundred years ago, made an astute comment on it. He agreed with Emperor Taizong that Buddhism was indeed an insightful teaching that was reasonable and profound, so much that it was beyond the imagination of the Confucians. However, he emphasized that the Buddhist doctrine was not the same as *the Way of Yao, Shun and Confucius*, for it cut off human relationships and remained aloof from worldly affairs 絕乎人倫，外乎世務，非堯舜孔子之

⁴¹ Luo Congyan 羅從彥 (1072-1135), *Luo Yuzhang ji* 羅豫章集, (Shanghai: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1937), *juan 2*, p.25. On another occasion, Emperor Taizong told Zhao Pu that he noticed some of the candidates who took the civil examination were formerly Taoist or Buddhist priests. These candidates did not study the classics well, and if they were given a post, they would not be morally incorruptible. Thus, the emperor reiterated that successful candidates must first study the classics thoroughly and follow the way of the Duke of Zhou and Confucius. See *Yuzhang ji*, *juan 2*, p.18. It should be pointed out that Luo Congyan was a disciple of Yang Shi 楊時 (1053-1135), who had studied under the Cheng 程 brothers in the Northern Song. Luo's own student Li Yanping 李延平 (1093-1163) was none other than the teacher of Zhu Xi.

⁴² *Paiyun zengguang shilei shizu daquan* 排韻增廣事類氏族大全, *juan 15*, in *Qinding Siku quanshu*, 952:426. This work was probably completed in the late thirteenth century during the early years of the Yuan dynasty (1279-1368); it is a collection of anecdotes about historical personages from Chinese history until the Song dynasty (960-1279). The author of this work is unknown.

道。⁴³ It is clear that something must be done in order to re-claim proper recognition and respect for the Confucian Way. It was around this time Liu Chang 劉敞 (1019-1068), a specialist on the Confucian classic *Chunqiu* 春秋, composed his commentary on the *Analects*. Liu's commentary is not a complete one; he only commented on selected passages from the *Analects*. Sometimes he might comment on each individual line in a chapter, or he might simply write a summary statement on a given chapter.

It should be noted that Han Yu's invention of the lineage of the transmission of the Confucian Way won wide currency in the early Northern Song.⁴⁴ This widespread pursuit of the Way was also reflected in Liu Chang's commentary on the *Analects*. In his commentary on *Analects* 5.13, Liu acknowledged that only the sages had access to the Way of Heaven, which was passed down from Yao to Shun, and then from Shun to Yu 天道者...聖人所獨知也,堯授舜,舜授禹是也。⁴⁵ And on *Analects* 1.4, Liu had this to say:

Chuan means "transmitting the *Way* that one has received from one's teacher." How can one try to teach it to someone without first practicing it? One can only do harm to others [this way].⁴⁶

傳者，傳所受於師之道而今無乃不習而以教人乎？為誤人爾。

Read against He Yan's commentary on the same passage, Liu's intention to single out the Way as the object of transmission becomes crystal clear. He Yan's commentary reads, "For the *things* that one is to transmit, can one not study and practice them routinely before doing so 言凡所傳之事，得無素不講習而傳之乎?"⁴⁷ In He's reading, the object of transmission is knowledge about concrete things; in contrast, Liu Chang was only interested in the transmission of the Way. After all, Han Yu had already decried the imparting of book knowledge as detrimental to the authority of the Confucian teacher.

Elsewhere in his commentary Liu Chang repeatedly emphasized the difficulty of the transmission of the Way. His words on *Analects* 19.12 read as follows:

⁴³ Luo Congyan, *Yuzhang ji*, *juan* 2, pp.25-26.

⁴⁴ See, for example, Shi Jie's essay "On Venerating Han Yu" 尊韓 in his *Culai Shi xiangsheng wenji*, pp.79-80.

⁴⁵ Liu Chang, *Gongshi Qijing xiaozhuan* 公是七經小傳, *juan xia* 卷下, in *Qinding Siku quanshu*, 183:33.

⁴⁶ Liu Chang, *Gongshi Qijing xiaozhuan*, *juan xia*, 183:31.

⁴⁷ Huang Kan, *Lunyu jijie yishu*, 1:10.

This [chapter] addresses the difficulty of transmitting the Way. How can one imprudently try to teach [the Way] to someone without first practicing it oneself? [On the other hand,] how can one be lazy about transmitting [the Way] knowing that it is ready for transmission?⁴⁸

此言傳道之難也。孰有不試而輕以教人乎？孰有既知其可傳而傳之反倦怠乎？

It is unmistakable that Liu was completely consumed with the passion to revive the Confucian Way. He was not so much interested in whether the Way could be transmitted as in whether one had practiced the Way enough to transmit it. In other words, the crux of the issue about the transmission of the Confucian Way lies with the person who can transmit it, and this person is called the teacher. Liu Chang was acutely aware of the challenge involved and his commentary on the *Analects* bears testimony to his historical consciousness and his missionary zeal.

Like his spiritual predecessor Han Yu, Liu Chang fully appreciated the role of the Confucian teacher in the formidable task of reviving the Way, and thus the critical role of the teacher figured prominently in his commentary as well. On the three parts of *Analects* 1.1, Liu wrote accordingly,

Keeping warm the old and getting to know the new.
溫故而知新

Peng means a multitude [of people]. When one is qualified to be a teacher, a multitude of people will come to him as if returning home.
朋，眾也。可以為師而眾歸之

Not to worry about others' failure to appreciate yourself.⁴⁹
不患人之不己知

First of all, it should be noted that Liu cited two passages (2.11 and 1.16) from the *Analects* itself to comment on *Analects* 1.1 intratextually. While it makes sense to say that “having learned something and trying it out at due intervals” is in a sense “keeping warm the old and getting to know the new,” we must not miss the subtle yet ingenious clue in this intratextual reference. In its original context in *Analects* 2.11, the purpose of “keeping warm the old and getting to know the new” is to make one qualify to be a *teacher* (*keyi wei shi yi* 可以為師矣). Liu drove his point home in his commentary on the second part of the chapter. Here, Liu

⁴⁸ Liu Chang, *Gongshi Qijing xiaozhuan, juan xia*, 183:43.

⁴⁹ Liu Chang, *Gongshi Qijing xiaozhuan, juan xia*, 183:31.

departed from Bao Xian and glossed “*peng*” as “a multitude of people.” Philologically, he was on safe ground.⁵⁰ It is significant that the term *gui* 歸 (literally, return home) may carry a subtle Buddhist connotation here. In Buddhist terminology, when one accepts the teachings and precepts of the Buddha, one is said to take refuge in (*gui*) Buddhism. Conversion to Buddhism is compared to finding a shelter or new home in life. Liu Chang’s use of the term *gui* here appears to be deliberate, as it subliminally conveys the hope that people who find spiritual fulfillment in Buddhism will “return home” and “take refuge in” Confucianism again.

Just as Bao Xian tried to relate his commentary to the reality of his time, Liu Chang addressed the concerns of his own era, and to him the most pressing of all was the revival of the authority of the Confucian teacher. How could the Confucian teacher attract people to himself? This is the question that loomed large in Liu’s commentary and he brought it to the forefront in the very first line of his work. This is also the question that determined Liu’s interpretation of the term *peng*.

The examples of Han Yu and Liu Chang indicate that the preoccupation of the transmission of the Way had made Confucian scholars painfully aware of the critical role of the teacher, and such preoccupation then shaped their understanding of the meaning of *peng* in the *Analects*. Instead of focusing on the interpersonal relationship among fellow students that was occasioned by the presence of a common teacher, the hermeneutical spotlight was now shifted onto the teacher himself. The meaning of *peng* was then explicated in relation to the cultural function and influence of the teacher. When we come to the Southern Song (1127-1279), however, the interpretation of *peng* began to take yet another new turn.

In response to the erosion of the authority of the teacher, Confucian scholars began to introduce reform in the education system in the early Northern Song. One of the ultimate concerns for educational reform was to train new talents to institute political reform, as the Northern Song, a relatively weak government, had to confront the Khitans in the north and the Tanguts from the west, who were threatening its security. Of particular importance in the educational reform were the roles of Fan Zhongyan 范仲淹 (989-1052) and Hu Yuan 胡瑗 (993-1059).⁵¹ When he was young, Hu

⁵⁰ In the commentary on the *Shangshu* 尚書 attributed to Kong Anguo 孔安國 of the Western Han dynasty, there is a gloss on the term *peng* in the “Yiji” 益稷 chapter and it says, “*Peng* means a group [of people] 朋, 群也.” See *Shangshu zhushu* 尚書注疏, in Ruan Yuan, *Shisanjing zhushu*, juan 5, 1:71.

⁵¹ For studies in English on Fan Zhongyan, see James Liu, “An Early Sung Reformer: Fan Chung-yen,” in *Chinese Thought and Institutions*, edited by John King Fairbank (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), pp.105-31; “Some Reflections on Fan Chung-yen (989-1052),” in *A Festschrift in Honor of Professor Jao Tsung-i on the Occasion of His Seventy-fifth*

left his family to study in a Taoist temple on Mt. Tai 泰山 for ten years, for there were no schools around for scholars to receive education. Thereafter he was teaching Confucian classics in the Suzhou 蘇州 area. When Fan Zhongyan was prefect of Suzhou, he employed Hu Yuan to teach in the prefectural school; later on, Hu also taught in Huzhou 湖州. In Hu's curricular design students were put on two different tracks -- one on the scholarly studies of the classics themselves and one on the practical applications of the classics. A balance was struck in this dual focus on the Confucian curriculum. Hu Yuan's curricular design and pedagogy later became the model for many regional schools and was even adopted by the central government when he was employed to take charge of the Imperial Academy. It was known as the Su-Hu pedagogy (蘇湖教法). Altogether he spent twenty years in his teaching career and he was said to have taught more than 1,700 students.⁵² Just as Liu Chang and others were busy defending the authority of the Confucian teacher, the institution of academy (*shuyuan* 書院) began to be implemented all over the country.⁵³

By the middle of the eleventh century there were signs that showed that Confucian teachers had begun to command authority and respect from society at large. The well known episode of the Neo-Confucian master Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107) speaks volumes. When two of Cheng Yi's disciples went to see their master for the first time at his residence one afternoon in the winter, Cheng Yi was about to take a siesta and so he asked them to come back again. However, the young men decided to stand in waiting. As the master awoke, he looked around and saw them in his room, so he urged them to go home as night had already begun to fall. When the two disciples went outside, they noticed that a foot of fresh snow had accumulated.⁵⁴ The respect for a teacher was most graphically and even

Anniversary (Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1993), pp.293-300.

⁵² Qian Mu 錢穆, *Song-Ming lixue gaishu* 宋明理學概述 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1975), pp.2-5. For a recent study on Hu Yuan and his commentary on the *Zhouyi* 周易, see Tze-ki Hon, "Eremitism, Sagehood, and Public Service: The *Zhouyi kouyi* of Hu Yuan," in *Monumenta Serica* 48 (2000): 67-92.

⁵³ For recent studies on academies in the Song period, see Thomas H.C. Lee, "Academies: Official Sponsorship and Suppression," in Frederick P. Brandauer and Chun-chieh Huang eds., *Imperial Rulership and Cultural Change in Traditional China* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1994), pp.117-143, and Thomas H.C. Lee, *Government Education and Examinations in Sung China* (New York: St. Martin's/Hong Kong: Chinese University of Hong Kong, 1985).

⁵⁴ *Henan Chengshi waishu* 河南程氏外書, *juan* 12, in *Ercheng ji* 二程集, 4 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984, 2nd reprint), 2:429. This famous episode was also included in the *Jinsi lu* 近思錄, an important anthology on

poetically captured in this episode. Indeed, when Cheng Yi was tutor to Zhezong 哲宗 emperor (r. 1086-1100), he conducted himself in the way that befitted the teacher 以師道自居.⁵⁵ As it was customary, the tutor, or technically known as the Classics Mat lecturer (*jingyan shi* 經筵師), should stand up while lecturing, but Cheng Yi always sat down and kept a solemn countenance.⁵⁶ Cheng argued that the practice was contrary to what was done in the past, and not only was it morally appropriate for the tutor to be seated while lecturing, but it also helped to encourage the Emperor's honor for Confucian scholars and respect for the Confucian Way 特令坐講, 不為義理為順, 所以養主上遵儒重道之心.⁵⁷ It is, then, little surprise that Cheng Yi in his well known commentary on the *Book of Changes* said, "In ancient times, only when the lord had expressed their utmost reverence in full accord with prescribed rituals would a person answer his summon. This is not because the person summoned wanted to be arrogant. Rather, it was probably because he honored virtue and took delight in the Way, for if a lord does not behave in the same way, he is not worthy of being helped towards the achievement of great things 古之人所以必待人君致敬盡禮而後望者, 非欲自為尊大, 蓋其尊德樂道, 不如是不足與有為也."⁵⁸ The emperor held Cheng Yi in awe.⁵⁹ Once after tutoring, the emperor playfully snapped a twig from a willow tree by the window, and when Cheng Yi saw it, he admonished him, saying "It is now spring time and life is stirring. Do not injure anything for no reason 方春發生, 不可無故摧折."⁶⁰ Compared to the situation Han Yu described about two centuries ago, the Confucian teacher had indeed come a long way.

Neo-Confucianism compiled by Zhu Xi and Lü Zuqian 呂祖謙 (1137-1181). For an English translation of the episode, see Wing-tsit Chan translated, with notes, *Reflections on Things at Hand* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p.304.

⁵⁵ Cheng Yi's strong sense of self-respect can be illustrated by the fact that he as Classics Mat Lecturer refused to submit an application for his salary to the Board of Revenue as customarily required. He'd rather borrow money to live on. See *Henan Chengshi yishu* 河南程氏遺書, *juan* 19, in *Ercheng ji*, 1:259. See also de Bary and Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, p.634.

⁵⁶ For some background on the institution of the Classics Mat, see de Bary and Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, pp.628-638.

⁵⁷ "Lun jingyan disan zhazi" 論經筵第三札子 in *Henan Chengshi wenji* 河南程氏文集, *juan* 6. See *Ercheng ji*, 2:539. For a translation of the text, see de Bary and Bloom, *Sources of Chinese Tradition*, p.638.

⁵⁸ *Zhouyi Chengshizhuan* 周易程氏傳, *juan* 1, commentary on the Meng 蒙 hexagram, in *Ercheng ji*, 3:719.

⁵⁹ *Henan Chengshi waishu*, *juan* 12, in *Ercheng ji*, 2:423.

⁶⁰ Zhu Xi 朱熹, "Yichuan xiansheng nianpu" 伊川先生年譜 in *Henan Chengshi yishu*, Appendix. See *Ercheng ji*, 1:342.

On the other hand, as the Northern Song was preoccupied with nation-building, issues of metaphysical significance were paled in the process. By and large, scholars were expending their creative energies in the political arena. Ouyang Xiu's 歐陽修 (1007-1070) perhaps captured the ethos of his time in the most direct way. In one of his letters to his friend Li Xu 李燾, he said that the Six Classics were all about practical issues that were pertinent to our lives, and that issues about human nature should not be the pressing concerns of scholars in his time. He substantiated his claim by noting that Confucius's disciples, as reported in the *Analects*, never asked any question about human nature.⁶¹ Ouyang Xiu, in effect, confirmed the views of Taizong Emperor and Zhao Pu that metaphysical speculations and spiritual cultivation did belong to the precinct of Buddhist teachings. At the very least, spiritual concerns should be put on the back burner at this critical juncture of nation-building.

IDENTIFYING WITH THE SAGE -- ZHU XI

The ambitious and radical political reforms introduced by Wang Anshi 王安石 (1021-1086) in the middle of the eleventh century split up many a scholar-official in opposing factions and failed in the end.⁶² One of the lessons many scholar-officials learned from the contentious factional politics was that successful political reform hinged on the moral minds of the people involved. As Wang Anshi himself put it, "the difference between a king and a hegemon lies in the mind."⁶³ The painful lesson of this protracted political struggle helped to shift the interests of Confucian scholars onto the search for a better understanding of the human mind.⁶⁴

⁶¹ "Da Li Xu diershu" 答李燾第二書 in *Ouyang Xiu quanji* 歐陽修全集, 6 vols. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), *juan* 47, 2:669. For a study of Ouyang Xiu, see James T.C. Liu, *Ou-yang Hsiu: An Eleventh-Century Neo-Confucianist* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1967).

⁶² For a discussion of the reforms introduced by Wang Anshi during the reign of Emperor Shenzong 神宗 (r. 1067-1085), see James T.C. Liu, *Reform in Sung China: Wang An-shih (1021-1089) and His New Policies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1959). See also the chapters by George Hatch, Paul J. Smith, and Peter K. Bol in *Ordering the World: Approaches to State and Society in Sung Dynasty China*, edited by Robert P. Hymes and Conrad Schirokauer (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), pp.39-192.

⁶³ Cited in Qian Mu, *Song-Ming lixue gaishu*, p.19.

⁶⁴ The idea of working on the fundamental, namely, the human mind, particularly, that of the ruler is repeatedly emphasized in *juan* 8 of the *Jinsi lu*. For example, Cheng Hao was quoted as saying, "The way of government may be discussed from the aspect of its fundamentals or from the aspect of its practical affairs. From the aspects of its fundamentals, it is nothing but 'rectifying what is wrong in the ruler's mind' and 'rectifying one's mind in order to rectify the minds of the officials at court, and rectifying the minds of

The switch from political rebuilding to philosophical exploration of the mind certainly justifies what James T.C. Liu characterizes as “inward turning” in the Song period.⁶⁵ Issues concerning human nature finally were moved to the front burner in the Southern Song.⁶⁶

Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130-1200) was born shortly after the Song regime had been forced to move south in the year of 1127. With the Confucian teacher now well respected in society and an interest in exploring human nature and the mind rekindled, Zhu Xi came to read the *Analects* quite differently from all his predecessors.⁶⁷ His gloss on *peng* is concise and it says,

Peng refers to people who are of the same kind. Since those from afar have come, we know those from nearby [will come as well]. Master Cheng said, “When a person extends goodness to other people, many will follow him in faith. That is how he is joyful.”⁶⁸

朋，同類也。自遠方來，近者可知。程子曰以善及人，而信從者眾，故可樂。

Zhu Xi was more interested in the common ontological ground that *peng* shared than in the social relationship that made them different. When a student of his asked him about the meaning of *Analects* 1.1, Zhu Xi answered, “Goodness is not something one can monopolize; everyone has it. When I acquired goodness by virtue of practice and yet am not able to extend it to others, it may be pleasurable but it is not joyful善不是自家獨有，人皆有之。我習而自得，未能及人，雖說未樂。”⁶⁹ That is why he elaborated on the implication of *peng* coming from afar, which is not

the officials at court in order to rectify the minds of various officers.’ From the aspects of its practical affairs, nothing needs to be done if the ruler does not want to save the country....” See Wing-tsit Chan, *Reflections on Things at Hand*, p.213. See also pp.214, 215.

⁶⁵ James T.C. Liu, *China Turning Inward: Intellectual-Political Changes in the Early Twelfth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988).

⁶⁶ For a discussion of the broader sociopolitical context of the twelfth-century that shaped Zhu Xi’s efforts to reinvigorate a weakened culture and moral tradition, see Daniel K. Gardner, *Learning to be a Sage: Selections from the Conversations of Master Chu, Arranged Topically* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), pp.10-22, 62-63.

⁶⁷ Zhu Xi specifically criticized Liu Chang’s commentary on the *Analects*, saying that it was “Lao-Zhuang Taoist in spirit in its interpretation of the critical passages in the *Analects*.” See Li Jingde 黎靖德 compiled, *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1999, 4th reprint), *juan* 19, 2:443.

⁶⁸ Zhu Xi, *Lunyun jizhu* 論語集注 in *Sishu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集注 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001, 6th reprint), p.47.

⁶⁹ Li Jingde, *Zhuzi yulei*, *juan* 20, 2:454.

necessarily intimated in the *Analects*. In Zhu's understanding, *peng* is someone with whom one associates because of their inherently shared conditions, which are neither physical nor social, but moral and metaphysical. The citation from Master Cheng makes this point clear. *Peng* are people who join company by virtue of their moral affinities.⁷⁰ In this sense, *peng* then is equivalent to what was called you (like-minded friend) in the Han period. In fact, in his *Sishu huowen* 四書或問, which details his meticulous ruminations of the ideas he eventually incorporated in his commentary that we know as the *Sishu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集注, Zhu Xi actually uses the term you in discussing the second part of *Analects* 1.1 where *peng* appears.⁷¹ In other words, *peng* and you become interchangeable insofar as moral affinities are concerned.

Zhu Xi evidently had read He Yan's *Collected Commentaries* as he seemed to discuss it regularly with his students,⁷² so he was fully aware of Bao Xian's gloss. Yet, after devoting his entire life on writing his commentary on the Four Books, he chose not to follow Bao's interpretation. There must be some profound reason for his departure from this standard interpretation, and it has to be found in the significance of his own gloss.

Basically, Zhu Xi characterized the exegeses from the Han-Wei period as "philological and annotative" (*xungu* 訓詁), but he considered the *Analects* to be a classic from the sages that encapsulated the essential teachings for our lives. Therefore, we should try to understand, in a personal way, the experience articulated in the book, or as he put it, to "savor the taste" of the book (漢魏諸儒只是訓詁, 論語須是玩味) rather than just knowing the meanings of the text (只是理會文義).⁷³ Contrary to the condemnation of many Qing-dynasty classicists that Zhu Xi disregarded the scholarship of Han exegetes, Zhu Xi's gloss on *peng* actually stands on solid philological ground. Zhang Yi's 張揖 (fl. early third century) *Guangya* 廣雅, for instance, was and still is one of the standard references for philological research, and it glosses "*peng*" as "category" or "kind" 類.⁷⁴ But when Zhu Xi defined *peng* as *tonglei*, he did not only have

⁷⁰ Cheng Yi himself said in his commentary on the *Yizhuan* 易傳 that "men and sages are of the same kind 人之與聖人, 類也." See *Zhouyi Chengshizhuan* in *Ercheng ji*, *juan* 1, 3:701.

⁷¹ Zhu Xi, *Sishu huowen* (Shanghai: Shanghai Guji chubanshe and Anhui jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001), p.106.

⁷² Li Jingde, *Zhuzi yulei*, *juan* 19, 2:428-445, *passim*.

⁷³ Li Jingde, *Zhuzi yulei*, *juan* 19, 2:434. Zhu Xi's emphasis on personal experiential understanding of the *Analects* is a constant theme in his discussion of the text with his students. See, *juan* 19, *passim*.

⁷⁴ Wang Niansun, *Guangya* 廣雅, (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1983), *juan* 3a, p.81.

philological justification in mind.⁷⁵ The term “*tonglei*,” which he used to explicate *peng*, actually comes from the book of *Mencius* where it says,

Now things of the same kind are all alike. Why should we have doubts when it comes to man? The sage and I are of the same kind....Should hearts prove to be an exception by possessing nothing in common? What is common to all hearts? Reason and rightness. The sage is simply the man first to discover this common element in my heart.⁷⁶

故凡同類者，舉相似也。何獨至於人而疑之？聖人與我同類者...心之所同然者何也？謂理也義也。聖人先得我心之所同然耳。

However, in this passage Mencius is not talking about fellow discipleship; he is indeed making a universal claim that the sages and all other human beings are of the same kind in terms of their minds wherein “reason and rightness” lie. In other words, Mencius defines “*lei*” in moral terms in a universalistic way; he is not interested in artificial social boundaries here. And it is precisely this unique philosophical underpinning of *lei* that Zhu Xu wanted to introduce in his own interpretation of *peng*.

Zhu Xi’s interpretation of *peng* was predicated on his understanding of the entire first book of the *Analects*, whose essential meaning, he argued, focused on the idea of learning (*xue* 學). He expressed this most unequivocally when he summarized the gist of the first book as follows: “This is the first book of the *Analects*, so most of the sayings recorded center on the idea of working on the fundament. It is the gate to entering into the Way, and the foundation of the accumulation of virtues 此為書之首篇，故所記多為務本之意，乃入道之門，積德之基。”⁷⁷ Elsewhere, he also said, “This book (i.e., the first book of the *Analects*) is, above all else, to spell out the one fundament 此一篇都是先說一箇根本。”⁷⁸ And Zhu Xi pointed out directly that this “fundament” was carefully elaborated, in gradation, in the experience of learning in *Analects* 1.1.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ Zhu Xi himself confessed that he was excited beyond words when he as a teenager read the line “The sages and I of the same kind” in the *Mencius*, because he thought he could become a sage as well. See Li Jingde, *Zhuzi yulei*, *juan* 104, 7:2611.

⁷⁶ D.C. Lau, tr., *Mencius* (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1970), 6A.7, p.164.

⁷⁷ Zhu Xi, *Lunyun jizhu* in *Sishu zhangju jizhu*, p.47.

⁷⁸ Zhu Xi, *Zhuzi yulei*, *juan* 21, 2:488.

⁷⁹ Another Song scholar Zheng Ruxie who was a contemporary senior to Zhu Xi also held the same view regarding the first chapter of the *Analects*. See Zheng Ruxie, *Lunyu yiyuan*, *juan* 1, in *Qinding Siku quanshu*, 199:113.

Just like Han Yu who disparaged book knowledge for its own sake, Zhu Xi, citing Yin Hejing 尹和靖 (1061-1132), who was a student of Cheng Yi, stated that “learning refers to learning to be human. When one learns to become a sage, one is simply practicing to the fullest the way of being human 所謂學者，所以學爲人也。學而至於聖人，亦不過盡爲人之道而已。”⁸⁰ So, for Zhu Xi, learning goes beyond book learning and should be integrated to the very essence of one being human. As Daniel K. Gardner sums it up most succinctly, “Learning -- defining it and transmitting it -- was at the heart of Chu Hsi’s [Zhu Xi’s] lifelong mission.”⁸¹ To Zhu Xi, authentic learning can only be found in Confucian teachings. As he himself put it baldly, “If one wants to connect with the Way, there is no other avenue than Confucian learning 欲通儒者之學，則舍儒者之學不可。”⁸² Learning now takes on an experiential dynamism that obliges us morally to cultivate the knowledge and to emulate the conduct of earlier sages. “Learning means to imitate 學之為言效也,” Zhu Xi pronounces emphatically in his commentary on the first line of the *Analects*, and he goes on to say, “Human nature is all good, and there is an order of being quicker or slower in awakening. Those who are slower in awakening must imitate the conduct of those who are quicker; only then are we able to manifest our goodness and return to our original state 人性皆善而覺有先後，後覺者必效先覺之所爲，乃可以明善而復其初也。”⁸³ Learning, as it turns out, becomes a redemptive endeavor that helps us recover our original state of being which is pure goodness. In Zhu Xi’s moral metaphysics, the experiential dynamism of learning thus links us back to our ontological grounding. And it is precisely on this moral-ontological grounding that we and the sages are of the same kind.

In a sense, Mencius’s claim about the sage and I being of the same kind runs counter to the relationship-based nature of *peng* as Bao Xian glossed it. That is, fellow discipleship is possible only when it is formed and defined with reference to a common mentor. Yet the Mencian claim attempts to break down all artificial distinctions between human beings and appeals only to their innate moral worth that is their common ontological

⁸⁰ See Zhu Xi, “Da Zhang Jingfu wenmu” 答張敬夫問目 (“Responses to Zhang Jingfu’s Queries”), *Hui’an ji* 晦庵集, *juan* 32, in *Qinding Siku quanshu*, 1143:718.

⁸¹ Gardner, *Learning to be a Sage*, p.13.

⁸² Zhu Xi, “Da Zhang Jingfu wenmu” in *Qinding Siku quanshu*, 1143:718.

⁸³ Zhu Xi, *Lunyun jizhu*, in his *Sishu zhangju jizhu*, p.47. In his commentary on the line *ming mingde* 明明德 (making one’s luminous virtue manifest) in the first chapter of the *Daxue* 大學, Zhu Xi said, “The learner should build on what he has discovered [in his moral nature] whereby he manifests it and recovers his original state 學者當因其所發而遂明之以復其初.” See his *Daxue zhangju* 大學章句 in *Sishu zhangju jizhu*, p.47.

ground. It is difficult to imagine that Zhu Xi was not acutely aware of this subversive nature of the Mencian claim vis-à-vis Bao Xian's time-hallowed and historically informed gloss. On the other hand, Zhu Xi was also well prepared to substitute Bao Xian's historical gloss with the radically new understanding of *peng* of his own. "Fellow discipleship," as Zhu Xi understood it, had now transformed from a relation-specific concept that defined the interpersonal relationship between two individuals with reference to their common mentor, to a quasi-metaphysical concept that defined human nature and prescribed the moral potentialities of all human beings with reference to the perfected nature of the sages.

Zhu Xi warned his students "not to miss the important words when reading a commentary," and he proudly confessed that he "weighed every word he decided to use before committing it to writing 看注解時，不可遺了緊要字...某下一字時，直是稱輕等重，方敢寫出。"⁸⁴ On the other hand, he admonished them that they read every single word in his *Jizhu* commentary on the *Analecets*; in fact, the more a word appears to be inconsequential and insignificant, Zhu Xi emphasized, the more it should demand their attention. When you think it is an insignificant word, it is indeed the crucial one 那箇無緊要閑底字，越要看。自家意裏說是閑字，那箇正是緊要字。⁸⁵ It is clear, then, that Zhu Xi's gloss on *peng* was a deliberate choice. Why would Zhu Xi want to introduce such a new concept of *peng*? And on what ground could he justify his own interpretation? The answer to these two questions lies, partly, in Zhu Xi's specific historical circumstances.

Just as Liu Chang's historical concern was to revive the authority of Confucian mentorship in the early years of the Northern Song, Zhu Xi's commentary reflected a quite different preoccupation peculiar to his own time in the first decade of the Southern Song (1127-1279). After Northern Song Confucians had struggled to institute educational reforms for one and a half centuries, Confucian academies spawned all over the territories of the Song empire. Aspiring scholars no longer needed to go into the mountains to study in seclusion or in monasteries. State-sponsored academies were all staffed with scholars of Confucian learning who served as mentors for the students. Thus Zhu Xi was no longer preoccupied with the reassertion of the authority of Confucian mentorship. In fact, Zhu Xi confessed that he did not realize that there were students just about two generations before his time who did not believe in their teachers until he read about it in the works of the Cheng brothers 程氏兄弟。⁸⁶ Zhu's apparent astonishment indicates

⁸⁴ Li Jingde, *Zhuzi yulei*, *juan* 11, 1:192. This is a position that Zhu Xi often repeated. See, for instance, in *Zhuzi yulei*, *juan* 105, 7:2626.

⁸⁵ Li Jingde, *Zhuzi yulei*, *juan* 19, 2:437-438.

⁸⁶ Li Jingde, *Zhuzi yulei*, *juan* 96, 6:2460.

that the authority of the Confucian teacher in his time was virtually taken for granted.⁸⁷

Meanwhile, even as Confucian academies dotted all over the country and the sheer number of students who were fellow disciples to one another steadily increased, the *idea* of fellow discipleship became familiarized eventually.⁸⁸ In comparison to the strict observance of a unique lineage of textual transmission by all disciples under a common scriptural master in the Han period, physical mobility and intellectual exchange among students from different academies in Song times rendered fellow discipleship a less formal and more fluid concept. A special gloss to highlight this commonplace relationship would then be as pointless as one that glossed a common kinship term. If we look at Xing Bing's 邢昺 (932-1010) commentary on *Analects* known as *Lunyu zhushu* 論語注疏, which was the state-sanctioned standard commentary on the classic since the year of 999 in the Northern Song, we can clearly see the Han-dynasty meaning of *peng* becoming obsolete in the tenth century. On *Analects* 1.1 Xing Bing considered *peng* and *you* to be different only in degree, not in kind. They both mean "friend." As Xing put it, "*Peng* are [friends] that are not close to us whereas *you* are [friends] that are intimate to us 朋疏而友親."⁸⁹

⁸⁷ Another way to look at the established authority and cultural status of the Confucian teacher in the Southern Song is to analyze the discussion of the role of the teacher by scholars of the time. For instance, Wu Ruyu 吳如愚 (fl. mid-13th century), composed an essay called "*Shishuo*" (Discourse on Teachers) after Han Yu's famed essay of the same title in which he argued that a teacher qualified himself to be such on the basis of his learning and moral character. Nowhere in his essay did he refer to the moral obligation of the teacher to transmit the Confucian Way. Thus we can see that the existential exigency of the Northern Song to resurrect the Confucian Way seems to have been quietly displaced. See Wu Ruyu, *Zhunzhai zashuo* 準齋雜說, *juan shang*, in *Qinding Siku quanshu*, 709:73-74.

⁸⁸ For instance, two hundred thousand candidates took prefectural examinations in the late twelfth century, so the sheer size of the student population in Song China can be imagined. John W. Chaffe, "Education and Examinations in Sung Society (960-1279)," Ph.D diss., University of Chicago, 1979, pp.55-61, and idem, *The Thorny Gates of Learning in Sung China: A Social History of Examinations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp.35-41.

⁸⁹ Xing Bing, *Lunyu zhushu* 論語注疏, *juan 1*, in Ruan Yuan, *Shisanjing zhushu*, 8:5. In fact, Huang Kan in the sixth century was the first to point out the distinction between *peng* and *you* in terms of intimacy but, as we have demonstrated, he insisted on the unique meaning of *peng* being "fellow disciples." It is self-evident that unlike friendship, fellow discipleship was not something that one could choose in Confucius's time. Perhaps for this reason, friendship was considered more intimate than fellow discipleship. Xing Bing

If the cultural authority of the Confucian teacher was fully regained, it was made possible only under the protection of the institution of Confucian academy. But Confucian mentorship was lost to the Buddhists in the centuries past for a more fundamental reason. That is, the Buddhists were considered to be more capable than the Confucians of explicating issues related to metaphysical speculation and personal salvation. Emperor Taizong and Zhao Pu were convinced about this, and Ouyang Xiu confirmed it. While the institution of Confucian academy could provide the physical conditions for scholars to re-examine the Confucian classics, it could not put the classics in a position to match Buddhist scriptures on metaphysical and soteriological issues. To do so would entail a rejuvenation of the Confucian classics themselves. It was at this particular historical juncture that Zhu Xi came on the scene of the ongoing enterprise of reinterpreting the Confucian tradition since the early Northern Song.⁹⁰ Zhu Xi wanted to advocate a new vision of Confucian humanity that was anchored on his Buddhist-inspired metaphysics and his rereading of the Four Books. It was his intention to privilege the Four Books over the Five Classics in the basic Confucian curriculum.⁹¹ He repeatedly insisted that everyone, not just scholars, read the *Analects* as it contained everything there was to know.⁹² This was a passionate historic appeal to refashion human beings in the Confucian way. It presupposes that the Four Books

evidently found this to be true of the society in the tenth century as well. See Huang Kan, *Lunyu jijie yishu*, *juan* 1, 1:5.

⁹⁰ For a discussion of broader historical context for Zhu Xi's transformation of the Confucian tradition, see Gardner, *Learning to be a Sage*, pp.57-81.

⁹¹ While Zhu Xi is by no means a utilitarian, one of his reasons for privileging the Four Books over the Five Classics is that it requires less effort to read the former with better return whereas the opposite is true for the latter. See Li Jingde, *Zhuzi yulei*, *juan* 19, 2:428. For a discussion of the historical circumstances surrounding Zhu Xi's privileging the Four Books over the Five Classics, see Daniel K. Gardner, *Chu Hsi and the Ta-hsueh: Neo-Confucian Reflection on the Confucian Canon* (Cambridge [Mass.] and London: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, Harvard East Asian Monographs No.118, 1986), ch.1. Elsewhere, Gardner also points out that "the curricular shift to the Four Books was contemporaneous with the literati retreat from national politics" and Zhu Xi's himself "saw his curriculum as providing literati with a training that was explicitly not professional; it was meant by him to be an alternative to examination-oriented learning, for those seeking spiritual advance, not material advance resulting from success in the examinations." Simply put, Zhu Xi wanted to transform learning "from professional preparation for public service to a meaningful way of life in itself, a vocation." See Gardner, *Learning to be a Sage*, p.79.

⁹² Zhu Xi even went so far as to say that the *Analects* covered all issues of importance there are (讀他書不如讀論語最要，蓋其中無所不有). Li Jingde, *Zhuzi yulei*, *juan* 120, 7:2891.

were relevant to the human condition of all.⁹³ Zhu Xi's philosophical position on human nature thus took on an undertone of moral egalitarianism. And it was imperative that he present an argument for this presupposition. Thus he found it necessary to write his own commentaries on the Four Books. There is no better place than *Analects* 1.1 to send the explicit message to his readers that "they and the sages are of the same kind."

DEFAMILIARIZING THE "FRIEND" -- MAO QILING

Finally, let us look at how one Qing classicist read Zhu Xi's commentary on the *Analects* in a different timeframe. As will be clear presently, historical displacement can mercilessly dispose one scholar to make a fool of the earnest intention of another. In his retirement from an illustrious official career, Mao Qiling 毛奇齡 (1623-1716) wrote a book called *Lunyu jiqiu pian* 論語稽求篇 for the sole purpose for criticizing Zhu Xi's commentary on the *Analects*. Methodologically, Mao's single criterion of truth lies in classical texts from pre-Han times as well as commentarial literature from the Han dynasty. If a reading can be justified on philological grounds with reference to such early classical texts, it is deemed a valid one. Measured against such a philological yardstick, there is only one exegetical method possible in Mao's hermeneutics, and by implication, only one kind of truth to be discovered. To Mao, this is the truth of the original author.⁹⁴ Since Han scholars lived in a time close enough to the pre-Han original authors, and they had the fortune to receive oral instructions on these early classical texts from a lineage of text

⁹³ Zhu Xi's philosophy of human nature prompted him to reorganize the ancient text of the *Daxue* 大學 (Great Learning). As Daniel K. Gardner has observed, the ancient text of the *Daxue* was primarily viewed as "a political book for the use of the ruler alone," because "it recorded extensive learning which could be used in the administration of government." As we know, the *Daxue* was originally a chapter in the *Liji*, but Zhu Xi extracted it and another chapter called *Zhongyong* 中庸 (The Mean) from the same classic and grouped them with the *Analects* and *Mencius* to form the so-called Four Books. But by re-organizing and re-interpreting the *Daxue* text, Zhu Xi wanted to promote it as a text that contained "a Way of cultivating the self and governing others that was to be studied by everyone, not just political leaders." As Gardner puts it, "In Chu's [Zhu's] understanding, the *Ta-hsueh's* [*Daxue's*] message began with the premise that all men were capable of perfecting themselves and, indeed, should strive to do so, through a process of self-cultivation." Thus, he concludes that "In Chu's hands, the entire orientation of the *Ta-hsueh* text had changed; a sort of 'democratization' of the work had taken place." See Gardner, *Chu Hsi and the Ta-hsueh*, pp.51 and 58.

⁹⁴ In his commentary on the *Analects* Zhu Xi also aimed at recovering the meaning of the original author. See his ruminations on *Analects* 2.11 in *Sishu huowen*, p.144-145.

transmitters, they could speak for the original authors. Beginning with He Yan, in Mao's judgment, the original meaning of the *Analects* had been lost.⁹⁵

In his commentary on *Analects* 1.1 Mao criticized Zhu Xi's reading of the first two parts of the chapter, and with regard to Zhu's gloss on *peng*, he cited Bao Xian's view and said it was *the* ancient gloss -- namely, "people who share the same gate are called *peng*." He then hastened to add that textual support for such view could be found in the *Shuowen jiezi*, the Han commentaries on the *Odes*, *Zuozhuan* as well as the *Gongyang zhuan* 同門曰朋, 此是古註, 自說文及詩註、左傳註、公羊傳註皆然. Here, Mao made it very clear that his frame of reference was philology and Han-dynasty commentaries on the Confucian classics. But Mao was not entirely indiscriminate in citing his sources. We have discussed earlier that Zheng Xuan glossed *peng* in a passage in the *Zhouli* as "people who share the same teacher," but Mao Qiling made a special note that Zheng's gloss was actually not quite as precise as the other Han commentaries (孔氏正義引周禮大司徒註同師曰朋, 便不如同門之當). He argued that *peng* was originally the appellation for "gate" (朋是門戶之名) and this "gate" actually referred to that which guarded the dormitories of the *students* (學僮居處) rather than the gate that belonged to the teacher. People who shared the same gate were called *peng*, and hence, the original meaning of *peng* was "fellow disciple," and it could not be altered (此是字義本爾, 不可易也).⁹⁶

While Mao himself did not offer any independent evidence to corroborate with the Han glosses he cited, his interpretation, in fact, can find support in the *Analects* itself. In *Analects* 2.9 we are told that Confucius was impressed with Yan Hui 顏回 even though this favorite disciple of his appeared to be stupid and never disagreed with his teacher during instruction. This is because the Master, by observing Yan Hui's private conduct, noted that it could actually throw light on what he had taught. The fact that Confucius could observe the interaction of his disciples in private suggests that the disciples did not live far away from their master. Furthermore, according to the "Xueji" 學記 chapter of the *Liji*, we learn that in ancient times students returned to their quarters at the conclusion of instruction 退息必有居, such quarters could only be what we call

⁹⁵ Mao Qiling, *Lunyu jiqiu pian*, Preface, in *Qinding Siku quanshu*, 210:134-135.

⁹⁶ Mao Qiling, *Lunyu jiqiu pian*, juan 1, in *Qinding Siku quanshu*, 210:137. In his monumental study of the *Analects* called *Lunyu zhengyi* 論語正義, Liu Baonan 劉寶楠 (1791-1855) argues that *peng* means "disciple" or "student;" his emphasis is on the relationship between *peng* and the teacher, rather than *peng* themselves. See *Lunyu zhengyi* (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1998), p.4.

dormitories today.⁹⁷ On the other hand, Mao was also aware of the locus classicus of the term *tonglei* in the *Mencius* but he insisted that it only referred to “ordinary people” in general and therefore it did not actually mean “*pengyou*” (然是凡人之稱，非朋友矣), as Zhu Xi had claimed.⁹⁸

Mao’s hermeneutics is as philological in nature as it is historicist. His interpretive analysis of the original meaning of *peng* is convincing and it can certainly help us get a clearer picture of what *peng* was like and how it became a metonym for fellow students who shared the same dormitory. As such, Mao’s analysis can add much to Bao Xian’s gloss which employed the same historicist principle of exegesis. While Mao’s analysis defamiliarizes for us the idea of fellow discipleship and helps us understand the earliest setting of Confucius’s teaching environment, we should not forget his own concerns as a classicist of his time in the early eighteenth century. Toward the end of the seventeenth century when latter-day followers of Wang Yangming 王陽明 (1472-1528) were embroiled in a vehement contestation with those of the Cheng brothers and Zhu Xi for the truth in the Confucian classics, neither seemed to be able to defend their claim on objective evidence. A hermeneutic momentum was beginning to pick up at that time when Qing classicists in the seventeenth century focused their intellectual energies on determining the authenticity of each Confucian classic on philological grounds. They wanted to authenticate not only the texts but the meanings of the texts as well. This was considered the only objective criterion to adjudicate the intellectual debates over interpretive meaning.⁹⁹ Thus began the so-called evidential research

⁹⁷ See *Liji*, *juan* 25, in Ruan Yuan, *Shisanjing zhushu*, 5:651. Kong Yinda’s 孔穎達 (574-648) *Standard Commentaries (zhengyi 正義)* elaborated on this line: When the students became tired, they could retire to their regular quarters where they could discuss [what they had learned] with their friends, so that they would not be able to associate themselves with bad companies 謂學者退息必有常居之處，各與其友同居，得相諮決，不可雜濫也。Ibid. The decisive proof for the existence of dormitories for the disciples of Confucius is a fragmentary record from the *Huanglan* 皇覽, coauthored by Wang Xiang 王象 and Miao Xi 繆襲 in the year of 226. The original work, which had long been lost, consisted of over 1,000 chapters (*pian* 篇) on tombs and gravesites from previous times. The surviving record in question notes that “The Hall of Learning of Confucius is located between River Si to its north and River Zhu to its south, and the dormitories for the disciples survive even today 先聖學堂泗水纏其北，洙水由其南。皇覽云諸弟子房舍井瓮猶存。Quoted in Kong Chuan 孔傳 (fl. early 12th century) compiled, *Dongjia zaji* 東家雜記 in *Qinding Siku quanshu*, *juan_xia* 卷下, 446:86.

⁹⁸ Mao Qiling, *Lunyu jiqiu pian*, *juan* 1, in *Qinding Siku quanshu*, 210:137.

⁹⁹ See Yu Yingshi 余英時, “Qingdai sixiangshi de yige xin jieshi” 清代思想史的一個新解釋 in his *Lishi yu sixiang* 歷史與思想 (Taipei: Lianjing

(*kaochengxue* 考證學) that characterized much of Qing-dynasty scholarship. Mao's commentary on the *Analects* and his criticism of Zhu Xi's illustrate such hermeneutical primacy in the seventeenth century.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Mao Qiling complained that Song-dynasty scholars such as Zhu Xi imposed their own readings on the *Analects* at the expense of its original meanings.¹⁰⁰ We can appreciate Mao's own historical concerns and his privileging philology over philosophy, but his hermeneutic vision effectively narrowed his imagination and immunized his sympathy for scholars like Zhu Xi who also had their own historical concerns even though they respected the historicist principle of exegesis as well. A philosopher may be searching for the ultimate truth that is universal and even transcends time and space, but his search will nevertheless be informed, shaped, and therefore, confined by the historical concerns of his own time. He can only search for the universal truth and investigate it in his particular cultural historicity.

This article has tried to document the symbiotic relationship between the search for philosophic truth and the cultural and historical circumstances that motivated it and characterized its outcome. In philosophical hermeneutics there may never be any "great chain of being" or overall grand scheme that unifies the odyssey of its historical undertaking. The intellectual historian, in charting the vicissitudes of the philosopher's search for universal truth in the shifting currents of history, should resist the temptation to "arrange things in a tight pattern without gaps," for "only in this fashion can the historical imagination be anchored in something approaching reality."¹⁰¹ He has to respect the hermeneutic differences between Bao Xian and Han Yu, or between Zhu Xi and Mao Qiling, and try to appreciate each of them in their unique cultural and historical circumstances. As a result, we may all see the philosopher's truth in a better light.

chubanshiye gongsi, 1976), pp.121-156, "Some Preliminary Observations on the Rise of Ch'ing Intellectualism," in *Tsing Hua Journal of Chinese Studies*, New Series 11.1 & 2 (December 1975); and Benjamin A. Elman, *From Philosophy to Philosophy: Intellectual and Social Aspects of Change in Late Imperial China*, Harvard East Asian Monograph 110 (Cambridge, Mass: Council on East Asian Studies, Harvard University, 1990 reprint).

¹⁰⁰ Mao Qiling, *Lunyu jiqiu pian*, Preface, in *Qinding Siku quanshu*, 210:134.

¹⁰¹ H. Stuart Hughes, *Consciousness and Society: The Reorientation of European Social Thought 1890-1930* (New York: Vintage Books, 1977, revised edition), p.23.

Chapter III

Music[yue] in Classical Confucianism: On the Recently Discovered *Xing Zi Ming Chu*

Johanna Liu

INTRODUCTION

Yue, as one of the Six Arts pertaining to classical training of Confucian literati, has a rather ambiguous feature as to its theoretical status, when compared especially with *shi* [poetry], not only because of the historical fact that the *Book of Music* [*Yueshu*] was lost after the burning of books in Qin Dynasty, but also due to the complicated relationship between *yue* and *li*. Besides, on the linguistic and semantic level, the Chinese character 樂, which represents music, is endowed with double pronunciations *yue/le* and double meanings music/pleasure. The recent discovered *Xing Zi Ming Chu*, among other bamboo slips of Guodian, with a major treatise on *yue*, provides us with a new clue to re-think the aesthetic meaning of *yue* in classical Confucianism. This is the main purpose of this paper. By the strategy of intertextuality applicable to the reading and interpretation of text, the first part of this paper is to contrast the texts on *yue* in *Xing Zi Ming Chu* with other ancient texts in the *Li Ji*, *Zhou Yi*, *Zuo Zhuan*, *Xun Zi*, *Shi Ji*, etc., to identify problems to be re-defined and re-understood, such as the ideas of music pursued by Confucian scholars, the crisis of Zheng and Wei music as new sounds and melodies criticized by Confucians, the place of music in the self-cultivation of *junzi*, etc. The second part of this paper will focus on the aesthetic meaning of music by referring to Confucian theory of *qing* (sentiment, affection, situation), also based on the *Xing Zi Ming Chu*, which has dealt with the in-depth relation between *yue* and *qing*.

INTERTEXTUALITY AND THE INTERPRETATION OF *XING ZI MING CHU*

The text entitled *Xing Zi Ming Chu*, written on bamboo slips discovered at Guodian in 1993, has been considered by scholars as one of the most important unearthed documents pertaining to the theory of music in Pre-Qin's Confucianism. Researchers could find, in its transcribed version, established by Jing-Men Museum and published by Wen-Wu Publisher in 1998, that one third of the text, distributed among 67 pieces of bamboo slips, are devoted to the discussion of music. It would be probably too rash to claim that a new theoretical understanding of classical

Confucian music could be built upon this newly unearthed text, because of the fragmentary character of the text itself and the uncertainty of its authorship. Nevertheless, it provides us undoubtedly with at least a new view and a critical reflection on the insufficiency of the received theories, which were based on other conventional texts that considered Confucian music mostly from its cultural ideological function in keeping peace and harmony in the society, rather than as an artefact with which people can enjoy more or less purely aesthetic value.

A comparative study of the similarity between the transcribed text of *Xing Zi Ming Chu* and other known texts in the *Li Ji*, *Yue Ji*, *Zhong Yong*, *Xun Zi*, etc., allows many scholars to infer that the texts of *Xing Zi Ming Chu* could be attributed to the so called Zi Si and Mencius' school (*Si Meng Xue Pai*). (Li Xue Qin 1999: 75-79, Liao Ming Chun 1999: 36-74). One of the contributions of this line of research consists in having traced some texts of the *Li Ji*, especially that of the *Yue Ji*, back to the period of Warring States. It concerns also some problems involved in the debates between scholars of *jin wen* and *gu wen* about the authorship of *Yue Ji*.¹

The main interest of this paper is not to get involved in the debate about the authenticity of author. Instead, the problem that we are concerned with in this paper is how to achieve an in-depth understanding of the aesthetic/artistic meaning of music [*yue*] in Confucianism, through the application of the reading strategy of intertextuality or intertextual analysis to the *Xing Zi Ming Chu*. The term "intertextuality" has been coined by Julia Kristeva in 1967,² and developed by Roland Barthes later (Roland Barthes 1977: 155-164). According to Julia Kristeva, every text is "constructed as a mosaic of quotations", and "absorption and transformation of another". Kristeva claimed that reading is an on-going dialogue between the writing subject, the addressee (or ideal reader), and exterior texts, and she suggested to view a text by both horizontal and vertical axes, since "the word's status is thus defined horizontally (the word in the text belongs to both writing subject and addressee) as well as

¹ In the compilation of Five Classics of Confucianism, the theory of music was arranged in the *Book of Rites*. According to the explanation of Gu Wen scholars, it was due to the disappearance of the *Book of Music* after Qin's fire. Nevertheless, according to Jin Wen scholars' understanding, a book on the theory of music never existed before, what has really existed was the documents on the rules of music sound. Since there is not enough documents to certify the original source of the texts in the *Yue Ji*, some scholars claimed later that the *Yue Ji* was created by Han scholars and falsely attributed to Pre-Qin Confucians. Some others claimed that the writer of *Yue Ji* was named Gon Shun Ni, a Confucian scholar in Spring and Autumn period.

² The word intertextuality was used by Julia Kristeva to explain the transposition in textual system. "À la place de la notion d'intersubjectivité s'installe celle d'intertextualité, et le langage poétique se lit, au moins, comme double". (Julia Kristeva 1969: 146).

vertically (the word in the text is oriented towards an anterior or synchronic literary corpus) (Julia Kristeva 1986: 36-37). Roland Barthes develops this idea of textual intersection and considers every text as the outcome of interconnection of cultural artifacts. He said,

One of the paths of this deconstruction-reconstruction is to permute texts, scraps of texts that have existed or exist around and finally within the text being considered: any text is an intertext; other texts are present in it, at varying levels, in more or less recognisable forms: the texts of the previous and surrounding culture. (Roland Barthes 1981: 74)

That is to say, a text is never a solitary work done by an isolated writer, but a network of writings by quoting one text from another, or by alluding one text to another, through and by which a continual deferment of an idea or a meaning in a particular culture would be able to continue.

In view of literary texts in Chinese classics, this type of intertextuality could be found everywhere since the time of Confucius, who claimed that: "I transmit but do not innovate." (*Analects*, 7:1)³ In this paper, the study of *Xing Zi Ming Chu* would be a good example for decoding Chinese textual meaning by intertextual analysis, which takes *Xing Zi Ming Chu* as an interconnected body of cultural texts from both synchronic (horizontal) and diachronic (vertical) views. According to the results of scientific examination of all excavated relics in the Guodian Chu tomb, it is supposed that those bamboo slips and their writings were presumably no later than 300 BC, that is, in the middle-late period of Warring States. The owner of these scripts was supposed to be a Confucian scholar of Chu⁴, arguably a teacher of the crown prince Heng, good at both Confucian Classics and Daoist, as evidenced by the co-existence of fragments related to both Zisi and Laozi (Li Xue Qin 1999: 13-14, Pang Pu 1999:23-24). Some parts of the unearthed texts, including *Xing Zi Ming Chu*, are apparently related to other Confucian Classics. Some scholars assume that the author was presumably a follower of Zisi and Mencius. The text, supposed to be used by the owner as teaching materials, could be viewed horizontally, as having an dialectic relation between writing subject (compilers/teachers), addressee (readers/students), and vertically, as interacting with previous texts and various forms of its contemporary cultures.

By contrasting the text on music in *Xing Zi Ming Chu* with other texts quoted from other Confucian classic, or when alluded to the other texts, or otherwise in connection with the cultural form of the day, two main

³ This text is translated from Chinese by the author of this paper.

⁴ The owner of the tomb was presumably related with Chen Liang, a Confucian scholar, recorded in the *Mencius*. (Jiang Guang Hui 2003: 160-162).

questions can be asked and examined: 1) the artistic meaning of music in classical Confucianism; 2) the aesthetic foundation of Confucian music on the concept of *qing* (sentiment). Some other questions relevant to Chinese aesthetic of music will also be discussed, such as the ideal of music that Confucian scholars were pursuing; the symbolic meaning of ritual music; the crisis of *Zheng and Wei* music as new sounds and melodies criticized by them, and the place of music in the four ways of self-cultivating of a *junzi*.

THE ARTISTIC MEANING OF MUSIC IN CONFUCIANISM

Generally speaking, *Xing Zi Ming Chu*, as a Confucian's teaching material, is an article talking about cultivation to become a *junzi* by way of music, given that music is supposed to contain spiritual power that may have influence on the formation of human nature. In it, there is a particular paragraph that elucidates the educational role of music as one of the three arts by which the Sages teaches the realization of Dao in human person that allows him/her to get along with all things. It reads,

The Dao is a way of getting along with all beings. The major concern of Dao consists in the art of mind. Among the four Arts/Ways to the Dao, only the Art/Way of being human is the way through which Dao could manifest itself. The other three arts/ways, (e.g. the art of poetry, the art of history, and the art of ritual music [*li yue*],) are human ways of expressing the Dao. Poetry, history and ritual music, all these three are originally produced by human beings. Poetry is versed by capable persons, history is narrated by capable persons, the ritual music is performed by capable persons.⁵

「道者，群物之道。凡道，心術為主。道四術，唯人道為可道也。其三術者，道之而已。詩、書、禮樂，其始出皆生于人。詩，有為為之也。書，有為言之也。禮樂，有為舉之也。」(XZMC:179)

Three points implied in this paragraph deserve our attention:

- 1) Dao means human Dao to get along with all beings, including those from Heaven, from Earth, and among people.
- 2) The ways of Dao contain two levels: human Dao and three arts (*san shu*) including *shi* (poetry), *shu* (history) and *li yue* (ritual music).⁶

⁵ English text is translated from Chinese by the author of this paper.

⁶ According to the annotation by Li Ling, here “*dao si shu*” should be understood as consisting in four arts, say, art of mind, art of poetry, art of history and art of ritual music; whereas “*san shu*” (three arts) means, respectively, *shi* (poetry), *shu* (history) and *li yue* (ritual music). For the coherence of meanings, the two words “*li yue*” should be read together as one

3) The *san shu* are originally produced by those who are capable of carrying out human Dao.

Our further question now is how to understand the formational meaning of “*li yue*” in the context of Confucian culture? How should we understand the meaning of *li yue*? *Li* of *yue*, or *yue* of *li*? What kind of music does the *li yue* refer to? Why Confucian scholars emphasize the self-cultivating function of *li yue*? What have they learned from *li yue*? Furthermore, what is the artistic meaning of *li yue* from the view point of Confucian aesthetics?

RELIGIOUS FUNCTION OF RITUAL MUSIC IN ZHOU DYNASTY

It was an old tradition in Confucian culture to consider music as having a transforming power on individual mind/heart and on social customs. Since Zhou Dynasty, music has been considered as one important subject in the curriculum including four disciplines for cultivating the sons of royal family and eminent people selected from the State to be prominent future leaders. In the *Book of Rites*, it was said in the chapter “On Royal Regulation” (*Wang Zhi*) that,

The (board for) the direction of Music gave all honour to its four subjects of instruction, and arranged the lessons in them, following closely the poems, histories, ceremonies, and music of the former kings, in order to complete its scholars. ...The eldest son of the king and his other sons, the eldest son of all the feudal princes, the sons, by their wives proper, of high ministers, Great offices, and officers of the highest grade, and the eminent and select scholars from (all) the states, all repaired (to their instruction), entering the schools according to their years. (James Legge 1967: 232-233)

Also in the chapter VII, “King Wen as Son and Heir” (*Wen Wang Shi Zi*), it was said also,

In the education of the crown princes adopted by the founders of the three dynasties, the subjects were the rules of propriety and music (James Legge 1967: 349)

According to the chapter “Spring Ministry” (*Chun Guan*) in the book of *Zhou Li*, it was *da si yue* 大司樂 (director of music) who took charge of the school of grand studies (Cheng Jun), and taught the heir-sons and the young generations the six ways of music performance with ethic

way/art, instead of being read separately as two different arts: art of *li* and art of *yue*. (Li Ling 2002: 70).

value⁷: mean, harmony, respect, moderation, piety, friendship; and taught them the six artist forms of musical language: figurativeness, discourse, ironic, narrative, speech, wording. After they became capable of performing music in ethic sense and expressing music in various forms of musical language, the heir-sons and eminent young scholars were taught the six pieces of ritual dance inherited from previous dynasties: *Cloud Gate* and *Grand Scroll*, *Grand Xian*, *Grand Chime*, *Grand Xia*, *Grand Huo*, and *Grand Wu*.⁸ The objective of teaching the heir-sons to play short flute, string music, and to perform the ritual dance of various kinds consisted in cultivating their capacity to conduct ceremonies with ritual music, rather than to become professional musicians such as vocalist, instrumentalist or composer, all these roles often played by the so-called *gu meng* 瞽矇 (the blind).

As to the value of music, what has been stressed in the *Zhou Li* and *Li Ji* was its religious function in the rituals of sacrificial offering, such as the sacrifice to Heaven and Earth offered by Son of Heaven, that to the spirits of the land and grains by princes of the states, and the five sacrifices of the house offered by great officers.⁹ All ceremonies of offerings were accompanied with performance of different ritual music, songs and dances.¹⁰ The six pieces of ritual dance are the ritual music of the six dynasties in ancient China. Somehow like other ancient civilizations in the world, the complete repertoires of their music performance were lost, but in China some textual descriptions about the titles, performances, and religious and social-political functions of its ancient ritual music still remained and could be read in some texts in the *Zhuo Zhuan*, *Lun Yu*, *Li Ji*, *Zhou Li*, *Guo Yu*, *Lü Shi Chun Qiu*, etc., which could still reveal to us a certain idea about music in pre-Qin China.

⁷ According to the commentary of Dong Zhongshu, quoted by Zheng Xuan in his annotations on *Li Ji*, the meaning of *dezhe* could be understood as the person capable to perform. I accept Zheng Xuan's commentary that understands the *yuede* as a way of music performance.

⁸ Cf. "Spring Ministry [Chunguan] with the Overseer of Ritual Affairs [Zongbo]" in the *Book of Zhou Li*. 「大司樂掌成均之法，以治建國之學政，而合國之子弟焉。凡有道者、有德者，使教焉。死則以為樂祖，祭于瞽宗。以樂德教國子：中、和、祗、庸、孝、友。以樂語教國子：興、道、諷、誦、言、語。以樂舞教國子：舞雲門大卷、大咸、大磬、大夏、大濩、大武。」

⁹ Cf. "Royal Regulation" in the *Book of Rites*, vol. I. 「天子祭天地，諸侯祭社稷，大夫祭五祀。」

¹⁰ Cf. "Spring Ministry" [Chunguan] in the *Zhou Li*. 「乃分樂而序之，以祭以享以祀。乃奏黃鍾，歌大呂，舞雲門，以祀神。乃奏蕤，歌應鍾，舞咸池，祭地示。乃奏姑洗，歌南呂，舞大磬，以祀四望。乃奏蕤賓，歌函鍾，舞大夏，以祭山川。乃奏夷則，小呂，舞大濩，以享先妣。乃奏無射，歌夾鍾，舞大武，以享先祖。」

Apparently, in referring to the abovementioned texts, *Xing Zi Ming Chu*'s mentioning of watching the ritual dances of *Lai* and *Wu*, *Shao* and *Xia*, could be understood as dealing with the religious value of ritual music from an aesthetics point of view. It reads,

In watching the dance of *Lai* and that of *Wu*, there arises a feeling of being well arranged in order. In watching the dance of *Shao* and that of *Xia*, there arises a sense of beauty of simplicity.¹¹

「觀賚武，則齊如也斯作。觀韶夏，則勉如也斯儉。」
(XZMC: 180)

It can be sure that, learning ritual music, for the heir-sons, is different from learning music for self-entertainment and for passing through leisure time. For them, the purpose of learning music is to cultivate their spiritual sensibility to the revealing of Heaven, Earth, and ancestors, through their training in the art of sounds. This means the religious function of ritual music has its aesthetic foundation in human mind, as expressed by the word “*qing*” in *Xing Zi Ming Chu*. Before we discuss in more details the relation between music and *qing*, we have to review briefly the shift of musical value in Confucian thought from religious function to more humanistic concerns.

CONFUCIAN IDEA OF MUSIC AS A WAY OF CULTIVATING A COMPLETE PERSON

Along with the collapse of Zhou aristocracy and the rise of various schools of thoughts in the periods of late Spring and Autumn and early Warring States, education was not any more the privilege of royal family members. In this process, the value of music in the cultivation of human mind degenerated. Laozi emphasized the quietness and silence of Nature, and criticized that too many sounds (five tones) would make people deaf. In the *Mozi* we find a chapter against music and there we read the criticism that indulgence in the pleasure of music was a cause of corruption. Among various intellectual schools, the Confucian was the only school that kept the traditional idea of education and put the emphasis on the cultural meaning of music. Confucius himself was a man of music, he used to sing, to play musical instruments such as chime, *qin* and *se*, and he even knew how to compose. He had put to right order the repertoires of music for odes, and

¹¹ The author of this paper translates this text in reference to Confucius' words about Shao and Wu in the *Lun Yu*: “the Master said of the *Shao* that it was perfectly beautiful and also perfectly good. He said of the *Wu* that it was perfectly beautiful but not perfectly good.” (*Analects*, 3:25) (James Legge 1991: 164).

corrected their tones after his trip from Wei back to Lu.¹² He has discussed the performance of music with the Grand Music Master of Lu in saying, “how to play music may be known. At the commencement of the piece, all the parts should sound together. As it proceeds, they should be in harmony while severally distinct and flowing without break, and thus on to the conclusion.” (*Analects*, 3:23)

Confucius taught disciples music as one of the six arts, and considered music essential element to the completion of cultivation of a *junzi* or a condition sine qua non of a complete person.¹³

Music, as essential to a complete person, did not consist merely in musical performance such as playing an instrument, but in the realization, through music, of the human Dao, e.g. the virtue of humanity (*ren*), without which music, as an art of sound, would become meaningless. Confucius said: “If a man be without the virtues proper to humanity, what has he to do with music?” (*Analects* 3:3) Only with the human Dao of *ren*, would music become properly a human art of sound, and thereby the following question, proposed by Confucius himself, would have the possibility of finding an answer: “Ritual, ritual, does it mean no more than gems and silk? Music, music, does it mean no more than bells and drums?” (*Analects* 17:11)

Basically, this question proposed by Confucius himself has touched upon a crucial problem in Chinese aesthetics of music, and would arouse a series of questions on the essence and the existence of music as an art. How the sounds of bells and drums could be musical and be considered as belonging to the art of music? If the answer is that their sounds are produced merely by the performance of a musician, then, what kind of music player could be considered as a musician-artist? If the answer is that those who know how to play bells and drums and perform in a way that is proper to music, then the question will turn back: What is music? Who is musician?

In contemporary western philosophy, Martin Heidegger has taken “the Coming of Being/Truth in thing” as the starting point for answering the question on the origin of work of art.(Martin Heidegger 1971:17-76) Confucians would take different approach than the ontological one taken by

¹² Confucius said, “I returned from Wei to Lu, and then the music was reformed, and the pieces in the royal songs and praise songs all found their proper places” (*Analects*, 9:15) (James Legge 1991: 221).

¹³ Confucius said, “It is by the odes that the mind is aroused. It is by the rules of propriety that the character is established. It is from music that the finish is received.” (*Analects* 8:8), (211). In answering Zilu’s question about a complete person, Confucius said, “suppose a man with the knowledge of Zang Wu-Zong, the freedom from covetousness of Gong Chuo, the bravery of Bian Zhuang Zi, and the varied talents of Ran Qiu; add to these the accomplishments of the rules of propriety and music; such a one might be reckoned a complete man.” (*Analects* 14:12) (279).

Martin Heidegger in answering these questions. They took ethical approach to consider the artistic value of “music” and “musician”. In the *Li Ji (The Book of Rites)*, it was said,

All modulations of sound take their rise from the mind of man; and music is the intercommunication of them in their relations and differences. Hence, even if beasts know sound, but they know not its modulations; and masses of the common people know the modulations, but they do not know music. It is only the superior man who can (really) know music. (*Book of Rite*, vol.II, James Legge 1967: 95)

In Confucian thought, music should always go along with practice of *li* (ritual, propriety). Anyone who is good at musical sounds, but not familiar with *li*, won't deserve the name of a good musician, that is, a musician as a complete person. One story told that Kui was reputed at the practice of musical sounds, but there was a rumor that Kui had only one leg. Duke Ai of Lu doubted about it and went to ask Confucius. Confucius explained that Kui was not a person with one leg, but a man who was capable only of playing sounds, that was insufficient, or one-legged in metaphor, for a good musician. That's why it is said that Kui has one *zu* (leg/enough). (*Han Fei Zi*, 465)

In a dialogues on the virtue of *li*, during Confucius' leisure time at home, Zi Gong asked a question suspecting whether Kui is a good musician, Confucius explained, “To be versed in the ceremonial usages, and not versed in music, we call being poorly furnished. To be versed in music, and not versed in the ceremonial usages, we call being one-sided. Now Khuei (Kui) was noted for his acquaintance with music, and not for his acquaintance with ceremonies, and therefore his name has been transmitted with the account of him (which your question implies).” *Book of Rite*, vol.II, (275-276)

It is clear then, for Confucius, Kui was a man who knew enough musical sounds and performed music well, but his one-sided knowledge was not enough for him to become a good musician in the sense of having a real knowledge of music as completing human personality.

QING AS THE AESTHETIC FOUNDATION OF CONFUCIAN MUSIC

The purpose of learning music was not merely to know musical sounds, but rather to cultivate the capacity of realizing human Dao in its completeness. The humanistic meaning of music based on Confucian theory of self-cultivation now gradually took more significant role than its religious function

In *Xing Zi Ming Chu*, the cultivation of music as an art should go along with the cultivation of *li* (rule of propriety), *shi* (poetry), and *shu*

(History), considered as the *san shu* (three arts), constituting thereby an integrated way orientated to the human Dao. By learning *shi, shu, li, yue*, the capacity of *junzi* would gradually develop under the teaching of the Sages, which consisted in the formation of human capacity of unifying all things by analogy, learning lessons from observing the sequence of things, measuring human activities by examining the righteousness of will, and ordering human feelings in expressing them out and in receiving them in.¹⁴ The capacity obtained from the training of *shi, shu, li yue* functions as a whole, without neglecting one or the other, no matter by way of *san shu* (three arts) or *liu yi* (six arts). It makes sense that in *Xing Zi Ming Chu*, the emphasis on music's value of self-cultivating did not neglect at all its relation with poetry (capacity of language), with ritual propriety, and with history.

According to *Xing Zi Ming Chu*, the realization of human Dao should start from cultivating the capacity of feeling (*qing*). *Xing Zi Ming Chu* said: "The Dao begins in *qing* [Dao shi yu qing]" (XZMC: 179). As Tang Yi-jie has well pointed out, "it makes sense to say 'Dao begins in *qing*' rather than 'dao arises from *qing*', because Dao exists from the start on account of human *qing* rather than emerging out of *qing*." (Tang Yijie 2003: 271) Tang Yi-jie explains in his notes that, "This is not to say that it cannot emerge at all, for it can also emerge out of rationality or study." (Tang Yijie 2003: 279)

Most of scholars' discussions on *qing* in Confucian classics focus on the status of *qing*, referring generally to the psychological forms of emotion, such as the seven *qings* (joy, anger, sadness, fear, love, disliking, liking) in the *Li Ji*,¹⁵ or the six *qing* (likes and dislikes, delights and angers, griefs and joys) in *Xun Zi*,¹⁶ in the context of their ethical discussion about the relation between human mind (*xin*) and human nature. *Zhong Yong*'s explanation of the moral function of *xi, nu, ai, le* (pleasure, anger, sorrow, joy),¹⁷ and Zhu Xi's annotations on the concept of *zhong he* (Equilibrium harmony) in his *Zong Yong Zhang Ju*, (Zhu Xi, 30) have well provided us with the ethical model of interpreting the meaning of human affectivity

¹⁴ 「聖人比其類而命會之，觀其之系而逢訓之，體其義而節度之，理其情而出入之，然後復以教。教，所以生德于中者也。」 (XZMC: 179)

¹⁵ "What are the feelings of men? They are joy, anger, sadness, fear, love, disliking, liking. These seven feelings belong to men without their learning them." ("The Li Yun", *Book of Rites*: 379).

¹⁶ "The likes and dislikes, delights and angers, griefs and joys of the nature are called emotions." ("Rectifying Names", *Hsun Tzu(XunZi)*, (Burton Watson 1963: 139).

¹⁷ "While there are no stirrings of pleasure, anger, sorrow, or joy, the mind may be said to be in the state of Equilibrium. When those feelings have been stirred, and they act in their due degree, there ensues what may be called the state of Harmony." Cf., *The Doctrine of the Mean*, Chapter 1, (James Legge 1991: 384).

(*qing*), but they left the aesthetic dimension of feeling untouched. But this aesthetic dimension agitates always in the creativity of poetry and music, and exists vividly in the daily life of people.

The interpretation of *qing* in *Xing Zi Ming Chu*, following *Zong Yong*, had also laid the foundation of feeling (*qing*) on human nature (*xing*),¹⁸ but its emphasis was put on the aesthetic function of *qing* in its expression through *yue/le* (music/pleasure) and *li* (ritual/propriety). In *Xing Zi Ming Chu*, the term “*qing*” is understood as the beginning of openness to the other in terms of “all things”, and “*yi*” as the ending, the final fulfilment, toward which human feeling tends; and those who understand feeling can express it properly, and those who understand *yi* can realize it in oneself properly. 「始者近情，終者近義。知情者能出之，知義者能入之。」 (XZMU: 179).

In short, according to the Confucian tradition, the learning of music and ritual propriety is to cultivate the capacity of a complete person as to his/her aesthetic feeling, which is rooted in human affectivity (*qing*), to be integrated with his/her moral feeling and religious sentiment, which are expressed through *yi* and *li*.

THE AESTHETIC DIMENSION OF YUE/LE IN XING ZI MING CHU

Apart from its ethical function in Confucian culture, music, together with ritual propriety, has also an aesthetic dimension as well. This consists in the pleasure (*le*) attained by a sympathetic feeling that is able to share the world of others by apprehending various affections communicated through sounds produced by others.

Sounds and Music, Music/Pleasure and Ritual Propriety

The *Book of Music* said that “music produces pleasure; -- what the nature of man cannot be without”. (*Book of Rite, vol.II, 127*) Enjoying the art of music with pleasure by singing songs, playing instruments, or enjoying a beautiful melody just by listening, is the common aesthetic experience of music among people. A famous story about Confucius studying Chinese lute under Shi Xiang tells that for Confucius, the aesthetic pleasure of music art does not consist only in the rhythm and melody, or playing on the mathematic structure of sounds, but in the existential meaningfulness conveyed through the sounds of the music, understood in a humanistic way. This does not mean Confucian theory of music has neglected the embodiment of music in sounds. On the contrary, it claims that only those who know sounds are able to talk about music. The *Book of Music* said, “Hence with him who does not know the sounds we cannot

¹⁸ “Qing arises from xing (*qing sheng yu xing*)” (XZMU: 179)

speak about the airs, and with him who does not know the airs we cannot speak about the music.” (*Book of Rite, vol.II, 95*)

By aesthetic feeling, human being is accessible to various kinds of pleasures in sounds as well as in music, and enjoy the experience of being revealed through them. *Xing Zi Ming Chu* has vividly described the variety of pleasures in the aesthetic experience of listening, such as listening to the sound of laughing that makes one lively happy; in hearing the ballad, one feels contented and excited; in listening to the melody of *qin* and *se*, a profound feeling of praising is inspired; in watching the dance of *Lai* and the dance of *Wu*, there arises a feeling of being arranged in order; in watching the dance of *Shao* and the dance of *Xia*, there arises a sense of beauty of simplicity.¹⁹

The pleasure obtained from sounds can stay no longer than the vibration of laughing in the air; whereas the pleasure obtained from musical melody will prolong as long as it resounds in one’s mind. The experience of Confucius in hearing the music of *Shao* in Qi State and then ignoring the taste of flesh for three months (*Analects,7:14*), is a typical aesthetic experience of musical art.

Concerning the relation between the aesthetic pleasure of music and the self-cultivation of a *junzi*, the *Xing Zi Ming Chu* pointed out that learning through music with a spiritual pleasure would be the faster way to reform one’s heart.²⁰ The longer the mind keeps the spiritual pleasure of music, the more serious it would be in returning to its original good nature and its starting *qing*, and the more smoothly it would be in expressing outward and in receiving inward. This is the way of realizing one’s virtue.

「其居此也久，其反善復始也慎，其出入也訓（順），司其德也。」
(*XZMC:180*).

One of the meanings of connecting *li* with *yue* consists in the fact that the practice of ritual propriety should be realized with spiritual pleasure in mind, given that the true meaning of *li* is based on the feeling of respect. In daily life, a sincere smiling is enough to display the pleasure of heart in the friendly exchange of agreeable words. As to the diplomatic meeting among nations, a concert in the national banquet represents the magnificence of the diplomatic rituals. No need to mention again the pious feeling in the performance of ritual music during the sacred offerings in a temple. Therefore, it makes sense for *Xing Zi Ming Chu* to claim that “Smiling is the superficial side of ritual propriety, whereas music/spiritual joy is the deep side of ritual propriety” 「笑，禮之淺澤也。樂，禮之深澤也。」 (*XZMC:180*).

¹⁹ 「聞笑聖（聲），則鮮如也斯喜。聞歌謠，則晉如也斯奮。聖（聽）琴瑟之聖（聲），則悸如也斯難。觀賚武，則齊如也斯作。觀韶夏，則勉如也斯儉。」 (*XZMC:180*).

²⁰ 「凡學者求其心為難。從其所為，近得之矣，不如以樂之速也。」
(*XZMC:180*)

Confucius once described the presentation of music in diplomatic courtesy and explained the symbolic function of music performed in the diplomatic ceremony during the visit of a ruler. This happened in Confucius' leisure time at home, after he had talked to his disciples Zi Zhang, Zi Gong and Yan You, on the value of *li*.

When one ruler is visiting another, they bow to each other, each courteously declining to take the precedence, and then enter the gate. As soon as they have done so, the instruments of music, suspended from their frames, strike up. They then bow and give place to each other again, and ascend to the hall, and when they have gone up, the music stops. In the court below, the dances *Hsiang (Xiang)* and *Wu* are performed to the music of the flute, and that of *Hsia (Xia)* proceeds in due order with (the brandishing of feathers and) fifes. (After this), the stands with their offerings are set out, the various ceremonies and musical performances go on in regular order, and the array of officers provided discharge their functions. In this way the superior man perceives the loving regard (which directs the entertainment). They move forward in perfect circles; they return and form again the square. The bells of the equipages are tuned to the *Khai-khi (Cai-Qi)*; when the guest goes out they sing the *Yung(Yong)*; when the things are being taken away, they sing the *Khan-yu*; and thus the superior man (sees that) there is not a single thing for which there is not its proper ceremonial usage. (*Book of Rite*, vol.II, 274-275)

In reading Confucius' detailed description of the diplomatic courtesy and music performed in the court, today we still can feel the magnificence of *li* and *yue* in Ancient China. The focus of Confucius was the symbolic function of music in showing their cultivated good feeling, virtue and historical knowledge, as the text goes on to say,

the striking up of the instruments of metal, when they enter the gate, serves to indicate their good feeling; the singing of the *Khing Miao (Qing Miao)*, when they have gone up to the hall, shows the virtue (they should cultivate); the performance of the *Hsiang (Xiang)* to the flute in the court below, reminds them of events (of history). Thus the superior men of antiquity did not need to set forth their views to one another in words; it was enough for them to show them in their music and ceremonies. (*Book of Rite*, vol.II, 274)

Ancient Music and New Sounds

It was by the aesthetic feeling, e.g. the sense of beauty, and the moral feeling, e.g. the sentiment of respect, that a superior man of antiquity could set forth their views and communicate with each other without the necessity of using verbal language. Just as the *Xing Zi Ming Chu* said, “Being in trust without words are those who have the sense of beauty” 「未言而信，有美情者也」 (XZMC: 181)

The temporary pleasure brought about by the musical sounds would not be enough to carry on the formation of individual’s virtues and people’s ethos. There is no need to say it is not good enough for the good governance of a country. Confucius’ criticism on the songs of Zheng and Wei was in the context of his reply to Yan Yuan’s question on the government of a State. For the purpose of serving as Music of a State, Confucius recommended the dance of *Shao* and alerted rulers to keep away from the sounds of Zheng, due to the latter’s excessive indulgence in the pleasures of sounds, which was unqualified to serve in the ritual ceremony in a temple or in the court (*Analects* 15:11) It seems that Confucius didn’t deny the cognitive value of sounds of Zheng that revealed local people’s ethos. What makes Confucius discontented was the mixture of court music of *ya* with the popular music of Zheng. (*Analects* 17:18)

Although purely melodic aspect of music is not enough for being performed in the sacred ritual, as music of *ya* is, it is still quite practical for the training of musical skill of an instrumentalist or vocalist. That’s why *Xing Zi Ming Chu* said, “The ancient music is good for mind, and the new sounds are good for the fingers, both are for the cultivation of the people.” 「凡古樂龍心，益樂龍指，皆教其人者也。」 (XZMC: 180)

Along with its affirmation of aesthetic value of music, *Xing Zi Ming Chu* didn’t ignore the aesthetic quality of the feeling of grief. In this sense it is quite different from Zi Zhang who took grief and joy as belonging to two separate categories of crying and music: “to grief, there belong crying and tears; to joy, songs and dancing” (*Zhuo Zhuan*:708). By contrast, *Xing Zi Ming Chu* considered pleasure and grief as a pair of feelings that produce each other: “The extreme development of music/pleasure accompanies itself certainly with grief. Crying, will be grief too. All of them touch human feelings. 「凡至樂必悲，哭亦悲，皆至其情也。」 (XZMC: 180)

The aesthetic pleasure produces a sense of being open to other’s joy, whereas the feeling of grief produces a sympathetic feeling upon other’s sorrow. A sound of crying expresses the feeling of grief as well as that of pleasure. It is only in the highest form of music endowed with highest pleasure that would contain a comprehensive feeling of sympathy capable of discerning various states of mind from sounds produced by others. Human mind tends to play with various kinds of sounds, in which crying is but one kind of decipherable sounds among others.

CONCLUSION

It is a common sense to say that, in general, Chinese Confucian culture, reputed as a *li yue* culture, has always put its emphasis on the educational function of music on the formation of individual moral characters and, furthermore, that of people's ethos. Most of the discussions on music in ancient Confucian documents focused always on the religious meaning of ritual music and its educational and ethical effect, especially by emphasizing the learning of the grandiose music of *ya*. In this historical and ideological context, the newly discovered *Xing Zi Ming Chu* shows us a very interesting case, in which we find a continuity of the same Confucian stereotypical idea in considering music as one of the three arts (*san shu*), as essential ways of realizing the human Dao, which apparently had followed the same classical Confucian tradition. On the other hand, *Xing Zi Ming Chu* has provided us with something new, that is, the aesthetic value of *qing*, the artistic value of musical sounds, and the dialectical relation between the feeling of pleasure and that of grief in music. It considers the quality of musical sounds out of other sounds, both physical and human, and relates them to the irreducible aesthetic and affective dimensions of human existence, all in promoting them with ethical and religious values. In this sense, even if the *Xing Zi Ming Chu* may not be taken as great as other Confucian classical texts, nevertheless, it can illuminate us with a remarkable aesthetic of music and the flourishing multiplicity of Confucian music culture in the Pre-Qin Era.

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GLOSSARY

Dao shi yu qing 道始於情

gu meng 瞽矇

junzi 君子

Lai and Wu 賚武

li yue 禮樂

liu Yi 六藝

qing 情

qing sheng yu xing 情生於性

san shu 三術

Shao and Xia 韶夏

Yue/le 樂

Xing Zi Ming Chu 性自命出

Xinqin Lun 性情論

Chapter IV

Is Mencius a Motivational Internalist?

Anh Tuan Nuyen

INTRODUCTION

According to many commentators, Mencius is a motivational internalist, someone who holds that if an agent believes a certain action to be morally good or right, then necessarily he or she is motivated to perform it. For instance, Xiusheng Liu claims that for Mencius, judgments of *ren* and *yi* are “internal” in that they both “necessarily involve[s] motivation.” (Liu 2002: 101) Liu characterizes internalism as the view that there is a “necessary connection between moral judgment and motivation...” (Ibid.:102). Given that *ren* and *yi* are “internal” in the sense that they “necessarily involve[s] motivation,” “there is a necessary connection between a judgment of *ren* (and *yi*) and a motivation to act in accordance with such a judgment” (Ibid.:115). Mencius is thus a motivational internalist (henceforth, the qualifying “motivational” will be dropped). Setting aside the fact that Liu’s argument for the claim that Mencius is an internalist is problematic, one particular problem with attributing internalism to Mencius is 1A:7 of the *Mencius*. In this passage, King Xuan acknowledges that he is aware of the suffering of his people, that it is *ren* to alleviate their suffering, *and* that, yet, he does not feel motivated to do so. Many commentators have tried to accommodate 1A:7 within the internalist reading of Mencius, but I will show that their attempts fall short. I will argue that 1A:7 shows that Mencius cannot be an internalist as strictly understood in the contemporary meta-ethical debate. I will further argue that for Mencius the connection between a moral judgment and motivation is not contingent as externalists hold. I will show that there is a position in the contemporary meta-ethical debate that is between internalism and externalism, which can best capture Mencius’ view on moral motivation.

THE KING AND HIS COMPASSION

In 1A:7, King Xuan asks Mencius if he, the king, is competent to love and protect his people, acknowledging that his people are right in complaining of being ignored. Mencius replies that he is, citing an incident in which the king once spared the life of an ox. Having once been told that the king had said that he could not “bear [the ox’s] frightened appearance, as if it were an innocent person going to the place of death,” Mencius says that he knows the king was not grudging the expense of an ox in ordering the substitution of a sheep for the ox, as

others had thought, but rather “felt pained by its being led without guilt to the place of death.”¹ Mencius goes on: “Your conduct was an artifice of benevolence.” The fact that the people are not loved and protected is due only to “your Majesty’s not exercising the royal sway, ... because you do not do it, not because you are not able to do it.”

For Mencius, compassion acts as the motivation to alleviate suffering. If the king does not have compassion then the lack of compassion is sufficient to explain why he “does not do it.” In 1A:7, Mencius tries to convince the king that he is a compassionate person and hence is “able to do it,” i.e. to alleviate the suffering of his people. Mencius’ task is to explain to the king why he is “able to do it” and yet “does not do it,” why the king fails to show compassion in this case. If internalism is true, the king cannot fail to be motivated. Indeed, if strong internalism is true, the judgment that he ought to alleviate suffering, a judgment of *ren*, is alone sufficient to motivate without the agency of an affective state such as compassion. Mencius might be a weak internalist who holds that a moral judgment can only motivate through an affective state such as compassion, in which case the problem is why the king is able to make a judgment of *ren* about his people, and yet does not feel the compassion that similar judgments of *ren* generate (as in the case of the ox), and hence is not motivated. If this is how Mencius diagnoses the king’s problem, he cannot be an internalist, weak or strong.

What then might support the case for attributing internalism to Mencius? Liu believes that there is textual evidence to support it. As we have seen, Liu attributes internalism to Mencius on the basis that for Mencius, *ren* and *yi* are “internal.” Liu gives as textual evidence 6A:4, where Mencius agrees with Gaozi that *ren* is “internal” but disagrees with him on *yi*, which is “external” for Gaozi, insisting that it too is “internal.” However, a closer look at this passage reveals that the sense of “internal” and “external” here is not the same as that in internalism and externalism. Here, “internal” means the motivational force, or the explanation for the motivating affective state (e.g. compassion), lies within the agent and does not depend on external circumstances. The love for a brother is “internal” and does not depend on the fact that someone is a brother, for otherwise someone who loves his brother would have to love someone else’s brother. By contrast, my reaction to a white object is “external” because it is the whiteness that makes me so react, and react in the same way to any white object, not something “in” me. All this is straightforward enough but it does not make Mencius an internalist. At best, 6A:4 merely says that *if* one is moved to act benevolently or righteously then the motivating force, or the explanation, lies in one’s own psychological make-up, including one’s tendency to judge what is benevolent or righteous. It does not say anything about the connection

¹ English translation is by James Legge.

between a judgment of *ren* or *yi* and the motivation to act, let alone saying that the connection is one of necessity as stipulated by internalists. Indeed, an externalist can accept that what is required to motivate an agent is “internal” in the sense stipulated in 6A:4, such as the desire to appear benevolent or righteous, or the judgment that one ought to be so. Such further motivating factor is external to the connection between a moral judgment and motivation while still “internal” to the agent in the sense of 6A:4.

Apart from 6A:4, other textual evidence is hard to come by. In the end, it seems that the strongest case for attributing internalism to Mencius is the plain fact that he cannot be an externalist. Given what Mencius has to say about the “four sprouts” and his comments on the behaviour of past sages, such as King Shun at 4B19, Mencius cannot be an externalist, someone who denies any necessary connection between judgments of *ren* and *yi* on the one hand and motivation on the other. But whatever the reason for attributing internalism to Mencius, 1A:7 has to be contended with. In his earlier remark on it, Nivison claims that what Mencius is trying to do is to persuade the king to extend the compassion that he once showed to the ox to his own people. (Nivison 1980) Since there is no relevant difference between the suffering of the ox and the suffering of his people, it would be inconsistent to have compassion for the former and not for the latter. However, Nivison himself admits that his account is puzzling, for the following reason. Nivison takes it that there is evidence to show that Mencius differentiates between having a good reason to have compassion and actually having compassion. If so then Mencius should know that his strategy will at best get the king to see that there is a good reason why he should have compassion for his people. How does Mencius get from there to getting the king to feel the compassion itself? How does one go from getting the king to see that he should extend compassion from the ox to the people, to getting him to “do it” when it is clear that he is “able to” and yet does not do it? Indeed, if internalism is true, why is there a problem for the king at all?

There are other problems with Nivison’s reading of 1A:7. For one thing, his account makes the rather implausible assumption that Mencius takes the king’s reasoning ability to be so defective as not to see that he should extend compassion from the ox to his people. After all, the passage makes clear that the reason why the king felt pity for the ox is precisely the fact that he extended, to the ox, the compassion for an imaginary innocent man being led to the place of death. The king is clearly capable of the kind of extension that Nivison says Mencius is trying to effect with his strategy. Another problem has been noted by David Wong and Shun Kwong-loi. (Wong 1991; Shun 1991) Thus, even if Mencius succeeds in getting the king to feel compassion for his people by the strategy identified by Nivison, the king’s compassion will be seen as being justified by the requirement of logical consistency, rather than by the actual suffering of his people, and as such it is not true compassion.

Shun, in particular, suggests that to overcome this problem, we have to interpret Mencius as trying to get the king to acquire the desire to alleviate the suffering of his people, a desire similar to that which motivated him to spare the ox. For Shun, if the king is really compassionate, he must desire the alleviation of suffering.

In a more recent account of 1A:7, Nivison seems to have abandoned his earlier reading (namely, what Mencius tries to do is to get the king to be consistent about how he once felt about the ox and how he should feel about his people). In this later version, Nivison accepts that the king does have a compassion for his people (thus he is not inconsistent) and that he is motivated to relieve the suffering of his people (which follows from an internalist reading). Given all this, the king's failure to act is due to his mistaken belief that his motivation is not strong enough, that he (the king) lacks a "sufficient strength of disposition" to act. (Nivison 1996) It is a case of "lack of will" (*acedia*) (as distinct from "weakness of will" -- *akrasia*). However, while this new reading is closer to the mark, it is not clear how it can be reconciled with the internalism that Nivison attributes to Mencius. If motivation is linked to judgment by necessity, how can either *acedia* or *akrasia* be possible? Furthermore, the reading does not quite explain how Mencius manages to solve the moral problem for the king, unless one assumes rather implausibly that the mere recognition of a lack of will somehow restores in the agent the requisite will. Tweaking the king's cognitive mechanism alone does not seem to be what Mencius tries to do. As we have seen, Shun Kwong-loi suggests that what Mencius tries to do is to instill in the king the desire to alleviate the suffering of his people, that is, tweaking the king's affective mechanism.

This is still problematic. Indeed, David Wong does not think that this is what Mencius tries to do. If the king's desire is the justifying reason for his compassion, it is still not true compassion. Mencius' strategy "would still be inconsistent with the perspective of the truly compassionate person, because [Mencius'] argument would identify the reason to act as lying in the King's *desire*, and not in the suffering he desires to alleviate" (Wong 1991: 42). For Wong, the correct reading of 1A:7 requires us to attribute to Mencius a view about moral motivation that departs from the Humean position that only a desire (or passion) can motivate, a position that assumes a distinction between reason and emotion. On Wong's reading, there is no place for the distinction between reason and emotion in Mencius' philosophy. An emotion has a cognitive component, and in the case of compassion, it is the perception of suffering. It is this cognitive component that functions to supply the reason to act: "...compassion typically involves at least implicit recognition of a reason to act in a certain way ..." (Ibid.: 32). Thus, if asked "Why did you do it (i.e. acting compassionately)?", the compassionate person "would identify his perception of the actual or possible suffering of another as the cause and as a justifying reason for what he does." (Ibid.) With this in mind, says Wong, we can see that

Mencius's strategy in 1A:7 is (1) "to bring before [the king's] mind a past action of his that constituted a paradigm scenario for compassion," (2) to help the "the king to verify the emotion that moved him to spare the ox," (3) to identify "for the king the ox's suffering as both the cause and justifying reason for his action" (p.37), and (4) to give "the king a way for the motive force of the instinctually compassionate response to enter into practical deliberation." (Ibid.: 39). The "instinctually compassionate response" is one of the four innate tendencies, or instincts, or impulses, that Mencius identifies elsewhere (2A:6), namely the sensitivity to others' suffering that is the beginning of *ren* (the other three being the instincts to feel shame, to feel modesty, and to feel rightness and wrongness, which are the beginnings respectively of *yi*, *li* and *chi*). The crucial step in Mencius's strategy is (4), the showing of "a way for [the king's] compassionate impulse to be channeled into practical deliberation." (Ibid.)

Wong's reading of 1A:7 can overcome the difficulties in Nivison's and Shun's readings, but at a cost and not without some questions. The main cost, for Craig Ihara, is that Wong's reading "goes considerably beyond the evidence of the text." (Ihara 1991: 45) Ihara seems to be right in claiming that Mencius' strategy as Wong understands it requires the king to come to a high level of abstract understanding before he can feel compassion for his people (particularly in terms of the four steps I identified above). He seems to be right in his claim that "there is no evidence that Mencius thinks that the king must come to this abstract level of understanding." (Ibid.: 51). As for questions, Ihara asks, quite reasonably, why the king did not need to be shown "'a way' to 'channel' compassion" from the imaginary innocent man to the ox, and yet has to be shown a way when it comes to his people. (Ibid.) But the more important question that Ihara asks is how it is possible, on Wong's account of emotion, for someone to act on a certain emotion (e.g. jealousy) without thinking that the cognitive component of it (e.g. the perception that one's spouse is unfaithful) is a justifying reason for so acting. (Ibid.: 47) In any case, to attribute this view of emotion to Mencius is also to "go considerably beyond the evidence of the text." Nowhere in the *Mencius* can we find a word "that can translate directly as 'emotion'." (Ibid.: 48) Mencius only speaks of the four instincts, or impulses, in *xin* (heart-mind) but they are not emotions and do not have a cognitive component that an agent can recognize as a reason for action. Ihara points out, correctly it seems, that the action of the compassionate man in the example of the child about to fall into a well is an "instinctive sympathetic" response: "Certainly there are no cognitive emotions in [this] example ..." (Ibid.: 50)

Ihara's own reading of 1A:7 is alarmingly simple:

According to Mencius, all human beings have a "mind" that cannot bear to see the suffering of others. The king's

doubt that this is true of himself is shown to be false through Mencius' explanation of the king's behavior toward the ox. At this point all Mencius is doing is telling the king to look again at himself, to see that he has such a mind ... and urging him to experience the suffering of his people as vividly as he did the suffering of the ox (Ibid.: 51).

What is so alarming about this reading is that it attributes to Mencius the belief that the king is just lacking in imagination and that the cure lies simply in getting the king to see suffering more "vividly." If this is true then we can still safely attribute internalism to Mencius, because the problem with the king then is just that he has not formed a judgment of *ren* about his people. However, the passage makes it clear enough that the king knows that his people are not happy, that they feel unloved and unprotected, and that he ought to do something about it. This is precisely why he asks Mencius whether he has what it takes to love and protect them. His problem is that such perception somehow does not "evoke feelings of compassion" in him. Does he have to "experience the suffering" by suffering the suffering itself? But this is certainly to go further beyond the evidence of the text than Ihara has accused Wong of doing. Also, in his response to Ihara, Wong points out, correctly, that Ihara's reading does not take account of Mencius' emphasis elsewhere (e.g. 3A:7) on the process of moral development, from the primitive stirrings of the four impulses in the heart-mind to a mature display of *ren*, *yi*, *li* and *chi*.

There does not seem to be any way of getting around the fact that there is somehow a disconnection between the king's judgment of *ren* about his people and the motivation to act accordingly, which is not possible if internalism is true. But if Mencius is not an internalist, must he be an externalist? On the surface, this conclusion seems inevitable, insofar as either there is or there isn't a necessary connection between a moral judgment and motivation. As mentioned above, it is probably to avoid landing Mencius in the externalist camp that many commentators attribute internalism to him, for it is much more implausible to suppose that for Mencius the relationship between a moral judgment and motivation is purely contingent. The evidence so far suggests that Mencius takes it to be the case that there is a very strong connection between the two, but not so strong as to rule out the possibility of someone, such as King Xuan, who judges that it is *ren* or *yi* to do something but is not motivated to do it. As it happens, it is possible to argue that both internalism and externalism are false, and that something in between is the correct view of moral motivation. Such a view has been defended by Evan Simpson. (Simpson 1999) In what follows, I will show that Simpson's account has the best chance of capturing Mencius' position on moral motivation.

BETWEEN INTERNALISM AND EXTERNALISM

According to Evan Simpson, both internalism and externalism are false. He does not directly show that they are false. Instead, he defends an account of moral motivation that, if true, entails that internalism and externalism are false. His account invokes a logical relationship that he calls “logical dependency,” which is weaker than logical necessity. Some kind of things, A, logically depends on another kind, B, if it is logically impossible for A things always to occur without B things, but logically possible for the first sometimes to occur without the second. Wittgenstein has argued that it is impossible for pain always to occur without pain behavior, but logically possible for it sometimes to occur without pain behavior. If this is right then pain logically depends on pain behavior but it is not logically required for every instance of pain to be manifested in behavior, which would be the case if the two are related by logical necessity. Simpson then claims that a moral consideration of a certain kind logically depends on moral motivation: the two are not contingently related nor are they related by logical necessity. If this is right then internalism is false because it requires the two to be related by logical necessity, and externalism is false because it claims the two are only contingently related.

Simpson defends the claim that moral beliefs are logically dependent on motives by giving a psycho-semantic account of moral dispositions. He observes that many affective states have a cognitive content with a dispositional property. For example, fear contains in it the belief in impending danger which disposes the agent to act so as to avoid the danger. The relationship between the belief (in impending danger) and the motivation to act (to avoid danger) is one of logical dependency: one can sometimes recognize the situation as dangerous without being motivated to act to avoid the danger, but it is not possible to recognize danger without ever being so motivated. Without the (danger-avoiding) disposition, or in the total absence of the motivation (to avoid danger), the agent indeed cannot be said to understand the concept that expresses the belief in question (the concept of danger in the example here). The same thing is true about moral emotions and the beliefs contained in them. Simpson’s example is pity which contains the belief that someone is suffering and that it is a bad thing. This belief in turn logically depends on the agent being motivated to act to relieve the suffering: to have such belief the agent must be (logically) sometimes motivated to act to relieve the suffering. Without sometimes being so motivated, the agent cannot be said to understand the meaning of the concept of suffering, hence cannot believe that anyone is suffering, and insofar as such belief is part of the emotion of pity, cannot be said to be capable of feeling pity. Likewise, one cannot properly learn the meaning of danger without experiencing fear, as the “fearless agent does not understand why one should be concerned about danger.” (Ibid.: 207)

However, since the relationship between a normative reason and its motivating counterpart is one of logical dependency rather than logical necessity, it is possible that on occasions, a person who sees a normative reason is not motivated. What happens on those occasions is that a certain “defeating condition obtains.” (Ibid.: 204), the sort of thing that motivates externalists to claim that the relationship is only contingent. In the case of pity, the agent may have been over-exposed to suffering and may have become insensitive. In the case of danger, an agent may succeed in training himself or herself to overcome fear (as Simpson believes the ancient Stoics tried to do). However, unlike externalists, Simpson insists that the relation of logical dependency presumes that a motivation is psycho-semantically induced by a moral judgment rather than just contingently occurs with the latter. Like the internalists, Simpson takes the motivation to be “necessarily present” with a normative belief, but unlike them, Simpson accepts that it is possible for “a defeating condition [to] obtain(s), in which case the presumption [of a motivation] is falsified in that instance but not generally.” (Ibid.:204)

What is interesting about Simpson’s account is the idea that a moral judgment has an affective content, and a moral affection has a cognitive content. Logical dependency arises from the psycho-semantic interplay between the cognitive and the affective in judgments and emotions. This fits in perfectly well with the Mencian notion of *xin*, typically translated as “heart-mind.” As is well known, and as stressed by Wong in his account of 1A:7, Mencius does not see a sharp distinction between the cognitive and the affective. The mind in *xin* has an affective content, and its heart depends on cognition. Indeed, it is for this reason that, in attributing internalism to Mencius, many commentators do not see the meta-ethical problem that Michael Smith tries to overcome in his *The Moral Problem*. (Smith 1995) According to Smith, common sense tells us that (1) the judgment “It is right that I θ ” expresses a belief about an objective matter of fact about what is right for me to do, (2) if I judge that “It is right that I θ ” then, *ceteris paribus*, I am motivated to θ , and (3) I am motivated to θ just in case I have an appropriate desire (and a means-end belief for the attainment of θ). (Ibid.: 12). These three propositions are “platitudes” that are difficult to deny. The problem is that the three are mutually inconsistent. (2) says that some beliefs are necessarily connected with motivation and (3) says that what motivates is a desire. Yet, following Hume, beliefs and desires are distinct entities and so there cannot be any necessary connection between them. The moral problem is how to reconcile these three propositions. Smith’s solution to the problem lies in the acceptance of the following principle: “Our θ -ing in circumstances C is right if and only if we would desire that we θ in C, if we were fully rational, where θ -ing in C is an act of the appropriate substantial kind.” (Ibid.: 184). Thus, what we believe is the right thing to do, we will have the desire, or will be motivated, to do if we are fully

rational. Having the belief without being motivated means one is not “fully rational.”

In terms of 1A:7, if Smith is right then either the king does not see that it is right to love and protect his people or the king is not fully rational. The latter possibility seems consistent with Nivision’s earlier reading of 1A:7, according to which Mencius’ strategy is to point out to the king a failure of rationality, namely the failure to see that there is no relevant difference between the ox and his people. However, as we have seen, reading the king’s problem as one of failure of rationality (of whatever kind) has many difficulties. The alternative is to read Mencius’ strategy as getting the king to see that loving and protecting his people is the right thing to do. The motivation will come by necessity, given that he is fully rational. Unfortunately, this alternative is also troublesome. As we have seen, there is textual evidence to show that the king knows well enough that his people are not happy and knows well enough that taking care of the people is the right thing to do, that it is part of the mandate of Heaven. What encourages commentators such as Wong to attribute internalism to Mencius, in view of these difficulties, is the fact that Mencius does not see a distinction between reason and emotion, between mind and heart, wedded as he is to the notion of *xin*, which is both heart and mind. Indeed, with *xin*, reason and emotion, or beliefs and desires, are not distinct existences, and so there is no reason why “It is right that I θ ” cannot motivate, so long as it is a product of the heart-mind. With *xin*, there is no “moral problem” of the sort Smith tries to resolve.

This is not to say that, with *xin*, we can unproblematically attribute internalism to Mencius. There is still 1A:7 to explain. We have seen that Wong’s explanation has many difficulties. Returning to Simpson’s account, another attractive feature is the psycho-semantic process that underlies the logical dependency between a moral judgment and motivation. The trouble with internalism is that it sees the link between moral judgments and motivation as a matter of logical entailment, hence as a matter of logic. But as a critic, James Dreier, has put it, “entailing isn’t always explaining.” (Dreier 1996: 364) What we need is an “analysis to help us to understand how a moral belief could motivate essentially, rather than merely in conjunction with a complementary desire,” but, Dreier complains, “(e)xactly what else is required is none too clear...” (Ibid.) With his psycho-semantic account, Simpson can explain how “a moral belief could motivate” : it could motivate because being motivated is part of the process of acquiring the belief. This fits in well with the Mencian idea of self-cultivation. As mentioned earlier, Mencius claims that moral judgments, of *ren* and *yi* for instance, originate from certain innate tendencies, or instincts, or impulses, referred at 2A:6 as the “four sprouts,” or “four beginnings.” But these “sprouts,” or “beginnings,” need to be nurtured. We need to learn to associate appropriate judgments to feelings rooted in the four “sprouts.” We need to learn to develop *xin*.

For all the reasons above, we can build on Simpson's account of moral motivation to give a reading of 1A:7 that avoids the difficulties that other readings face. The first thing to notice is that between a certain cognition, or a certain affective stirring, and an action in response to it, there is a whole chain of occurrences, even though the action can be immediate (as in Mencius' example of a man acting to save a child the moment he observes that it is about to fall into a well). Indeed, even a cognition can be unpacked into a chain of occurrences. As is well known, there is a difference between "seeing" and "seeing as" or between "basic seeing" and "cognitive seeing." It takes some cognitive ability to see that the images depicted on the television screen are images of people going without food, having no shelter and being medically neglected. It takes somewhat more cognitive input to see that hunger, homelessness and neglect are being depicted, and even more to see that the people depicted are suffering. Cognitive seeing just is the process of learning concepts. As concepts get "thicker," more learning is required. Concepts like suffering are "thicker" than concepts like hunger and homelessness, which in turn are thicker than concepts of lack of food and lack of shelter. One can see that some people live under certain conditions without seeing hunger or homelessness, and one can see hunger and homelessness without seeing suffering. Moral cognition is even thicker. Thus, it takes much more to go from seeing suffering to seeing that one ought to help the people suffering, or to relieve suffering. In most cases, the "more" just is the psycho-semantic process that Simpson speaks of. This process, as we have seen, will lead to thick notions that entail motivations, where the "entailing" is not just a logical process, but one that depends in turn on the psycho-semantic process of learning. Finally, even when there is a motivation, many steps may have to be traversed before an action is undertaken. As Simpson has pointed out, the fact that someone has a motive to commit murder is not sufficient proof that he or she is the murderer.

Thus, many things happen between certain basic seeings, or certain emotional stirrings, and appropriate actions. The relationship of logical dependency holds between many pairs of occurrences in this long chain. Since a "defeating condition" may exist between a pair of occurrences related by logical dependency, it is possible for the motivation to take a morally justifiable action not to exist (and indeed, for the action not to be performed even when there is a motivation to do so -- greed may motivate someone to murder his or her rich uncle but cowardice often defeats the action). It follows that to motivate someone to take an appropriate action, we have to do more than convincing him or her of a normative reason for acting. We have to understand what conditions might defeat the motivating judgment, or the motivating affective state, that we may presume to follow a normative reason by virtue of the relationship of logical dependency and somehow neutralize

them. We can now see that this is what underlies Mencius' strategy in 1A:7.

KING XUAN'S EDUCATION

The key to Simpson's account of moral motivation is the psycho-semantic explanation of moral judgments and feelings. This explanation, in turn, assumes that a judgment (e.g. of danger, or suffering) has an affective content (e.g. fear, or compassion), and conversely. This assumption is taken to the extreme in the Mencian concept of *xin*, which, as we have seen, is both cognitive and affective, mind and heart. This is what makes Simpson's account particularly appropriate for reading 1A:7. Indeed, we can argue that Mencius operates with something very much like it in mind given his emphasis on defeating conditions in paragraph 8: "...the superior man ... having seen [animals] alive, ... cannot bear to see them die; having heard their dying cries, ... cannot bear to eat their flesh. Therefore he keeps away from his slaughterhouse and cook-room." In this passage, Mencius takes it that the seeing and hearing animals suffering will, given *xin*, make a person feel compassion for them and reluctant to eat meat, but since "the gentleman" has to eat meat (presumably vegetarianism was not an option for Mencius), he has to block his own compassion by keeping out of slaughterhouses and cook-rooms. The nature of the heart-mind, *xin*, is mysterious unless we take it that the gentleman has learned to recognize the cries of animals being slaughtered as suffering, to relate suffering to his own feeling of pity, and to identify in the feeling of pity the tendency to act to alleviate the suffering. Clearly then, something like a relationship of logical dependency, which is based on a psycho-semantic process, is assumed by Mencius to stand between the gentleman's hearing the cries of animals and the recognition of suffering, between seeing suffering and feeling compassion, and between feeling compassion and acting to alleviate the suffering. Clearly also, Mencius believes that the relationship of dependency of the judgment of *ren* for animals and the feeling of pity for them is defeasible.

If I am right then, given Simpson's account of moral motivation, or rather my version of it, we can read Mencius, in 1A:7, as simply trying to explain to the king the defeating condition that prevents him from acting to relieve his people's suffering. From the episode of the ox, it is clear that the king understands the meaning of suffering. Having identified what he saw in the ox as suffering, there being no defeating condition, he felt compassion for the ox, and again there being no defeating condition, he was moved to save the ox and took action. We know that he identified what he saw as suffering and what he felt as compassion because he explicitly compared what he saw and felt with what he would feel if he had seen an innocent man being led to the place of death. One puzzle that this reading solves is why he ordered a sheep to be sacrificed in the place of the ox. Did he not think the sheep would

suffer just as much, or did he have no compassion for it? On Nivision's reading, Mencius tries to get the king to be consistent between the ox and his people, but that leaves the king inconsistent between the ox and the sheep. But we can now say that between the recognition of the sheep's fate and the compassion for it, there stand some defeating conditions. One of them is the fact that the sacrificial ceremony could not be abandoned: "*The king* said, How can [the consecration of the bell with blood] be omitted? Change it for a sheep" (paragraph 4). Another explicitly identified by Mencius for the king is the fact that the king "saw the ox and had not seen the sheep" (paragraph 8).

On my reading, the king's problem is, for Mencius, that he does not know what defeating condition stands between his recognition of the suffering of his people and the motivation to take appropriate actions to alleviate it. He knows what suffering means and by the relationship of logical dependency, he expects to feel compassion and to be doing something about his people's suffering. Since he does not feel the compassion, he has doubt about his heart-mind, asking Mencius whether he has what it takes to be benevolent to his people. Mencius assures him that there is nothing wrong with his heart-mind, citing the incident of the ox. Also, given that compassion psycho-semantically depends on action, the king fears that his inaction might indicate his inability to feel compassion. On this, Mencius assures the king that his inaction is merely a case of "not doing a thing" rather than "not being able to do it." The effect on the king is immediate: once the king understands what defeats his feeling of compassion, on which his understanding of the suffering of his people psycho-semantically depends, he begins to feel what he had expected: "When you, Master, spoke those words, the movements of compassion began to work in my mind" (paragraph 9).

Why was the compassion not there before the "Master spoke those words"? Why does the king's understanding of suffering not lead to the feeling of compassion, which in turn would lead to action? This is a puzzle for the king precisely because the king implicitly understands what is expected to follow from what he knows about his people, by the relationship of logical dependency. The fact that Mencius understands the king's puzzlement indicates that Mencius has in mind something like the relationship of logical dependency between the recognition of suffering and the feeling of compassion and between the latter and the action to alleviate suffering. For, if the relationship were one of logical necessity as internalists insist then the king's lack of compassion and his inaction would be an utter mystery, and if the relationship were one of mere contingency as the externalists insist then there would be no reason for the king to be puzzled. The only thing that would make sense of the king's puzzlement is to take the relationship to be one of logical dependency, which is defeasible. This leads naturally to reading what Mencius says to the king as pointing out to the king a defeating condition, namely the king's preoccupation with territorial conquests (paragraphs

14-16). Mencius' strategy then, is to identify for the king the defeating condition so that he can reconnect his cognition of suffering with his feelings and the appropriate action. This of course will not be sufficient to get the king to act: the defeating condition has to be removed. The next part of Mencius' strategy is to show the king that the condition thought to defeat the king's action to help his people really does not do so at all. Mencius then tries to convince the king that his desire to secure his kingdom would in fact be met if he were to act on his compassion for his people (paragraphs 17-18). Instead of defeating the appropriate action, on which the king's compassion and his cognition of suffering logically depend, his territorial desire calls for it. Once the king has understood this, all that remains for Mencius to do is to spell out for the king what has to be done in order to enrich his people (paragraphs 19-24).

In his response to Ihara, Wong claims that Ihara's reading of 1A:7 "does nothing to make sense of the plant metaphor" that Mencius employs to explain the process of moral development. (Wong 1991: 57) Wong is certainly right in claiming that Mencius places a great deal of stress on moral development, and that any explication of Mencius' theory of moral motivation has to give the idea of moral development a large role in the theory. However, it is not entirely clear how Wong's "distinction between the innate beginnings of compassion and a fully developed compassion with the cognitive dimension that enables reliable helping helps to spell out the seed-and-stalk metaphor," or how it "illuminate(s) the way that the seed of compassion can contain the contours of its full development, and yet need cultivation." (Ibid.) On my reading, Mencius' idea of moral development can be cashed out explicitly in terms of the psycho-semantic process of learning moral concepts such as pain and suffering, of learning to recognize moral feelings such as compassion and pity, and of learning to connect concepts with affects and dispositions to act. As pointed out above, I see this process as the thickening, through education, of cognition and affection, from the bare seeing of certain images to seeing them as depicting, for example, hunger and homeless, to seeing suffering, to seeing that it is bad, to seeing that one ought to do something about it; and from certain primitive affective stirrings to, for example, feelings of sympathy, to feelings of compassion or benevolence, to desires to help. In the Mencian framework, the main ingredient that thickens cognition, the mind, is the affective movement, the heart, and the main ingredient that thickens affection, the heart, is the cognitive input, the mind. Thus, what mainly thickens the seeing of hunger and homeless to the seeing of suffering is the heart-felt tendency to help the hungry and the homeless, and what mainly thickens the heart-felt tendency to help to the feeling of compassion is the cognition that hunger and homeless are bad for those who have to endure them. The ultimate aim of moral development is the development of the heart-mind, *xin*, that sees and feels in harmony.

If I am right, what King Xuan has learnt from Mencius is not a lesson in how to be logically consistent, as Nivison suggests, nor in how to let the “motive force” of the primitive stirrings to do its work in practical reasoning, as Wong claims, nor in how to be imaginative, as Ihara believes. What the king has learnt from Mencius is the true nature of the heart-mind, and how a developed heart-mind can be out of balance and fail to see through the conditions that defeat the movement from one state of the heart-mind to the next, on which the former psycho-semantically depends, or from the normative reason to what it logically depends, the motivating condition, in the contemporary language of moral motivation.

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Chapter V

Xunzi and the Essentialist Mode of Thinking about Human Nature

Kim-chong Chong

INTRODUCTION

In his essay “Philosophy of Human Nature,” Antonio Cua argues that the term “bad” in Xunzi’s statement that “Human nature is bad” is to be taken in a consequential sense. This goes against a common tendency to read the *Xunzi* in what I refer to as the essentialist mode of thinking. In this paper, I show how it is that the consequential reading of “bad” and other features that Professor Cua describes offer a significant understanding of Xunzi’s position as a non-essentialist one.

THE ESSENTIALIST MODE OF THINKING

Historically, Xunzi’s statement that “Human nature is bad (*ren zhi xing e* 人之性惡)” has been regarded as the opposite of Mencius’s view that “(Human) nature is good (*xing shan* 性善).”¹ It is Mencius’s considered position that human nature is inherently good. Thus, given Xunzi’s opposition to Mencius, it has seemed natural to take him to mean that human nature is inherently bad. However, it is wrong to think that if Xunzi denies an inherent goodness, he must therefore be committed to the belief in an inherent badness. The mode in which Mencius thinks of nature or *xing* 性 remains deeply entrenched if one takes this to be Xunzi’s considered view. In his criticism of Mencius, however, Xunzi targets not only the idea that *xing* is good. He also attempts to undermine what I shall refer to as the “essentialist” mode of thinking about *xing*.

It is important to spell out what this essentialist mode of thinking is and what Xunzi’s position is in relation to it. In this regard, the term

¹ For the statement by Xunzi, see John Knoblock, *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Works* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), Volume 3, Book 23, “Man’s Nature is Evil.” Li Disheng, *Xunzi Jishi* 荀子集釋 (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1994), *Xing E Pian*. The statement is repeated several times throughout Book 23. For the statement of Mencius’s position, see the passage 6A:6 in the bilingual edition of D.C. Lau, *Mencius* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1984). I shall follow Knoblock’s passage numberings in the references to the *Xunzi* and Lau’s passage numberings in references to the *Mencius*.

*qing*情 plays a pivotal role. With reference to Mencius's use of the term *qing* in response to a question about what he means by man's *xing* being good, A.C. Graham has given the following definition: "The *qing* of X is what makes it a genuine X, what every X has and without which would not be an X."² We may break this down as follows. Take an entity called "X" (in this instance, "man"). There is some essential ("genuine") characteristic of X that makes it what it is. This characteristic is "essential" in the sense that each and every member of the class "X" necessarily possesses it. An entity that lacks this characteristic is not "X". According to Graham, in the *Mencius* and the pre-Qin philosophical texts in general, the term *qing* refers to this essential characteristic in the way just defined.³

Let us see how this essentialist mode of thinking about human nature applies to Mencius by referring to part of Xunzi's analysis of his view that human nature is good. According to Xunzi, underlying this view is a tendency to think of human nature as an original unadorned state with a beneficial resource, in the way that eyesight belongs to the eyes (*Xunzi* 23.1d). The eyes and eyesight are inseparably linked such that without the former, there would not be the latter. In other words, the eyes are essential to the ability to see. Similarly, for Mencius, the resource of goodness is inseparably linked to each and every person at birth. The possession of this resource is inseparable from and therefore essential to what a man is.

This is indeed the way Mencius characterizes *ren* 人 or "man". After the example of the child about to fall into a well (*Mencius* 2A:6) he enumerates each of the four sprouts of the heart-mind (compassion, shame, courtesy and modesty, right and wrong) and says that whoever is devoid of any of them is not a man (*fei ren ye* 非人也). Thus, for Mencius, the possession of each of the four sprouts is *the* distinguishing feature of each man *qua* man. As he says in 4B:19, "Slight is the difference between man and the brutes. The common man loses this distinguishing feature, while the gentleman retains it." We need not go into the sense in which some people are said to "lose" this distinguishing feature, and certainly there is a philosophical difficulty here for Mencius. But consistent with

² A. C. Graham, "The Background of the Mencian Theory of Human Nature," in *Studies in Chinese Philosophy & Philosophical Literature* (Singapore: The Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1986), p.33. I have substituted *qing* for *ch'ing*.

³ Graham, "The Background...." Ibid. pp.59-66, "Appendix: The Meaning of *Ch'ing*." In an examination of the various uses of *qing* in the Pre-Qin texts, Kwong-loi Shun says: "I am inclined to agree with A.C. Graham's interpretation of *ch'ing* in terms of what a thing is genuinely like." However, he cautions against Graham's translation of the term as "essence" because of its Aristotelian associations. See Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought* (Stanford University Press, 1997), pp.184-185.

this way of regarding the distinguishing feature of man, Mencius would say of someone who fails to express any sign of the sprouts of goodness that he is not a *ren* or man.

We have described what I have referred to as the essentialist mode of thinking about human nature and how Mencius's view of human nature belongs to this mode. The question to be considered is: Does Xunzi think of human nature in this mode? Elsewhere, I have argued that Xunzi's view of *xing* amounts to the second of the four positions mentioned by Mencius's disciple Gongduzi, that it has the capacity to become good or to become bad (*ke yi wei shan* 可以為善, *ke yi wei bu shan* 可以為不善).⁴ A.C. Graham has associated this position with a pre-Mencian figure named Shih Shih who is said to have thought that "there is both good and bad in man's nature. If we pick out what is good in man's nature and by nourishing develop it, the good grows; if we nourish and develop the bad in our nature the bad grows." According to Graham, this is "clearly a justification" of the second position mentioned by Gongduzi.⁵ If this means that both goodness and badness are inherent in the nature of each and every person *qua* man, then this amounts to the essentialist mode of thinking about human nature.

ANTONIO CUA AND THREE FEATURES OF THE XUNZI

Ignoring the question of whether it would be coherent to talk of a person's nature being both *inherently* good and bad at the same time, I think that it would be a mistake to attribute this mode of thinking to Xunzi. In what follows, I shall refer to some features of Xunzi's position on human nature that would not fit the essentialist mode. These features have been clearly described by Antonio Cua in his essay, "Philosophy of Human Nature."⁶ In the beginning of this essay, Cua says that the concept of human nature is a "fluid" notion. He is not merely reminding us of the evident fact that there are various accounts of human nature.

⁴ In the chapter "Situating Xunzi" in my book, *Early Confucian Ethics* (Chicago: Open Court, forthcoming). See also my paper (in Chinese), "Xunzi and the Four Views on Human Nature," *NCCU Philosophical Journal* 11 (December 2003): 185-210. The four positions mentioned by Gongduzi in *Mencius* 6A:6 are that (1) *xing* is neither good nor not-good, (2) *xing* has the capacity to become good or to become bad, (3) there are *xing* that are good, and there are *xing* that are bad, and (4) *xing* is good. Position (2) has to be clearly distinguished from (3). The latter states that some people are by nature good, and some by nature bad. The former states that people have the capacity to become good, and the capacity to become bad.

⁵ Graham, "The Background..." Ibid. p.21.

⁶ Antonio S. Cua, "Philosophy of Human Nature," in *Human Nature, Ritual, and History -- Studies in Xunzi and Chinese Philosophy* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), pp.3-38.

Instead, he holds that any particular account of human nature reflects a certain moral vision, ideal or norm. This is demonstrated in his analysis of Xunzi's thesis that "human nature is bad." What Xunzi means, according to Cua, is that there is a motivational structure of desires and feelings that would tend toward strife and disorder if left unrestrained. This is a "quasi-empirical" claim, and it is validated by the implied moral point of view that strife and disorder are undesirable. In other words, it is the consequences of such a situation that would be bad. For Xunzi, there is nothing intrinsically bad about desires and feelings. As Cua says, "To characterize man's nature as 'bad' is, in effect, a shorthand way of asserting the nature of these consequences."⁷

To those familiar with discussions on human nature among the pre-Qin philosophers, the word "fluid" might bring to mind the analogy that Gaozi uses in his description of human nature. According to Gaozi (*Mencius* 6A:2), nature or *xing* does not distinguish between good/bad in the way that water does not distinguish between east/west. The implication is that nature is morally neutral and conceptions of nature as good or bad are imposed by individuals or communities. Cua does not refer to Gaozi here but to a similar analogy of Xunzi's between the acquisition of ritual principles and the molding of clay: "In a way, man's nature, understood in terms of his basic motivational structure, is not bad in itself, but it is bad in the way he tends to actualize this basic nature, and this from the moral point of view. Xunzi, throughout, is insistent on man as a raw material for moral transformation. Man is, like a piece of clay to be molded into a proper shape, to be transformed by *li*-morality."⁸

Hence, according to Cua, these are the three main features of Xunzi's account of human nature: (1) His statement that "Man's *xing* is bad" refers to the consequences of indulging its motivational structure of desires and feelings; (2) There is nothing inherently bad about man's *xing* -- it is morally neutral; and (3) Man's *xing* consists of a basic "raw material" that can be shaped or transformed. In the rest of this paper, I

⁷ Ibid. p.8.

⁸ Even if Xunzi does refer to a state of nature, this could, as Cua notes, be a thought experiment about the consequences of the absence of ritual principles and other social norms. On p.28 of his essay Cua refers to a passage in 23.3a where what Xunzi says is "reminiscent" of Hobbes's account of the state of nature: "Now, let us try to imagine a situation where we do away with the authority of lords and superiors, do without the transforming influence of ritual and morality...In such a situation the strong would inflict harm on the weak and rob them...the perversity and rebelliousness of the whole world would quickly ensure their mutual destruction. If we consider the implications of these facts, it is plain that human nature is evil and that any good in humans is acquired by conscious exertion." (Knoblock's translation)

shall do the following. First, I shall build upon the first two features that Cua describes through a reading of relevant passages in the *Xunzi*. Second, I shall discuss the third feature -- the so-called “raw material” of nature and its transformation. This would involve a discussion of the relation between *qing* and *xing* in the text and how transformation is possible, thus leading to a fuller description of Xunzi’s non-essentialist position.

In the course of discussing the three features mentioned above, certain questions will inevitably arise. For instance, if we argue that for Xunzi nature is bad only in a consequential sense, how do we account for the fact that Xunzi constantly talks about the need for transforming one’s nature -- does not the need for transformation assume that man’s nature is essentially bad in the first place? Furthermore, what is this “raw material” that man is said to possess, even if for the sake of argument, it is granted that it is not inherently bad in the first place? Surely, this “raw material” must refer to the contents of one’s nature *qua* man and this would mean that it is essentially possessed by man -- how then can there be any reading of human nature in a non-essentialist mode? These questions indicate that the essentialist mode of thought is not easy to shake off and will tend to crop up throughout the discussion. Thus, discussing the features of Xunzi’s position would at the same time involve unveiling essentialist assumptions. The response to the questions posed will ultimately help us to develop what I think is a proper account of Xunzi’s position and to understand how there can be a non-essentialist conception of human nature.

THE MEANING OF “XING IS BAD”

Passage 23.1a of the *Xing E Pian* 性惡篇 of the *Xunzi* begins:

The *xing* of man is bad (*e*). His (expressions of) goodness is (the result of) constitutive activity (*wei* 偽). The *xing* of man is such that he is born with a liking of benefit. (Should this be allowed to be) indulged in (*shun shi* 順是), strife will arise and ritualistic deference (*ci rang* 辭讓) will be lost. (My translation)

It might be held that strictly speaking, since the context of discussion is *xing* and what man is born with, Xunzi is not entitled to speak of the rules and behavior of ritualistic deference being “lost” if *xing* is indulged in. But this assumes that in this passage he has in mind a state of nature where ritualistic rules are non-existent. For in such a state of nature, rules of ritual cannot be “lost” since they are non-existent. However, Xunzi mentions the loss of the rules of ritual as a conjecture about the consequences -- what would happen if people do not conduct

themselves on the basis of ritual and instead allow their natural dispositions to have free rein?⁹

The above passage continues:

(Man is) born with (the tendencies toward feelings of) envy and hate. (Should this be allowed to be) indulged in, violence and crime will arise and loyalty and trustworthiness will be lost. (Man is) born with the desires (*yu* 欲) of the ears and the eyes, having a liking for sounds and colors. (Should this be allowed to be) indulged in, dissoluteness and disorder will thus arise while ritual principles and cultural form will be lost. (My translation)

Although this is similar to the initial section quoted above, it adds the tendencies toward *feelings* of envy and hate and the sensory desires to the *desire* for benefit as what man is born possessing. Again, the stress is on what would happen should the desires and feelings be given free rein -- there would be disorder and the loss of ritual principles and “cultural form” (*wen li* 文理) that constitute the social order. Xunzi says next:

Thus (wantonly) following man’s *xing* and indulging man’s *qing* will inevitably result in strife which amounts to transgression of social divisions (*fen* 分) and disorder, ultimately ending up in (a situation of) tyrannical violence. (My translation)

We shall be discussing in detail the relation between the terms *xing* and *qing* later. But note the separate mention of *xing* and *qing* in this section of the passage. This indicates that they are not used interchangeably here. Having mentioned the wanton following of *xing*, there seems no reason for Xunzi to repeat himself by mentioning the indulgence of *qing* if it is interchangeable with *xing*. And Xunzi does not seem to be using *qing* in the sense of what is “genuine” here either. It is therefore probable that *qing* refers to the feelings or emotions (of envy and hate) that Xunzi had mentioned earlier.¹⁰ Xunzi is saying that if

⁹ Cua translates *xing* as “nature” and *qing* as “feelings”. See Cua, “Philosophy of Human Nature,” p.7. Knoblock has “inborn nature” for *xing* and “natural inclinations” for *qing* in this passage. I follow Cua’s use of “feelings” for *qing*. But both confirm that *xing* and *qing* are two separate items here.

¹⁰ On p. 31 of his essay Cua notes that “Xunzi thus may be regarded as proposing a remedy for the human predicament beset by man’s basic nature.” He adds the interesting remark that “Xunzi could agree with Hume ‘that if

people are allowed to give free rein to their sensory desires (*xing*) and dispositional feelings (*qing*) this would result in the consequences mentioned. The passage 23.1a concludes:

Therefore there must be the transformation (*hua* 化) brought about by teachers/laws and the way of ritual principles before there can be deference, conformity to cultural form and ultimately orderly governance. From this perspective it is clear that man's *xing* is bad and (the expressions of) goodness is (the result of) constitutive activity (*wei*). (My translation)

Xunzi is careful to say that it is "from this perspective" that *xing* is bad. What is this perspective? This must refer to what he has repeatedly stressed throughout the passage, namely, that the indulgence of the desire for benefit, the sensory desires and the disposition to feel envy and hate will result in disorder and the loss of cultural form and ritual principles. An important corollary is that the structures of cultural form and ritual principles are not inborn. Instead, they have been constituted to rein in the desires and feelings -- both to control/regulate and to transform them so as to ensure social order. At the same time, as Xunzi says elsewhere, the human predicament is such that resources are scarce, and comprehensively speaking there may not be enough to satisfy the desires of everyone. Thus, the social divisions instituted by ritual principles are necessary to allocate the resources according to different familial and social rankings and other criteria (*Xunzi* 10.1, 19.1a).¹¹

The above confirms Cua's analysis -- Xunzi's statement "nature is bad" in 23.1a stresses the consequences of allowing the indulgence of man's nature, "badness" being regarded from the viewpoint of the moral idealistic norm of social order.

MORAL NEUTRALITY OF *XING*

In passage 23.1b an analogy is made with the process of straightening a piece of wood. Xunzi says that man's *xing* is bad and can be "straightened" (*jiao shi* 矯飾) or made upright (*zheng* 正) through a process involving teachers/laws and ritual principles. Following the above analysis of 23.1a, we may say that the same consequential sense of "bad"

men were supplied with everything in the same abundance, or if every one had the same affection and tender regard for everyone as for himself; justice and injustice would be equally unknown among mankind."

¹¹ In 8.7 there is also a reference to *jiao shi* or to correct one's *qingxing*. The *qingxing* is often referred to as something that people indulge (*zong* 縱, for instance, 6.2) and that people need to restrain (*ren* 忍, for instance, 6.3).

applies here too. That is, *xing* needs to be “straightened” to prevent social disorder and it is from this perspective that *xing* is bad.¹²

But we should consider an alternative reading. There is a case for saying that if *xing* needs to be “straightened” it must be inherently undesirable. Given that Xunzi repeatedly mentions the need for *xing* to be transformed, isn’t this a pessimistic view of *xing* and does not this imply that it is inherently bad after all? At the end of 23.1b, Xunzi distinguishes between the gentleman (*junzi* 君子) and the petty person (*xiaoren* 小人). The assumption is that both share the same *xing* or *qingxing* 情性. However, the former has undergone the transformation brought about by teachers/laws and the accumulation of cultural form and ritual principles. The latter has wantonly expressed his *qingxing*, acting indiscriminately and violating ritual principles. Xunzi again concludes: “From this perspective, it is clear that man’s *xing* is bad, and his (expressions of) goodness is the result of constitutive activity.”

Suppose we take this last statement to mean that *xing* is inherently bad. This would mean that the gentleman has, somehow, managed to break away from this *xing*. But there is a difficulty here: how is it possible to do so, given the assumption of inherent badness? Xunzi shows he is aware of the problem when he postulates the objection in 23.2a that “If man’s *xing* is bad then how are ritual principles established?” This question assumes that *xing* is inherently bad such that it would be impossible for ritual principles to be established. It also presupposes that ritual principles can be established only because man possesses an inborn goodness in the first place. We have seen how Xunzi questions this presupposition in 23.1d by relating the “so-called goodness of *xing* (*suo wei xing shan zhe* 所謂性善者)” to a tendency to think of it as an organic resource inseparable from birth just as eyesight is inseparable from the eyes. This comparison throws doubt on the existence of such an organic resource and Xunzi dismisses the idea by saying that the moment one is born, one would have moved away from any supposed unadorned state in which such a resource is said to abide. The assumption of an inherent badness and the alleged impossibility of establishing ritual principles are countered by an analogy between a sage’s establishing ritual principles and a potter’s molding a clay vessel/ in 23.2a and 23.4a. We would not assume that the vessel/dish is part of the potter’s *xing*. Similarly, we should not assume that ritual principles inhere in the sage’s *xing*. In other words, there is a structure to ritual principles that cannot (logically speaking) be said to belong to man’s *xing*. If goodness is something that is constitutively structured, then people must have the capacities that would allow for this (and it does not follow either that these must be inborn moral capacities).

¹² See my full discussion of this in “Xunzi’s Systematic Critique of Mencius,” *Philosophy East and West* 53:2 (2003): 215-233, and in *Early Confucian Ethics*.

We therefore learn that for Xunzi, *xing* is neither inherently good nor bad. For him, *xing* is a biological concept consisting of certain desires and feelings. However, for the same reason that there is nothing inherently (morally) good about these desires and feelings, there is also nothing inherently (morally) bad about them either. Xunzi argues that (the goodness of) ritual principle has a certain constitutive structure that needs to be worked upon, and it would be fallacious to assume that such a structure is inborn. As he says later in the *Xing E Pian* (Xunzi 23.5b), everyone has the capacity to become a sage, although for various reasons, not everyone translates this into the ability to do so.¹³ If goodness is a constitutive structure, then badness must be the undesirable consequences of failing to establish/maintain such a structure.

XING, QING AND THE POSSIBILITY OF TRANSFORMATION

We have so far confirmed the first two features of Xunzi's view on human nature that Cua has mentioned: (1) "Man's *xing* is bad" refers to the consequences of indulging its motivational structure of desires and feelings. (2) There is nothing inherently bad about man's *xing* -- it is morally neutral. We shall now proceed to discuss the third feature: (3) Man's *xing* consists of a basic "raw material" that can be shaped or transformed. The following questions have to be answered. What is this "raw material?" In other words, what are the contents of *xing*, and in what sense can they be said to be transformed? Here, there is a tendency to think that if the contents of *xing* are *essential* to man, there must be a *prima facie* incoherence to the idea of transforming man's nature. In order to answer these questions we shall have to clarify the terms *qing*, *xing* and the relation between them.

Xunzi often uses *qing* instead of *xing* when talking of the nature of man. There is also the binomial *qingxing*. In the above discussion of 23.1a, I maintained that *xing* and *qing* are not used interchangeably when Xunzi says: "Thus (wantonly) following man's *xing* and indulging man's *qing* will inevitably result in strife..." Following the mention of the desire for benefit and the sensory desires on the one hand, and the disposition to

¹³ In 4.9 Xunzi says: "All men possess [something in common]: when hungry, they desire food; when cold, they desire to be warm; when exhausted from toil, they desire to rest; and they all desire benefit and hate harm. Such is [what man is born] possessing. They do not have to await development before they become so. It is the same in the case of a Yu and in that of a Jie." Though the term is not mentioned we know that Xunzi is referring to *xing* because he says that all persons have something in common -- the sensory and appetitive desires, and the desire for benefit and aversion to harm. He adds that these are what they are born possessing instead of something that awaits development. This is the way Xunzi defines *xing* elsewhere when he contrasts it with *wei* or what I have translated as "constitutive activity".

feel envy and hate on the other, I suggested that it is best to think of *qing* in this passage as referring to the feelings/emotions. Based upon this, the binomial *qingxing* can sometimes be regarded as a more inclusive reference to “emotional and sensory nature.” However, *qingxing* seems also to be interchangeable with *xing*. In the first sentence of 23.1e, for instance, after referring to the contents of *xing* as the desires (*yu*) for: food (when hungry), warmth (when feeling cold), and rest (when feeling tired), Xunzi says: “These are man’s *qingxing*.” But it does not matter very much whether we take *xing* or *qingxing* as interchangeable or not so long as we bear in mind that their contents include both the sensory desires and certain dispositional feelings/emotions.¹⁴

However, unlike Knoblock, I would hesitate to translate *xing* as “essential nature” or *qingxing* as “essential qualities inherent in his nature”.¹⁵ These translations are fine if we remember all that Xunzi has

¹⁴ In a personal correspondence, Antonio Cua has noted that Knoblock’s translation of *qing* as “essential nature” is “misleading”. He refers to Li Disheng p.46 (Knoblock 3.8). Cua would himself translate the expression found here *ren zhi qing* not as “the essential nature of humans” but as “the way humans are” and qualified by “as we know from observing human behavior” or “normal behavior” or for short, “human condition *ren zhi chang qing* 人之常情”. In 3.8, we have “that one who has just washed his body will shake out his robes and that one who has just washed his hair will dust off his cap is because of the essential nature (*qing*) of humans.” Li Disheng and Jiang et.al. regard *qing* here as *ren zhi chang qing* or “the common characteristic (behavior) of man.” In 3.10, we have “Thus, the gentleman need not leave his own house, yet the essential nature (*qing*) of all that is within the seas is established and accumulated there.” Li translates *qing* here as *qing xing* 情形 or “the circumstances” and Jiang et al. translates it as *shi qing* 事情 or “affairs”. For an earlier occurrence of *qing* in 3.10, Jiang et al. has *qing kuang* 情况 or “situation”. See Li Disheng, *Xunzi Jishi* (Taipei: Xuesheng Shuju, 1994), p.47 note 3 and p.51, note 9. Jiang Nanhua, Luo Shuqing and Yang Hanqing, eds., *Xunzi Quanyi* 荀子全譯 (Guizhou Renmin Chubanshe, 1995), p.40 and p.43. Because of the limited purpose of this essay, I have not discussed other aspects of the term *qing*. For a full discussion see Chen Zhaoying, *Rujia Meixue yu Jingdian Quanshi* (Taipei: Taiwan Daxue Chuban Zhongxin, 2005), chapter 3. Chen traces the development of the term from Confucius to Mencius and Xunzi.

¹⁵ In 8.11, Xunzi says: “It is by fixing the mind on the goal, devising ways and means to realize it, and effectuating it through the habituation of custom that the inborn nature is transformed (*hua xing* 化性). By unifying all these diverse elements and permitting no duality of goals in the mind, accumulated effort is perfected. The habituation of custom modifies the direction of will and, if continued for a long time, will alter its very substance (*yi zhi* 移質).” We note from this that for Xunzi *xing* is something that can be *hua* or transformed, and the last statement states that the “substance” can be altered. But just as one should be careful about treating *xing* as “essential

in mind when talking about *xing* or *qingxing* is that the desires and dispositional feelings are what we are born with, and that these are morally neutral. But the terms “essential” and “inherent” tend to contribute to the idea that there is something deeply unchangeable and static about *xing* or *qingxing* and generally speaking this is not the case for Xunzi.¹⁶ This is especially clear when Xunzi refers to *qing* instead of *xing*. Thus while *xing* and *qingxing* may be interchangeable, we would need to be more cautious about the relation between *qing* and *xing*.

Consider the concluding section of passage 4.10 where *qing* is referred to, but not *xing*. Before this section, Xunzi first refers to man’s being born petty, loving benefit and being concerned with satisfying appetitive desires -- more or less the standard contents of *xing*. Next, he says that once they have gone beyond the barest necessities, people will not be content with anything less than what they have learned to savor. Xunzi is not merely alluding to the fact that people desire or want luxury and wealth, but also to their capacity for refinement. Luxury and wealth are only possible through refinement. But significantly, this refinement at the same time reflects the encompassing categories of ritual principles (*ren yi zhi tong* 仁義之統).¹⁷ Referring to these, he asks: “Are they not the means by which we live together in societies, by which we protect and nurture each other, by which we hedge in our faults and refine each other, and by which together we become tranquil and secure?” Thus, people who behave like the tyrannical Jie and Robber Zhi are said to be *lou* 陋 or uncultivated, and it is the task of the humane person to transform them. Xunzi concludes:

But when [the wise and benevolent kings] Tang and Wu lived, the world followed them and order prevailed, and when [the cruel and tyrannical kings] Jie and Zhou Xin lived, the world followed them and was chaotic. How could this be if such were contrary to the [*qing* of man] (*ren zhi qing* 人之情) because certainly it is as possible

nature”, I think the term “substance” as a translation for *zhi* might be too strong since it implies something unchangeable. Perhaps “qualities” may be better.

¹⁶ I argue that *ren yi* 仁義 and *li yi* 禮義 are equivalent as “ritual principles” in *Early Confucian Ethics*. “Encompassing categories” follows Li Disheng’s explanation of *ren yi zhi tong* as *li yi zhi tong lei* 禮義之統類. See Li, p.67, note 17. I thank Antonio Cua for this reference to Li.

¹⁷ This seems to tally with what Kwong-loi Shun says in his discussion of *qing* in the pre-Qin texts, that “sometimes the [*qing*] of X’s can be features that obtain of X’s as a class but not of each member of the class, as when the difference in the abilities of the common people is described as the [*qing*] of the common people.” See Shun, *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought*, p.185.

for a man to be like the one as like the other?
(Knoblock's translation, except for the bracketed words)

This question can be paraphrased thus: "How is it possible for benevolent or tyrannical kings to influence people into being good or bad, if this were contrary to the *qing* of man?" Given what was said earlier, the term *qing* does not refer just to the contents of *xing* (pettiness, love of benefit and basic sensory/appetitive desires) but also to other *facts* about man such as the capacity for refinement which is at the same time intimately linked to the capacity for transformation according to ritual principles. The *qing* of man is such that it is equally possible for anyone to become good (cultivated) or to become bad (uncultivated). Given the possibility of going either way, *qing* in this sense cannot be said to refer to some essential quality that is static and unchangeable. Consider also the next passage, 4.11:

It is the [*qing* of man] that for food he desires the meat of pastured and grain-fed animals, that he desires clothing decorated with patterns and brocades, that to travel he wants a horse and carriage, and even that he wants wealth in the form of surplus money and hoards of provisions so that even in lean periods stretching over years, he will not know insufficiency. Such is the [*qing* of man]. (Knoblock's translation except for the bracketed words)

In mentioning the *qing* of man, Xunzi refers to the desire for food, clothing and so on, and these seem to be the same as the sensory and appetitive desires of *xing*. However, this is not the case. Notice that the items mentioned are refinements that Xunzi has associated with the establishment of ritual principles. In addition, Xunzi mentions the desire for surplus not as motivated by greed but prudence. The remainder of the passage following makes it clear that prudence is not a universal trait because there are extravagant individuals who fail to think long term and impoverish themselves as a result.¹⁸

¹⁸ In some places (4.12, 11.4, 11.7b) Xunzi talks about *qing* in terms of what men desire (*yu*) in common. These go beyond the basic necessities and involve a high level of sophistication and refinement that it would be necessary to take the proper steps to secure (11.4). The list of desires or wants is much broader than what I have listed in the discussion. I would prefer to use "wants" here to distinguish them from the basic biological desires. For instance, beside wealth, this could include honor and power (4.12). Further items include wanting the existence of regulations and standards, governmental ordinances and edicts, punishment for negligent officers and rebellious states, for reputation, accomplishment and

We can now summarize the relation between *xing* and *qing* with reference to Xunzi's view of human nature. *Xing* is a biological concept in that it refers to what all men are born with. That is, it refers to the basic sensory and appetitive desires. In conjunction with these desires, Xunzi says that man is born with a love of benefit, feelings of envy and hate, and is petty. The term *qing* could, as we have seen, refer to these desires and feelings. In this regard, Xunzi might use the more inclusive *qingxing*. However, "the *qing* of man" also refers to other general facts about people: they have wants and capacities that go beyond the basic sensory and appetitive desires and feelings. That is, people want surplus items of wealth and luxury. These wants imply the need for security, and the capacities for prudence, refinement and hence for establishing ritual principles.¹⁹

The contents of *xing* are essential only because they are basic to biological life and survival. As Xunzi says in another context, without these desires we would be dead.²⁰ They are not essential in the sense of being what is distinctive about man *qua* man. This biological "raw material" can be transformed because in addition, the *qing* of man is such that people possess the capacity for refinement. However, some people do not succeed in refining and cultivating themselves because of a lack of teachers and models, or because they do not work hard and cumulatively. Nevertheless, there is no inherent or essential badness that would prevent them from transforming themselves.

This is where Xunzi can be easily misunderstood if he is read in the essentialist mode. For instance, some writers have claimed that Xunzi is inconsistent. He is alleged to have held on the one hand that nature is bad or that people have a "lowly character" but on the other hand that people are born with "an innate moral sense (*yi*義)." ²¹ But we have seen

achievements, and so on (11.7b). The *qing* of man refers to wants that extend all the way to comforts and luxuries enjoyed by the king. However, to have all these, regulations are necessary.

¹⁹ See 22.5a. Xunzi says that "Having desire and having no desire, these are different categories -- (the difference between) life and death, not (the difference between) order and disorder." This is an apparent criticism of Song Xing who held that it is the *qing* of man to have few desires (see 18.10).

²⁰ Donald J. Munro, "A Villain in the *Xunzi*," in Philip J. Ivanhoe, ed., *Chinese Language, Thought, and Culture: Nivison and His Critics* (Chicago: Open Court, 1996), p.198. Munro argues that Xunzi was more concerned with the measures to prevent social chaos and his discussions about human nature were secondary. In this regard, I think that in principle Munro could agree with Cua's analysis that "bad" for Xunzi is to be taken in a consequential sense. But I would disagree with Munro's remark that Xunzi left his theory of human nature in "a mess." On the contrary, I think that Xunzi was remarkably consistent in his remarks about human nature.

²¹ I have discussed this (and other meanings of *yi*) in more detail in the chapter on "Situating Xunzi" in my *Early Confucian Ethics*.

that Xunzi's statement that "nature is bad" is to be taken in a consequential and not an inherent sense. Although Xunzi does say that people are born with a liking for benefit, pettiness, and feelings of envy and hate, there is nothing essential about these such that a person cannot be transformed. The belief that Xunzi is being inconsistent must be based in part on the tendency to think that the "badness" and the "lowly" aspects of character must be deeply essential such that it would be inconsistent to say that anyone can be transformed. Therefore, the charge of inconsistency would stick only if the essentialist mode of thought is granted.

This charge of inconsistency is abetted by a mistaken reading of what Xunzi means by *yi* in the present context. He does not think of it as an "innate moral sense." Instead, for Xunzi, *yi* refers to an ability that the human species has in contrast to other animals -- to make social distinctions and to institute and apply ritual principles that constitute the general structure of society and social relations.²² I shall say more about this species ability shortly. The reading of Xunzi in the essentialist mode is also evident in the argument that Xunzi would have great difficulty in explaining how it is that the sage-kings could "have created morality unless morality were already a part of their nature."²³

A NON-ESSENTIALIST DEFINITION OF THE HUMAN

There may now be an objection that if we take Xunzi's considered position to be that *xing* has the capacity to be good and the capacity to be bad, this would be too loose to qualify as a theory about human nature. There are at least three elements that any theory of human nature must cover. In the account of Xunzi that I have given so far, I seem to have emphasized only two. First, there must be a discussion of the biological facts about man. Second, these facts must be universal. Thus, although I have referred to the universal contents of *xing* and *qing* (remembering that certain wants and capacities may not be universally realized), a third element needs to be brought into the picture. That is, we

²² David B. Wong, "Xunzi on Moral Motivation," in Philip J. Ivanhoe, ed., *Chinese Language, Thought, and Culture: Nivison and His Critics* (Chicago: Open Court, 1996), p.206. Here, he is citing David Nivison, "Hsün Tzu and Chuang Tzu," in *Chinese Texts and Philosophical Contexts: Essays dedicated to Angus C. Graham*, ed. Henry Rosemont (La Salle, Illinois: Open Court, 1991), pp.129-42.

²³ For the three elements in any discussion of human nature, see David J. Buller, *Adapting Minds: Evolutionary Psychology and the Persistent Quest for Human Nature* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 2005), pp.421-422.

need to consider what it is that constitutes the human.²⁴ It would be insufficient for Xunzi to talk about human nature without any mention of what it is to be human. And in fact, when I said that in referring to *yi* Xunzi is not talking about an innate moral sense but to a species ability, I have admitted that Xunzi does define what it is to be human. Thus, it could be objected that contrary to what I have said, reference to what constitutes the essence of human nature is unavoidable after all.

My reply is that although Xunzi does define the human, there is an important philosophical sense in which this is not an essentialist definition. First, note that the definition is given independently of the concept *xing*. In the passage 5.4, Xunzi says:

What is it that makes a man human? I say that it lies in his ability to draw boundaries (*bian*辨). To desire food when hungry, to desire warmth when cold, to desire rest when tired, and to be fond of what is beneficial and to hate what is harmful -- these characteristics man is born possessing, and he does not have to wait to develop them. They are identical in the case of a Yu and in that of a Jie. But even so, what makes a man really human lies not primarily in his being a [facially hairless] biped, but rather in his ability to draw boundaries. (Knoblock's translation)²⁵

Here, Xunzi denies that the biological contents of *xing* constitute the human even though they are universally shared. Even the ape has these sensory and appetitive desires as well the desire for benefit and the aversion to harm. Xunzi, like Mencius, goes on to mention a difference between human beings and other animals. However, Knoblock's translation of *ren zhi suo yi wei ren zhe he yi ye* 人之所以為人者何已也 as "What is it that makes a man human?" hides an important difference. Xunzi does not ask, "What makes a man human?" In other words, he does not refer to that which each and every person is alleged to possess before he/she qualifies to be human. As we have seen, for Mencius, what is distinctive about each person *qua* man in this regard is the possession of the four sprouts. Lacking any of these, someone would not be entitled to be called a "man". A more literal translation of Xunzi's question would be "What makes man "man" ? The two occurrences of "man" in this question are used in a collective sense, and there is no reference to any

²⁴ There is a textual problem here. See the explanation in Knoblock's translation of the *Xunzi* Volume I (1988), p.297, note 54. Instead of Knoblock's "featherless biped" I have "facially hairless" to make sense of the similarity between man and ape since I find "featherless biped" rather odd.

²⁵ Cua, "Philosophy of Human Nature," *ibid.* pp.21-22.

individual person. In other words, Xunzi is asking what characterizes the human species as a whole, as distinct from other animals.

His answer, in a word, is *bian* or the ability to “draw boundaries”. Xunzi goes on to give two examples of what he means by *bian*. First, there is the *qin* 親 between father and son. This does not just mean “natural affection” (Knoblock’s translation) but implies the relation of filial piety and the ritual behavior that constitutes, including the duties and obligations governing the relationship. Second, although animals recognize sexual differences, they lack *nan nü zhi bie* 男女之別 or the “distinction between man and woman.” In other words, for the species human being, the difference between progenitor and offspring and between the sexes is not simply biological, but socially constitutive. Xunzi also talks of this socially constitutive ability in terms of the concept of *yi*. To repeat, this has been wrongly construed as the possession of an innate moral sense. Instead, it is the species ability to make social distinctions and to institute and apply ritual principles that constitute the general structure of society and social relations.

In one sense, this could be referred to as an “essential” characteristic because it distinguishes man from other animals. However, this species ability to make constitutive rules and to structure human relations opens up the possibility of there being different social structures, even though Xunzi himself emphasizes certain ritualistic forms. In this sense therefore, this species ability is not “essentialist”. With reference to Xunzi’s emphasis on the term *wei* as opposed to *xing*, it is appropriate to call this species ability a “constitutive” ability, or the ability for “constitutive activity”. Although the ability to constitute the general structure of society and social relations distinguishes the species man from other animals, it logically does not preclude the possibility of there being different forms of transformation and different social structures.

CONCLUSION

Let us conclude with a question that has disturbed many. In 23.2b, Xunzi says that “Man desires to do good because his nature is bad.” He continues:

Those with very little think longingly about having much, the ugly about being beautiful, those in cramped quarters about spacious surroundings, the poor about wealth, the base about eminence -- indeed whatever a man lacks within himself he is sure to desire from without. Thus, those who are already rich do not wish for valuables nor do the eminent wish for high position, for indeed whatever a person has within he does not seek from without. [From this perspective man desires to do

good because] his nature is [bad]. (Knoblock's translation except for the bracketed words)

To almost every reader of the *Xunzi* this is extremely puzzling if not absurd. How can it be said that man desires to do good because his nature is bad? Xunzi bases this statement upon a comparison with the fact that "Those with very little think longingly about having much, the ugly about being beautiful...the poor about wealth..." and so on. And conversely, "those who are already rich do not wish for valuables nor the eminent wish for high position..." and so on. In his analysis of this passage, Cua has noted that these examples are plausible although not universally true. Nevertheless, Cua observes that the passage "appears to embody a conceptual point about the notion of desire independently of whether Xunzi has successfully defended his thesis that man's nature is bad."²⁶ Cua notes that there is a difference between the conceptual point about desire, namely, that it implies wanting something that one lacks, and the more substantive claim that man's nature is bad. The former does not establish the latter. This is right, and luckily, Xunzi's statement that "nature is bad" does not rest on this conceptual point alone.

Nevertheless, the idea that "man desires to do good because his nature is bad" is not absurd. It is thought to be so only because in an essentialist sense of what human nature is, this would be self-contradictory. If a man is bad in the essentialist sense he cannot intelligibly be said to desire something that goes against his nature. But if we take "bad" in the sense of the unwelcome consequences of indulging the desires and feelings (*xing*) as Cua has suggested, then the idea that (in contemplating these consequences) a man would desire to do good is intelligible. This is especially so if in addition we reflect upon what (for Xunzi) every person has in terms of his or her *qing* -- the want of things that go beyond the basic sensory and appetitive desires, the need for security, and the capacities for prudence and refinement. These desires, wants and capacities provide an intelligible framework for the idea that a man desires to do good because his nature is bad. In other words, he contemplates that it would be good to maximize his wants and capacities

²⁶ See Antonio S. Cua, *Ethical Argumentation: A Study in Hsün Tzu's Moral Epistemology* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1985), p.26, where Cua explains his use of "rationale" for *li* 理 or what sinologists commonly translate as "pattern". Eric Hutton, "Moral Reasoning in Aristotle and Xunzi," *Journal of Chinese Philosophy* 29:3 (2002), has questioned Cua's use of "rationale". He says, for instance, that "it positively obscures important aspects of Xunzi's thought rather than illuminating them." However, I think that there are "important aspects of Xunzi's thought" where "rationale" is a most appropriate term to use. See the discussion in note 9 of the chapter on "Xunzi's Critique of Mencius," in *Early Confucian Thought*, and the "Appendix" at the end of this chapter.

and he realizes that this would fail if he makes no effort and instead allows the indulgence of his basic desires and feelings.

To round up the whole discussion, the following points and qualifications should be made. First, if it is agreed that Xunzi's considered position on human nature is the second listed by Gongduzi, namely, that *xing* has the capacity to become good or to become bad (and there is evidence to affirm this), then Xunzi would entertain the possibility that the required transformative structuring might not have succeeded. In other words, there is no guarantee that a society must succeed in building a "good" structure, and also that particular individuals may fail in transforming themselves. This would be consistent with what I have referred to as his "non-essentialist" position.

Second, Xunzi refers to the cumulative efforts of earlier sage-kings in establishing ritual principles. It is, however, difficult to accept that any particular individual or individuals came up with the ritual principles. But consistently with Xunzi's position, we can understand the constitutive establishment of ritual principles over time. There is no one set of well defined principles that can be drawn up. In the *Li Lun Pian* and in the *Yue Lun Pian*, we find an examination of different ritual practices. Xunzi talks in detail about the principles of division and harmony involved, and this includes passages where he describes the aestheticization of the feelings and emotions. Clearly, Xunzi is reading backwards. He is not saying that these are the actual principles that were first drawn up and that gave rise to an ordered society. Instead, starting from the ritual principles and the ideals that he valued, he tried to deduce what Cua has referred to as their "rationale".²⁷

The third point I would like to raise is not a qualification but more a question for further exploration. In addition to the regulative and supportive functions of the ritual principles or *li* 禮, Cua has also memorably referred to its "ennobling function" and he has offered us a very good explanation of what this is in his work.²⁸ Briefly, we can say that the rites transform emotions such as joy and sorrow through conceptions of what is (considered as) aesthetic and moral. In this regard, the raw emotional capacities do not themselves determine what is aesthetically appropriate or morally proper. Thus, the emotions too can be structured differently and take different forms. But are we just talking of restraining and structuring the emotions according to certain forms, or are we suggesting that an emotion can be transformed to the extent that it is no longer the "same" ? The possibility of "ennobling" the feelings and

²⁷ See for instance the essay, "The Ethical and the Religious Dimensions of *Li* (Propriety)," in *Human Nature, Ritual, and History*. See also "Basic Concepts of Confucian Ethics," in Cua's *Moral Vision and Tradition -- Essays in Chinese Ethics* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1998).

emotions tends to suggest the latter, and an exploration of this question should take further what Cua has said about this function of *li*.

CHINESE GLOSSARY

- bian* 辨
ci rang 辭讓
e 惡
fei ren ye 非人也
fen 分
hua 化
hua xing 化性
jiao shi 矯飾
junzi 君子
ke yi wei bu shan 可以為不善
ke yi wei shan 可以為善
li 禮
li 理
li yi 禮義
li yi zhi tong lei 禮義之統類
lou 陋
nan nü zhi bie 男女之別
qin 親
qing 情
qing kuang 情況
qing xing 情形
qingxing 情性
ren 人
ren 忍
ren yi 仁義
ren yi zhi tong 仁義之統
ren zhi chang qing 人之常情
ren zhi qing 人之情
ren zhi suo yi wei ren zhe he yi ye 人之所以為人者何已也
ren zhi xing e 人之性惡
shi qing 事情
shun shi 順是
suo wei xing shan zhe 所謂性善者
wei 偽
wen li 文理
xiaoren 小人

xing 性

Xing E Pian 性惡篇

xing shan 性善

Xunzi Jishi 荀子集釋

Xunzi Quan Yi 荀子全譯

yi 義

yi zhi 移質

yu 欲

zheng 正

zong 縱

Chapter VI

Do Sages Have Emotions?

Alan K. L. Chan

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary discussions of Confucian philosophy may tend to privilege certain key ethical concepts such as “benevolence” (*ren* 仁) and “filial piety” (*xiao* 孝), but in traditional China much of the Confucian hermeneutical and philosophical enterprise revolved around the figure of the ideal “sage” (*shengren* 聖人). Virtues are neither abstract nor self-existing; they are seen to cohere and find profound expression in the being of the sage. In this context, “sagehood” thus emerges as a critical concern in Confucian self-understanding. Can sagehood be attained? Can the “average person” (*zhongren* 中人), indeed, become like Confucius, the sage *par excellence*, who embodies the height of virtue? Would it not seem more likely that sagehood is determined by a special inborn “nature” (*xing* 性) that is categorically different from that of the common people?

In this discussion, I propose to explore the nature of the sage and specifically the place of the emotions (*qing* 情) in it. Does the sage share the same nature -- taking *xing* in the more restricted sense as referring to human nature -- as ordinary human beings? Despite Mencius’ confident and rhetorically powerful claim that “the sage and I are the same in kind,”¹ prior to the rise of Neo-Confucianism probably the majority of Confucian scholars would find it difficult to imagine that ordinary individuals could match the extraordinary attainment of Confucius. In particular, the average person seems to be always trapped in a web of desire and emotions that renders ethical progress at best a painfully slow and uncertain proposition. The sage ideal reaches deep in the Confucian imagination, but sagehood ironically seems an unreachable goal, unless a person is so “ordained” by “heaven,” that is to say, endowed with a “sage nature” that is “tranquil” or “still” on account of its “purity” and thus free from the corrupting stirrings of desire. It would not be an overstatement that questions and debate on the nature of the ideal sage helped shape the course of Confucian philosophy.

The concept of *qing*, as is well known, signifies both the emotions and the “essence” or “fact” of a thing or state of affairs. Leaving aside the relationship between these two senses of *qing* for the moment, it is clear that *qing* is understood generally as forming a part of human nature. According to the *Xunzi*, for example, “The likes and dislikes, pleasure and

¹ *Mencius* 6A.7; as translated in D. C. Lau, *Mencius* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University Press, 1984), 231.

anger, and sorrow and joy of human nature are what is meant by *qing*.”² This suggests that all human beings have likes and dislikes and other emotions. If these are seen to be an obstacle to sagehood, one possible solution would be to argue that the sage is “without emotions” (*wuqing* 無情). Though some may find this logically compelling, it is not without difficulty, for *wuqing*, at least in modern Chinese, implies that someone is “heartless” or “unfeeling.” By definition, the sage epitomizes the highest good and brings order and peace. How could he be unmoved by the sufferings of the people or be unresponsive to their needs? Is it conceivable that the sage has a mind that is unmoved by passion and desire and yet at the same time possesses a heart that knows compassion, loathes injustice and delights in rightness? “It is the constancy of the sage,” Cheng Hao 程顥 (1032 -- 1085) once wrote, in reply to a question raised by Zhang Zai 張載 (1020 -- 1077), that “he uses his *qing* to enable the flourishing of phenomena, but he is without *qing*” (聖人之常，以其情順萬物而無情).³ At first glance, this appears self-contradictory. Doubtless, Cheng Hao was trying to resolve the thorny issue of the emotive nature of the sage. Nevertheless, the question remains: does the sage have *qing* or not? Perhaps Cheng Hao was exploiting the dual meaning of *qing* here; but is he saying that the sage is totally unlike ordinary human beings? If so, how is the sage able to bring about human flourishing? If not, how is he able to rise above the apparently inherent partiality and fickleness of the human heart-mind (*xin* 心)?

To pursue these questions, I begin by reconstructing a hermeneutical context, focusing especially on the *Lunyu* and two of the Guodian “bamboo texts,” in which the divide between the nature of the sage and that of the average person comes to the fore. Against that background, I will briefly discuss the debate on the *qing* of the sage in Wei-Jin (220 -- 420) philosophy, before coming back to Cheng Hao’s influential “Letter on stilling one’s nature” (*Dingxing shu*). Cheng Hao’s argument can be shown to be indebted to the earlier Wei-Jin debate. More importantly, what I hope to achieve in this exercise is to reconstruct some of the questions, assumptions and arguments that underlie the Confucian discourse on the sage’s *xing* and *qing*.

² *Xunzi*, chapter 22, “Zhengming” 正名, in *Xunzi zhuzi suoyin* 荀子逐字索引, the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Institute of Chinese Studies, Ancient Chinese Texts Concordance Series (Hong Kong: Commercial Press, 1996), 107; compare John Knoblock trans., *Xunzi*, vol. 3 (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994), 127. Translations are my own unless stated otherwise.

³ Cheng Hao, “Letter on stilling one’s nature” (*Dingxing shu* 定性書), in *Song Yuan xue’an* 宋元學案, *juan* 13 (Taipei: Shijie shuju, 1966), 319; cf. the slightly longer version in *Er Cheng ji* 二程集 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1981), 460.

THE SAGE AND THE AVERAGE PERSON

The *Lunyu* presents a hermeneutical and philosophical challenge to later scholars in its portrayal of human nature and capacity. Although the disciple Zigong 子貢 intimates that Confucius' view on *xing* cannot be "heard,"⁴ there are instances in the *Lunyu* that seem to suggest otherwise and would compel reflections on it. Most conspicuously, Confucius seems to hold that people are similar by nature and that it is practice that sets them apart (LY17.2: 性相近也, 習相遠也). Further, Confucius distinguishes the highly intelligent (*shangzhi* 上知) from the most foolish (*xiayu* 下愚) (LY17.3). This seems to align with the distinction between "those who are born with knowledge," whom Confucius ranks as the highest, and "those who do not learn even when they are confronted with difficulties," that is to say, even when they have a pressing need to do so. Between these two groups are "those who acquire knowledge through learning" and "those who learn when they are confronted with difficulties" (LY16.9: 生而知之者上也; 學而知之者次也; 困而學之, 又其次也; 困而不學, 民斯為下矣). We should also not forget that for Confucius, "One can speak to those who are above average about things of the highest order, but one cannot speak about these things to those who are below average" (LY6.21: 中人以上, 可以語上也; 中人以下, 不可以語上也).

The passages cited above can be read in different ways. For example, whereas Huang Kan 皇侃 (488 -- 545) surmises that the word "*xing*" in *Lunyu* 5.13 refers to Confucius' own unique nature, Zhu Xi 朱熹 (1130 -- 1200) explains that Zigong actually got to hear Confucius' view on *xing* and was just making a point about how wonderful that was.⁵ Regardless of their precise meaning, three preliminary observations may be made. First, in the light of these passages, it is understandable how questions about *xing* would enter into the Confucian interpretive landscape. Second, these passages need to be interpreted consistently. Third, their perceived meaning would impact on interpretation of other passages in the *Lunyu*. For example, if one believes that for Confucius there were people who were "born with knowledge," then one would have to address sensitively Confucius' disclaimer that he was not one who was born with knowledge (LY7.20), lest one ends up branding him second-rate. Given these hermeneutical parameters, as one enters deeper into the text and more

⁴ *Lunyu* 5.13. The numbering of the *Lunyu* follows that of Yang Bojun 楊伯峻, *Lunyu yizhu* 論語譯注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982). Subsequent quotations from the *Lunyu* (abbreviated as LY) will be cited in the body of the text.

⁵ See Huang Kan, *Lunyu jijie yishu* 論語集解義疏, *Shisanjing zhushu* edition (Taipei: Shijie, 1963), 45; and Zhu Xi, *Sishu zhangju jizhu* 四書章句集注 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1983), 79.

generally the received teachings of Confucius, at some point one would need to decide whether the Sage held a doctrine of *xing*.

Perhaps in the eyes of modern scholarship it would be prudent to conclude that the *Lunyu* alone yields insufficient evidence that Confucius seriously considered the question of *xing* and still less developed a theory of it. However, in pre-modern China the consensus is clearly that the concept of human nature is fundamental to Confucian teachings. There is ample evidence that *xing* did become a matter of philosophic concern during the Warring States period. In that context, one can envisage a degree of interpretive pressure to find a place for *xing* in Confucius' thinking, as the followers of the Sage sought to preserve, codify, define and defend his teachings. There are two main options, if one judges that Confucius held a consistent view of *xing* -- (1) affirm a threefold or fourfold division of human beings and attribute the difference to one's inborn nature, or (2) pursue a non-discriminatory view of human nature and emphasize the constitutive and/or regulative effect of learning and practice.

Whereas a threefold division simply draws a line in the middle, taking the lead perhaps from *Lunyu* 6.21, cited above, a fourfold classification reserves a special place for those who are "born with knowledge" (LY16.9), i.e., the sage, apart from those who are above average, average, and below average. Under option (1), whether one adopts a threefold or fourfold classification, one would have to assume on the principle of consistency that Confucius was referring to the "average," presumably the majority, when he spoke of the similarity of inborn nature. In contrast, if one argues that human nature is similar or identical under option (2), one would see *Lunyu* 17.2 in a different light as referring to humanity at large. That human beings turn out to be different and may therefore be grouped into three general bands is due to the effect of learning and practice. From this angle, it is inconceivable that anyone can be "born with knowledge" ; what Confucius meant in this instance was that some were able to maximize their capacity to learn, which is common to all. When he said that he was not born with knowledge, he was but making a rhetorical point to emphasize the centrality of learning. In this way, coherence is achieved, which is also to say that as the interpreter makes the necessary connections, supplies justifications and brings out the Confucian view of *xing*, the hermeneutic merges with the philosophical into a single interpretive venture.

There are other possibilities. Perhaps Confucius was saying that whereas the sage is blessed with a special inborn nature, ordinary men and women share a common nature and the differences among them are due to learning and practice. The statement in the *Lunyu* (7.26) that Confucius saw little hope in ever meeting a sage but only a cultured and morally accomplished gentleman (*junzi* 君子), for example, may be read in this way. Alternatively, Confucius might be deploying the concept of *xing* in different senses, metaphysically in some instances and concretely in terms of varying capacities in others. Nevertheless, the two options outlined

above should suffice to give a sense of the dynamics that characterizes the development of early Confucian philosophy. Conceivably these were among the options considered by the “eight schools” of Confucianism that emerged after Confucius’ death and vied for legitimacy and dominance.⁶ Evidence for both approaches may be found in some of the bamboo texts recently recovered from Guodian. Although studies on these texts are still in their infancy and differences of opinion abound on every front, the Guodian material seems to agree that all human beings are endowed by heaven with an inborn nature, as distinguished from values and dispositions that are acquired and internalized. There is also disagreement. On the one hand, the text that has been named *Xing zi ming chu* 性自命出 seems to emphasize the commonality of *xing*. On the other hand, a section of the text that now bears the title *Cheng zhi wen zhi* 成之聞之 may be seen to uphold an essential difference between the nature of the sage and that of the average person.

The *Cheng zhi wen zhi* seems to suggest:

聖人之性與中人之性，其生而未有別之。即於儒也，則猶是也。唯其於善道也，亦別有擇類以移也。及其博長而厚大也，則聖人不可由與效之。此以民皆有性，而聖人不可慕也。

At birth, the nature of the sage and the nature of the average person are difficult to distinguish. However, for ordinary individuals, their nature remains what it is despite having received instructions from their masters. Even the way of the good cannot guide and change them. For the sage, his nature is inherently great and profound; it is not something that the average person can follow and imitate. This is the reason why although all are endowed with an inborn nature, it is not possible to emulate the sage.

This follows the reading of Li Xueqin.⁷ The passage has also been read in the opposite direction as testifying to the universality and commonality of human nature. Under that interpretation, as proposed by Guo Yi, the text is saying that at birth, there is no distinction between the nature of the sage and that of the average person. The difference between them is due to the fact that whereas the former is drawn to and grows with the way of the good, the latter remains unchanged despite having received

⁶ The “Xianxue” 顯學 chapter of the *Hanfeizi* identifies “eight schools” of Confucianism after the Master’s death; see Chen Qiyou 陳奇猷, *Hanfeizi jishi* 韓非子集釋 (Shanghai: Shanghai renmin chubanshe, 1974), 1080.

⁷ Li Xueqin 李學勤, “Shengren yu zhongren -- tan *Cheng zhi wen zhi* zhong yiduan wenzi” 聖人與中人 -- 談《成之聞之》中一段文字, published online at <http://www.jianbo.org/Wssf/Lixueqin.htm>, August 29, 2000.

instructions from their teachers. Thus, although inborn nature is the same, the average men and women cannot hope to learn to become a sage.⁸

The two readings part company not on philological grounds, as Guo Yi accepts most of Li Xueqin's textual reconstruction;⁹ rather, the divergence stems from the hermeneutical issues identified above and relates specifically to the perceived doctrine of *xing* in Confucius. If for Confucius the highly intelligent and the most foolish "do not change" (LY17.3), and if the *Cheng zhi wen zhi* seeks to develop Confucius' teachings, as Li Xueqin suggests, then surely there is a basic difference between the nature of the sage and that of the common, average person. For Guo Yi, however, the author(s) here went beyond Confucius and introduced for the first time in the history of Chinese philosophy the idea that human nature is universally the same.

On logical grounds, Li Xueqin offers a stronger interpretation. There is no disagreement on the text's conclusion; that is, "the people all have *xing*, but the sage cannot be emulated (*mu* 慕)."¹⁰ This begs the question, why? If one argues that human nature is essentially the same, it seems difficult to explain why the sage alone is drawn to -- or "is fond of" (*xi'ai* 喜愛), according to Guo Yi -- the way of the good. The *Cheng zhi wen zhi*, it should be noted, seems to indicate that the people not only do not change but more fundamentally cannot be transformed by moral instruction. Furthermore, if learning is decisive, it is unclear why the average person should not aspire to follow in the footsteps of the sages.¹¹ The text's strong conclusion, in short, seems to point to a categorical difference -- a difference in kind and not one in degree -- between the nature of the sage and that of the average person.

⁸ Guo Yi 郭沂, *Guodian zhujian yu xian Qin xueshu sixiang* 郭店竹簡與先秦學術思想 (Shanghai: Shanghai jiaoyu chubanshe, 2001), 218–221.

⁹ There is one difference in punctuation. Whereas Li Xueqin reads, "唯其於善道也, 亦別有擇類以移也," Guo Yi has "唯其於善道也亦別。有擇, 類以移也." Guo Yi notes that the word "yi" 擇 follows Li Xueqin's reading, but Li indicates that he takes the word here to be "ze" 擇.

¹⁰ The same reading is also suggested by Qiu Xigui 裘錫圭 in *Guodian Chumu zhujian* 郭店楚墓竹簡, edited by the Museum of Jingmen City (Beijing: Wenwu chubanshe, 1998), 170, n.28; and by Li Ling 李零, *Guodian Chujian jiaodu ji* 郭店楚簡校讀記 (Beijing: Beijing Daxue chubanshe, 2002), 122. The *Shangshu*, section 23, "Jun Chen" 君陳, also seems to suggest that the sage cannot be emulated; see *Shangshu zhengyi* 尚書正義, *Shisanjing zhushu* edition (Taipei: Shijie, 1963), 18.17a.

¹¹ Li Ling takes this to mean that even the sage cannot "add" to those who have been transformed through learning. However, he does not quite explain what distinguishes the sage from the average person. See Li Ling, *op. cit.*, 127–128.

The *Xing zi ming chu*, in contrast, is clearly of the view that “within the four seas, human nature is one. That human beings apply their heart-mind differently is due to the effect of instruction” (四海之內，其性一也。其用心各異，教使然也).¹² This serves to (1) draw out what the text considers to be the correct conclusion of the general and probably non-controversial assertion that “*xing* issues from life, and life stems from heaven” (性自命出，命自天降);¹³ and (2) explain why human beings turn out to be different, which is phenomenologically apparent.

Although all human beings are endowed with an inborn nature by heaven, by itself that does not specify whether they have the same nature. Indeed, coupled with the observation that human beings are different in all sorts of ways -- the sage, for example, certainly far surpasses the average person in his perspicacity and spiritual attainments -- this may easily lead to the opposite conclusion that inborn nature is not the same for all. However, according to the *Xing zi ming chu*, what is decisive is that

凡人雖有性，心亡莫志，待物而後作，待悅而後行，待習而後奠。

although all human beings have *xing*, the heart-mind does not have a fixed direction, which is formed after it has come into contact with phenomena, aroused after it finds the conditions pleasing, and fixed after it has gone through repeated practice.¹⁴

Whatever else the heart-mind may be, it is the locus of *xing*. Put differently, inborn nature, whatever its content, can be realized only through the physical, cognitive and affective processes of the heart-mind. A strong reading of *xing* would see it as setting the direction of the heart-mind. As

¹² *Guodian Chumu zhujian*, 179. The bamboo texts collected by the Shanghai Museum include a work that is substantially the same as the *Xing zi ming chu* and has been given the title, *Xingqing lun* 性情論. See Ma Chengyuan 馬承源, ed., *Shanghai Bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu* 上海博物館藏戰國楚竹書, volume 1 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 2001), 215–301.

¹³ *Guodian Chumu zhujian*, 179. *Ming* refers to the decree of heaven, but here it may be taken to mean human life; see further discussion on the concept below.

¹⁴ *Guodian Chumu zhujian*, 179; cf. Li Tianhong 李天虹, *Guodian zhujian Xing zi ming chu yanjiu* 郭店竹簡性自命出研究 (Wuhan: Hubei jiaoyu chubanshe, 2003), 133. A helpful analysis of the *Xing zi ming chu* is Liang Tao 梁濤, “*Xing zi ming chu* yu zaoqi Rujia xinxing lun” 《性自命出》與早期儒家心性論, parts 1 and 2, in <http://www.jianbo.org/Wssf/Liangtao10-01.htm> <http://www.jianbo.org/Wssf/Liangtao10-03.htm>.

the *Xing zi ming chu* sees it, however, the heart-mind is subject to external influences. If this is true, it cannot be said that by nature the sage is blessed with an unwavering heart-mind that is immune to external influences; i.e., that the sage is born with a special nature that steers the heart-mind in certain inherent directions despite varying circumstances. This suggests that individual differences are not due to *xing*; consequently, learning emerges as the only candidate that can account for such differences. This, then, provides sufficient reason to conclude that inborn nature is the same and that it is learning that sets human beings apart, which in this reading, of course, is meant to bring out also what Confucius “really” meant in *Lunyu* 17.2. The question is on what basis can one assert that the heart-mind does not have any inherent “direction” (*zhi* 志)?

THE CONTENT OF *XING*

The *Xing zi ming chu* makes another point: “Dao begins with *qing*, and *qing* is born of *xing*” (道始於情, 情生於性).¹⁵ Moreover, the text defines *xing* explicitly as “the *qi* of pleasure, anger, sorrow, and grief” (喜怒哀悲之氣性也).¹⁶ Taken together, a case can be made that (1) *qing* is understood to mean the emotions; (2) the *qing*-emotions are constituted by vital “pneumas” or “energies” (*qi*); (3) *xing* is constituted by *qi*, among which are the *qi* of the emotions; and (4) in this sense the emotions are born of *xing*. This would explain why the heart-mind is fickle, for *qi* can be aroused and expend in different directions when they come into contact with phenomena.

The concept of *qi*, of course, has a long history. Leaving aside the origins of the concept, one may safely conclude that by the Warring States period *qi* was widely understood as the basic constituent of the cosmos and the dynamic energies that make life possible. Life (*sheng* 生) may be seen to have arisen from heaven’s “mandate” or as forming part of a natural “order” (*ming* 命); but whether the concept of *ming* is taken religiously or naturalistically, it does not quite tell us what life is. That is the work of *xing*, which serves to define life, articulating its perceived content, purpose and direction. It would be simplistic to assume that the concept of *xing* yielded only one meaning. Nevertheless, polysemy does not mean anything goes. *Xing* may invite diverse interpretations, but it can hardly be divorced

¹⁵ *Guodian Chumu zhujian*, 179. Elsewhere, the *Xing zi ming chu* states, “*qing* issues from *xing*” 情出於性, 180. Another Guodian text, *Yucong er* 語叢二 also affirms, “*qing* is born of *xing*” 情生於性; *Guodian Chumu zhujian*, 203.

¹⁶ *Guodian Chumu zhujian*, 179. “*Bei*” 悲 signifies not only grief but also pity and indignation.

completely from the concept of *qi*, which breaks down phenomena to their underlying processes and constituents.

From this perspective, with the concept of *qi* in the background, the *Zhuangzi* thus defines *xing* as the “substance“ (*zhi*) of one’s life (性者生之質也).¹⁷ If *xing* defines life, what, then, constitutes *xing*? The *Xunzi* explains, “*qing* is the substance of *xing*” (情者性之質也).¹⁸ Insofar as *qing* issues from *xing*, it can be said to be essential to *xing*; by extension, *qing* thus signifies what is “genuinely so” not only of things but also states of affairs.¹⁹ As cognitive-affective movements of the heart-mind, however, *qing* translates into specific emotions such as pleasure and anger. Recall the definition of *qing* in the *Xunzi* cited earlier -- likes and dislikes, pleasure and anger, and sorrow and joy are specific emotions and can be said to be essential ingredients of *xing*. The *Liji* makes a similar point, albeit with a different sorting of the emotions: “What is meant by human *qing*? Pleasure, anger, sorrow, fear, love, aversion, and desire -- these seven are what human beings are naturally capable of without having to acquire through learning” (何謂人情? 喜怒哀懼愛惡欲. 七者弗學而能).²⁰

According to the *Zuozhuan*, “The common people have likes and dislikes, pleasure and anger, and sorrow and joy, which are born of the six *qi*” (民有好惡喜怒哀樂, 生於六氣).²¹ Setting aside the evident numerological interest, there can be little doubt that the emotions are seen to be constituted by *qi*. Because the people are driven by these emotions, the *Zuozhuan* continues, the ruler should carefully regulate the “six directions” (*liu zhi* 六志) -- or “aspirations,” in its root sense of “breathing upon” and by extension seeking to reach something -- of the heart-mind that stem from them. On this passage, Kong Yingda 孔穎達 (574 -- 648) comments, “These ‘six *zhi*-directions’ are identified as the six *qing* in the

¹⁷ *Zhuangzi*, chapter 23, “Gengsang Chu” 庚桑楚; in Guo Qingfan 郭慶藩, *Zhuangzi jishi* 莊子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1985), 810.

¹⁸ *Xunzi*, “Zhengming,” in *Xunzi zhuzi suoyin*, 111.

¹⁹ On this usage of *qing*, see A. C. Graham, “The Mencian Theory of Human Nature,” reprinted in Graham, *Studies in Chinese Philosophy and Philosophical Literature* (Singapore: Institute of East Asian Philosophies, 1986, and Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 59–60. See also the recent studies by Michael Puett, “The Ethics of Responding Properly: The Notion of *Qing* in Early Chinese Thought,” and Christoph Harbsmeier, “The Semantics of *Qing* in Pre-Buddhist Chinese,” in *Love and Emotions in Traditional Chinese Literature*, edited by Halvor Eifring (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2004), 37–68 and 69–148, respectively.

²⁰ *Liji*, chapter 9, “Liyun” 禮運; in *Liji zhengyi* 禮記正義, *juan* 22, *Shisanjing zhushu* edition (Taipei: Shijie, 1963), 27b.

²¹ *Zuozhuan*, Duke Zhao, year 25, in *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi* 春秋左傳正義 (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 1999), *juan* 51, 1454; cf. Duke Zhao, year 1, 1165–1167.

Book of Rites. Within oneself, they are called *qing*; when the *qing* are activated they are called *zhi*. *Qing* and *zhi* are one” (此六志禮記謂之六情。在己為情，情動為志，情志一也).²² The text entitled *Min zhi fumu* 民之父母 in the second series of the Shanghai Museum bamboo texts, with parallels in the *Liji* and the *Kongzi jiayu* 孔子家語, likewise links the *zhi*-direction of the heart-mind to the emotions and to the forces of *qi*.²³

The reason why the *Xing zi ming chu* considers the heart-mind to be without any inherent direction thus seems clear. The heart-mind is indeed shaped by *xing*, but the important point is that *xing* embraces the emotions, which are formed by *qi*. In operational terms, pleasure, anger and other emotions are particular concentration and movement of *qi*; the *Zhuangzi*, for example, characterizes anger in terms of concentrated *qi* “rising up without coming down.”²⁴ Rising from *xing* through the heart-mind and in reaction to external influences, the emotions can vary in strength and become “excessive,” regardless of the ethical standards applied, whether they stem from certain internal measure or external control. The *Lüshi chunqiu* 呂氏春秋, for example, seems to suggest that there is an internal measure (*jie* 節) regulating human “appetites” (*tan* 貪) and “desires” (*yu* 欲), which are naturally endowed and common to both sage-kings and tyrants.²⁵ In contrast, the *Xing zi ming chu* seems to take ritual and moral instruction to be the standard. In either case, the underlying argument is that because the emotions are constituted by *qi*, they can move the heart-mind in different directions.

If inborn nature is essentially the same for all, and if it consists of *qi*-constituted emotions, the critical role of learning and instruction seems evident. However, should not the sage be considered differently given his extraordinary achievements, which are clearly beyond the capacity of the average person? The bamboo texts of Guodian indicate that the question already attracted significant attention during the Warring States period among Confucian scholars. Perhaps the Confucian text entitled *Wuxing* 五行 found in both Mawangdui and Guodian gives a sense of the challenge that the question of sage nature has presented. Whereas the Guodian version of the text singles out “sagacity” (*sheng* 聖) as different from benevolence, rightness, ritual propriety and wisdom in that it remains an “inner” virtue even when it is not fully formed within the heart-mind, the Mawangdui

²² *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi*, 1455. The *Zuozhuan* also indicates that if the “six *qi*” were in excess, the people would lose their “nature” (*xing*); *ibid.*, 1449.

²³ Ma Chengyuan, ed., *Shanghai Bowuguan cang Zhanguo Chu zhushu*, volume 2 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji, 2002), 169, 172–173.

²⁴ *Zhuangzi*, chapter 19, “Dasheng” 達生; *Zhuangzi jishi*, 650.

²⁵ *Lüshi chunqiu*, chapter 2, “Qingyu” 情欲; see John Knoblock and Jeffrey Riegel, trans., *The Annals of Lü Buwei* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000), 84.

version sees all five as equal in that depending on whether they are fully formed in the heart-mind, they may constitute virtuous character within or find expression only in morally commendable conduct without. Whereas virtuous character (*de* 德) is a matter of the “Dao of heaven,” moral conduct (*shan* 善) belongs to the “Dao of human beings.”²⁶ There is no need to adjudicate which is the “correct” or “original” version; what is more important for our purpose is that they may reflect different thinking concerning human nature in general and sage nature in particular. The way of heaven seems to point to an inborn nature, whereas the way of human beings suggests learning and effort. Again, although it is clear that ordinary individuals require learning and effort to become one with the way of the good, the sage presents a more challenging problem to Confucian philosophers. The various attempts at resolving the problem helped shape the development of Confucian philosophy; but it would be an overstatement to say that there was an “orthodox” solution accepted by all, at least prior to the ascendancy of “Cheng-Zhu” Neo-Confucianism.

HARMONY, NATURALNESS, AND THE WORKINGS OF *QING*

During the Han period (206 BCE -- 220 CE), to be sure, there was significant development in mapping out a comprehensive picture of the human being based on what may be loosely called the yin-yang five-phase cosmology. However, there is no need to rehearse that development here, so long as it is recognized that human beings are seen to embody the yin and yang *qi*-forces of the universe. For example, Wang Chong’s 王充 (27 -- circa 100) view that *xing* is constituted by *qi* is well known.²⁷ During the early years of the Wei dynasty (220 -- 265), a fresh debate on the *qing* of the sage erupted between He Yan 何晏 (d. 249) and Wang Bi 王弼 (226 -- 249). As the *Sanguozhi* relates,

何晏以為聖人無喜怒哀樂，其論甚精，鍾會等述之。弼與不同，以為聖人茂於人者神明也，同於人者五情也。神明茂，故能體沖和以通無。五情同，故不能無哀樂以應物。然則聖人之情，應物而無累於物者也。今以其無累，便謂不復應物，失之多矣。

²⁶ See Pang Pu 龐樸, *Zhubo Wuxing pian jiaozhu ji yanjiu* 竹帛五行篇校注及研究 (Taipei: Wanjuanlou tushu, 2000), 1, 11 and 29. The Mawangdui version reads: 仁形于内謂之德之行, 不形于内謂之行 ... 聖形于内謂之德之行, 不形于内謂之行. The Guodian version, however, has: 聖形于内謂之德之行, 不形于内謂之德之行; that is, *sheng* is unique in that it is always an “inner” virtue.

²⁷ See, for example, Mou Zongsan 牟宗三, *Caixing yu xuanli* 才性與玄理 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1993), chapter 1.

He Yan believed that the sage does not have pleasure and anger, or sorrow and joy. His argument was extremely cogent. Zhong Hui and others expounded it. Wang Bi offered a contrary view. He believed that the sage surpasses the common people in his divine perspicacity, but he is the same as everyone in having the five emotions. Because of his deep spirit-like perspicacity, he is thus able to embody harmony and reach the state of not having anything (such as self-interest or partiality that would negate harmony). Because he shares the same five emotions, he cannot but have sorrow and joy in response to phenomena. However, although the affective capacity of the sage responds to things, it is not fettered by them. Now, if in view of the fact that the sage is not fettered by things, one concludes that he does not respond to them at all, then, indeed, one far misses the mark.²⁸

This is an important debate which has a direct bearing on the development of Neo-Confucianism. Studies on Wei-Jin intellectual history often make the point that whereas He Yan was arguing that sage nature is “emotionless” (*wuqing*), Wang Bi defended the “affectivity” of the sage. This may be easily misunderstood.

As I have addressed this issue in some detail elsewhere, I will only give a brief summary here.²⁹ There is little disagreement that He Yan considered the Dao as the source of all beings. It is also sufficiently clear that he accepted the then prevalent view that *xing* is constituted by *qi*. Three points follow from this latter claim. First, what this means is that *xing* is understood concretely as a kind of *qi*-constituted “substance” (*zhi* 質), which in turn may be explained in terms of a person’s inborn “capacity” (*cai* 才), understood broadly as encompassing physical endowment, intelligence, moral and communicative competence and the capacity to generate emotive responses. Second, individual nature and capacity are essentially determined by *qi*, although learning and practice, including the use of certain drugs, may augment one’s capacity to some extent. Third, the sage is categorically different from the average person in that he is endowed with the finest and richest *qi* possible. Simply put, sages are born, not made.

He Yan thus works from a basic fourfold classification of human beings, in the sense described above. What complicates matters is that He Yan is also well-known to have championed a new approach to the Dao as *wu*, “nothing.” Viewed alongside his thesis that the sage does not

²⁸ *Sanguozhi*, juan 28 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982), 795, n.1.

²⁹ I have examined these issues in two separate essays, “Sage Nature and the Logic of Namelessness: Reconstructing He Yan’s Explication of Dao” and “The Nature of the Sage and the Emotions in Wei-Jin Philosophy.”

experience pleasure and anger, or sorrow and joy, it is understandable why he has often been credited with the view that the sage embodies the “nothingness” of the Dao and is therefore “without emotions” (*wuqing*) in the sense that the nature of the sage is “empty,” like a stone pillar, as it were, devoid of emotive substance and capacity. On closer inspection, however, He Yan seems to hold a very different conception of the Dao and the nature of the sage.

From the surviving fragments of He Yan’s “Discourse on Dao” and “Discourse on the Nameless,” it is clear that he defines Dao as *wu* not in the sense of absence or negation but in view of its “completeness” (*quan* 全).³⁰ Because the Dao is “undifferentiated and complete,” as the *Laozi* puts it (chapter 25), it is able to bring forth all phenomena. This, to He Yan, is but another way of saying that the Dao is the source of *qi*. Furthermore, the Dao’s completeness dictates that it must remain nameless. Names entail distinctions; the Dao, in contrast, logically cannot have distinctions, for otherwise it would not be able to bring about the differentiation of *qi* and consequently the processes of creative transformation. The term “Dao” serves but a heuristic purpose and does not detract from the essential namelessness of that which gives rise to forms and names.

In saying that the sage does not experience pleasure and anger, and other emotions, He Yan is thus not suggesting that the sage lacks certain cognitive and affective capacity. Embodying in abundance the purest *qi* that emanates from the Dao, the sage enjoys an extraordinary nature that yields optimal capacity on all fronts. As such, the sage cannot be lacking in any way. The assertion that the sage remains unmoved by external influences thus reflects a conception of sage nature that mirrors the Dao in being undifferentiated and complete. This agrees with the portrayal of sage nature as integrally “harmonious” (*zhonghe* 中和) in the third-century work, *Renwuzhi* 人物志 (An Account of Human Capacity). As Liu Shao 劉邵, author of the *Renwuzhi* argues, the substance of harmonious nature is necessarily “bland,” i.e., without distinguishable flavors.³¹ This is a logical point, for only what is undifferentiated and complete can generate the “five tastes,” i.e., the basis of all specific flavors. Similarly, it is the sage’s harmonious and absolutely impartial nature that enables him and him alone to accomplish the project of ideal order (*taiping* 太平).³²

³⁰ He Yan’s two “Discourses” are preserved in Zhang Zhan’s 張湛 commentary on the *Liezi*; see Yang Bojun, *Liezi jishi* 列子集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1985), 10–11, and 121.

³¹ *Renwuzhi*, chapter 1, “Jiuzheng” 九徵, *Congshu jicheng xinbian* edition (Taipei: Xinwenfeng, 1984), vol. 20, 443.

³² Whether the sage alone could realize “great peace” was the subject of intense debate during the Han-Wei transition. I considered this question in a separate article, “What are the ‘Four Roots of Capacity and Nature?’” in Vincent Shen and Willard Oxtoby, eds., *Wisdom in China and the West*

From the *Sanguozhi* account cited above, Wang Bi recognizes that “nothingness” should be understood in terms of “harmony” on He Yan’s view. Without going into any detail here, Wang Bi was concerned primarily with the ethical and political implications of He Yan’s argument, which rules out the possibility of attaining sagehood. If He Yan was concerned that human nature is driven by desire, Wang Bi countered that human beings may attain a profound discernment or clarity of the heart-mind that would enable them to exercise their *qing* in response to things and affairs without being tied (*lei* 累) to them, in the sense that they do not become a burden that weighs them down, a burden which turns natural, nurturing bonds into enslaving bondage. If this is possible, then one no longer needs to defend a special sage nature that excludes specific interests and qualities.

What sets He Yan and Wang Bi apart, then, is that whereas to the former, the sage is a special kind of being because of his exceptional *qi*-endowment, to the latter, the sage and the average person share the same essential nature and the difference between them is a matter of attainment, a difference in degree. Although He Yan is not saying that the sage lacks the capacity to generate *qing* in people and affairs, he cannot but maintain that sagehood is not a genuine ethical option. Thus, on Confucius’ call to “set one’s mind on Dao” (*Lunyu* 7.6), He Yan comments: “Setting one mind’s on something means to aspire toward it. The Dao cannot be embodied (for ordinary individuals); thus, one can only set one’s mind after it.”³³ This calls to mind the argument of the Guodian *Cheng zhi wen zhi*. Although He Yan admits “aspiring” toward the Dao, in denying the possibility of “embodying” it he is employing basically the same reasoning -- i.e., sage nature, the ontological crystallization of the Dao, is inborn and cannot be attained through learning and effort.

To Wang Bi, however, it cannot be admitted that sagehood is beyond the reach of the average person; otherwise, the common ontological ground that unites the sage and the people would be severed and as such, the sage’s ability in reaching the people and effecting genuine change would be called into question. Dao, indeed, must not be reified, but human beings are endowed with a nature that in its authentic mode tends toward stillness and contains sufficient resources to attain sagely illumination. So long as one’s emotions abide by the natural affective order of *xing*, they will not become deviant or excessive; thus, to Wang Bi the key to sagehood lies

(Washington, D.C.: Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, 2004), 143–184.

³³ Han Yan’s *Lunyu jijie* 論語集解 is a collective effort, but there is some agreement that those comments not ascribed to any author in the collection reflect He Yan’s own view. On the phrase, “*zhi yu dao*” 志於道 in the *Lunyu*, He Yan’s commentary reads: “志，慕也。道不可體，故志之而已”； in *Lunyu jijie yishu*, with Huang Kan’s sub-commentary, 64 (see note 5, above). Subsequent quotations from He Yan’s *Lunyu* commentary are from this edition and will be cited in the text.

in ensuring that one's *qing* conform to *xing* (性其情).³⁴ This should not be confused with any artificial attempt to rein in one's emotions. The sage is naturally free from the burden of desire because he realizes fully his original nature, and in this sense can be said to have embodied "naturalness" (*ziran* 自然) and returned to his "roots" in Dao.

No doubt, He Yan and Wang Bi would each have their supporters, but one may also assume that to some, neither position seems entirely satisfactory. Whereas He Yan's view effectively removes the sage from the ethical and political agenda -- to be replaced by a class of "above average" individuals, like Yan Yuan 顏淵, Confucius' prized disciple, who by virtue of their superior *qi*-endowment vis-à-vis the common people can and should be entrusted with the task of government -- Wang Bi's faith in a simple and tranquil *xing* core may appear far too sanguine in the face of the often brutal contest of power and desire in human affairs. From another perspective, although it appears reasonable that no ordinary person could hope to become like Confucius in every respect, it seems counter-intuitive to assert that Confucius did not experience pleasure and sorrow. In this regard, Guo Xiang 郭象 (d. 312) offers an alternative to the problem of the *qing* of the sage.

Like He Yan, Guo Xiang also argues from the premise that the limit of one's nature and capacity is determined by *qi*. Thus, Guo Xiang affirms that there are those who are born sages by virtue of their special inborn nature.³⁵ However, Guo Xiang also emphasizes that individual nature, though different, is each complete and self-sufficient in its own right. The unchangeability of *xing* and the attainability of sagehood are not mutually exclusive. Harking back to the Guodian *Cheng zhi wen zhi*, Guo Xiang could therefore say that it is pointless to emulate the sage. Yet, sagehood can be attained because "sage" is but the name we give to those who have realized fully their inborn nature.³⁶ He Yan is right in recognizing that one's *qi*-constituted nature may be "thick" or "thin" and consequently that individuals differ in their capacity; but, this does not entail that sagehood is the exclusive preserve of a select few. Wang Bi is right in maintaining that sagehood is an attainable goal, but this does not warrant reducing the diversity of *xing* to a common core. The real issue is how one could realize fully one's individual nature and attain liberation from the tyranny of desire.

When Yan Yuan died, Confucius was inconsolable (*Lunyu* 11.10). This could not be explained satisfactorily if one relies on He Yan's account

³⁴ Commentary to the *Lunyu*, 17.2; in Lou Yulie 樓宇烈, *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi* 王弼集校釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980), 631–632.

³⁵ Guo Xiang, *Zhuangzi zhu* 莊子注, chapter 5, in Guo Qingfan, *Zhuangzi jishi*, 194, n.4. All quotations from Guo Xiang's *Zhuangzi Commentary* are from this work.

³⁶ *Zhuangzi Commentary*, ch. 1, 22, n.16.

of the ideal sage. To Wang Bi, there is nothing to explain here, for Confucius is no different from everybody else in experiencing sorrow at the passing of a friend or loved one, although he is not burdened by it and remains true to his nature. On Confucius' show of emotion, Guo Xiang writes, "Just as everyone cried, Confucius also cried; just as everyone was deeply saddened, Confucius was also deeply saddened. This is the way in which someone who is *wuqing* (i.e., Confucius *qua* sage) changes with things."³⁷ Similarly, this is why Qin Yi 秦失, a friend of Laozi's, only gave three perfunctory cries at the latter's funeral: "The people mourned and he also mourned; the people wailed and he also wailed."³⁸ Needless to say, deception can be ruled out. It is also not the case that the sage lacks the capacity to feel sorrow. Rather, as Guo Xiang goes on to say, the sage recognizes that "sorrow and joy are born of a sense of loss and gain." Life and death, respectively the most cherished of all gains and losses, are but moments of natural transformation. The sage understands the processes of change and consequently does not attach any value to or invest any emotion in them. In this sense, the sage can be said to be "without emotions" (*zhiren wuqing* 至人無情).³⁹

What makes this kind of divestment possible is not an assumed unity of *xing*, but a deep understanding of the workings of *qing*. The emotions may be many, but they are derived from one's likes and dislikes. The *Zuozhuan*, for example, has already noted that "pleasure is born of likes, and anger is born of dislikes."⁴⁰ Being of "one heart" (*yixin* 壹心) with another person, the *Zuozhuan* also observes, means that one's "likes and dislikes are the same as the other's."⁴¹ One of the Guodian bamboo texts, the *Yucong yi* 語叢 -- states, "When there is life and consciousness, then likes and dislikes are born."⁴² Another Guodian fragment points out that dislikes arise from one's nature and give rise to anger.⁴³ The *Lunyu* also seems to recognize the importance of managing one's likes and dislikes -- as Confucius is reported to have said, only a person of benevolence could like or dislike someone, presumably in an ethically responsive and responsible manner.⁴⁴ One could further specify, as the *Xunzi* does, that

³⁷ Commentary to *Lunyu* 11.10, as cited in Huang Kan, *Lunyu jijie yishu*.

³⁸ *Zhuangzi Commentary*, ch. 3, 127, n.1.

³⁹ *Zhuangzi Commentary*, ch. 3, 128, n.1.

⁴⁰ *Zuozhuan*, Duke Zhao, yr. 25, *Chunqiu Zuozhuan zhengyi*, 1455.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 1461.

⁴² *Guodian Chumu zhujian*, 193. The text reads: 有生有知而後好惡生. The *Xing zi ming chu* puts it more succinctly: "Likes and dislikes are (part of) *xing*" (好惡性也); *Guodian Chumu zhujian*, 179.

⁴³ *Guodian Chumu zhujian*, 204. The text reads: 惡生於性, 怒生於惡.

⁴⁴ *Lunyu* 4.3. There are different interpretations of this. According to the *Hou Hanshu* 後漢書, *juan* 50 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1982), 1675, n.2, this means that the likes and dislikes of one who values benevolence hit the mark;

human beings are partial to honor and profit in general, and are averse to disgrace and harm;⁴⁵ but the basic assumption remains that human affectivity is motivated by likes and dislikes. What Guo Xiang did was to probe deeper into the basis of *qing* and trace one's likes and dislikes to the value distinctions that one makes.

In Guo Xiang's interpretation, the *Zhuangzi* makes clear that human emotions are derived from what one likes and dislikes, which in turn are formed by cognitive distinctions of "right" (*shi* 是) and "wrong" (*fei* 非) as measured by one's self-interest.⁴⁶ Without such distinctions, likes and dislikes do not arise and the emotions do not cause any ripple in the heart-mind. In this state, the heart-mind may be likened to "dead ashes," according to the *Zhuangzi*, which Guo Xiang interprets as *wuqing* in the sense that the sage "abides by his naturally endowed nature and forgets all cognitive discriminations" (任自然而忘是非).⁴⁷ In this sense, Guo Xiang also speaks of the "*qing* of *wuqing*" (無情之情) that does not transgress the limits of one's nature and forms the basis of sagely "nonaction."⁴⁸

THE STILLNESS OF XING

The above analysis, though brief, should give an indication of the way in which Wei-Jin philosophers tried to come to terms with the issues occasioned by the discourse on *xing* and *qing*, especially as they apply to the ideal sage, which by the third century had become deeply embedded in the common intellectual frame. He Yan, Wang Bi and Guo Xiang might have been known especially for their contributions to *xuanxue* 玄學, the "learning of the mysterious Dao," but they were certainly not partisan "Daoists" who opposed Confucian learning. *Xuanxue* aims at bringing to light the profound truth of Dao, a truth that, it is believed, Confucius and other sages of old all recognized and embodied -- according to some, by nature, and according to others, in varying degree -- in their being. In any event, little is explained in simply asserting that He Yan, Wang Bi, or Guo Xiang made use of "Daoism" to interpret "Confucianism." Labels may serve a useful function, but they are not self-explanatory and must not be allowed to take the place of interpretation. All three considered Confucius to be the highest sage, worked on the *Lunyu*, and had in their own way tried to provide a coherent account of the received teachings of Confucius, Laozi and other sages and near-sages. They were equally concerned with the

as cited in Yang Bojun, *Lunyu yizhu*, 36. He Yan's commentary in this instance adopts the explanation by Kong Anguo 孔安國, which takes this to mean that the benevolent person is able to discern the likes and dislikes of others.

⁴⁵ *Xunzi*, chapter 4, "Rongru" 榮辱, in *Xunzi zhuzi suoyin*, 14.

⁴⁶ See especially *Zhuangzi Commentary*, ch. 5, 222, n.1.

⁴⁷ *Zhuangzi Commentary*, ch. 2, 44, n.2.

⁴⁸ *Zhuangzi Commentary*, ch. 6, 247, n.1.

central issue of sagehood, the “one thread” -- to borrow a metaphor from the *Lunyu* (4.15) -- that captures the essence of Dao and runs through the best that tradition has to offer; but in engaging it they parted company on philosophic grounds.

At the ethical level, to He Yan, because the sage is out of reach, the best model is someone like Yan Yuan, who is “close to the way of the sage” (commentary to *Lunyu* 11.19). Moreover, He Yan writes:

凡人任情，喜怒違理。顏淵任道，怒不過分 ... 怒當其理。
Generally, human beings allow the emotions to dictate their actions, and their pleasure and anger deviate from the norm. Yan Yuan abided by the Dao; his anger was never excessive ... [but] accorded with what was due (commentary to *Lunyu* 6.3).

Strictly speaking, Yan Yuan is also a special case, for even among Confucius’ disciples few could match his attainments.⁴⁹ For He Yan, it would be foolish to expect that the average person, with his limited *qi*-endowment, could become like Yan Yuan. To Wang Bi, all that one needs to say is that Yan Yuan aspires to become a sage (*mu sheng* 慕聖)⁵⁰ and so should everyone, especially the ruler and those in charge of government, recognizing that sagehood is already present in the authenticity of being. To Guo Xiang, of course, there is no point in emulating Yan Yuan either, for imitation inevitably detracts from the project of self-realization. I mention the case of Yan Yuan here because it seems to bear on Cheng Hao’s examination of *xing* and *qing*.

According to the *Song Yuan xue’an*, Cheng Hao’s *Dingxing shu* seeks to address Zhang Zai’s concern that human nature cannot but remain tied to the external world, no matter how hard one tries to still it. The text reads: “In stilling one’s nature, one cannot render it unmoving, for it remains burdened by external things. How does one deal with that” (定性未能不動，猶累于外物，何如)? The idea that emotions pose a “burden” (*lei* 累) that afflicts “virtue” figures in the *Zhuangzi*.⁵¹ Both Wang Bi and Guo Xiang have made use of the idea to highlight the danger of being entangled and tied down by desire.

Cheng Hao begins by attacking the implied divide between the “inner” (*nei* 內) and the “outer” (*wai* 外) in Zhang Zai’s question. The stillness of *xing*, if attained, pervades both movement and quietude and admits no distinction between the internal world of the heart-mind and the

⁴⁹ On this point, see, for example, He Yan’s commentary to *Lunyu* 6.7, 9.20.

⁵⁰ Commentary to the *Lunyu*, 11.19; in Lou Yulie, *Wang Bi ji jiaoshi*, 629.

⁵¹ For example, see the *Zhuangzi*, ch. 23, 810.

external world of phenomena. Zhu Xi is probably right in suggesting that by “*xing*,” Cheng Hao means the heart-mind.⁵² In any case, this sets the stage for Cheng Hao’s main thesis that the sage may be likened to “heaven and earth”: “Now, it is the constancy of heaven and earth that they use their heart to benefit all things but are without self-interest or partiality; (in the same way) it is the constancy of the sage that he uses his *qing* to enable the flourishing of all things but is without *qing*” (夫天地之常，以其心普萬物而無心；聖人之常，以其情順萬物而無情). The question is, of course, how one should interpret *wuqing* in this context. Whereas the reference to the “heart” of heaven and earth is largely metaphoric, a literary convention intimating their “selfless” nurturing function, the reference to the *qing* of the sage demands closer philosophic scrutiny. Is Cheng Hao thinking of a special “harmonious” sage nature that is undifferentiated and complete, or is he appealing to an authentic nature that is inherently still, or to a kind of profound understanding of the workings of *qing* that would free the sage from all “right and wrong” (*shifei*) distinctions?

With the sage ideal so defined, Cheng Hao goes on to say that “therefore, in the learning of the gentleman, there is nothing more important than being open and absolutely impartial, and in responding to things and affairs accordingly as they come” (故君子之學，莫若廓然而大公，物來而順應). The meaning of the last phrase is not immediately clear and I will come back to it later; but following this the learning of the “gentleman” (*junzi*) is contrasted with piecemeal effort in trying to get rid of this or that desire, which is endless and ultimately futile. As Cheng Hao frames his argument in terms of “learning” (*xue*), even though he concurs with He Yan that impartiality is central to the sage ideal, it seems unlikely that he was defending a special sage nature that is categorically different from that of the average person. Although as we shall see shortly a later Confucian interpreter made the case that the *junzi* ideal should be distinguished from that of the sage, so far the text seems to point toward a non-discriminatory view of *xing*.

Human beings are unable to abide by the Dao -- i.e., unable to accomplish the learning of the *junzi* and attain sagehood -- because for different reasons their *qing* are clouded, Cheng Hao next observes. Generally, the problem lies in their being selfish (*zisi* 自私) and in their application of intelligence (*yongzhi* 用智) to pursue private ends. Acting out of self-interest, ordinary human beings are unable to align their action with the “traces” (*ji* 迹) of the sages -- a metaphor that Guo Xiang frequently makes use of in his *Zhuangzi* commentary.⁵³ Concentrating their

⁵² *Zhuzi yulei* 朱子語類, *juan* 95 (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1986), 2441.

⁵³ Brook Ziporyn has discussed the concept of “traces” in Guo Xiang’s *Zhuangzi Commentary* at some length in his recent book, *The Penumbra Unbound: the Neo-Taoist Philosophy of Guo Xiang* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2003), 31ff. However, according to Zhu Xi, Cheng Hao is

intellectual capacity on self-gain, they are unable to see things as they are or discern the natural course of events. In stilling one's nature, as Cheng Hao again emphasizes, the point is not to lay blame on things and circumstances or to keep out external influences, but to understand why *qing* may be clouded.

However, this is not to say that one should then devote oneself exclusively to cultivating the inner realm of the heart-mind. "Rather than repudiating the external and affirming the internal, it would be far better to forget both the internal and the external" (與其非外而是內, 不若內外之兩忘也). Once they are both "forgotten," it is as if a veil has been lifted and the heart-mind is no longer troubled by any stirring of desire or external influences (兩忘則澄然無事矣). This kind of "forgetfulness" seems to go beyond any deliberate disregard. Without selfishness and without any mental exercise directed at self-gratification, the heart-mind becomes still (*ding* 定). In stillness, the heart-mind becomes clear and perspicacious (*ming* 明). With such clarity, there should be no concern that the heart-mind would become burdened (*lei* 累) by things when it responds to them.

The idea of "forgetfulness" is reminiscent of Guo Xiang's conception of the sage ideal. The reference to *shi* and *fei* also suggests some recognition of the cognitive basis of *qing*. Nevertheless, in tracing the stillness of *xing* to a kind of sagely illumination, Cheng Hao may be closer to Wang Bi than to Guo Xiang. Although the noun phrase *shenming* 神明 does appear in Guo Xiang's *Zhuangzi* commentary, *ming* 明 is used as a verb -- to elucidate, make clear -- in the majority of cases there. If one assumes that individual nature is complete and self-sufficient, an awareness and acceptance of the processes of change and a sense of utter equanimity would probably be more important than a "spirit-like perspicacity," in which the heart-mind functions like a clear mirror in reflecting the true nature of things. To Wang Bi, *ming*-perspicacity is critical because it characterizes authentic nature. Is that what Cheng Hao has in mind as well?

The pleasure and anger of the sage, Cheng Hao continues, invariably accord with what ought to be the case (聖人之喜以物之當喜; 聖人之怒以物之當怒). For this reason, the pleasure and anger of the sage are not tied to the heart-mind but rather to things (是聖人之喜怒, 不繫於心而繫於物也). This rules out any suspicion that the sage does not respond to phenomena and should address Wang Bi's concern over He Yan's conception of the sage; but it also makes clearer the objective dimension of *qing*. The immediate conclusion here is that as the sage's *qing* is

here simply referring to the traces of things and affairs; see *Zhuzi yulei*, 95, 2443. As *ji* seems to parallel "naturalness" in the next sentence, I take it in a stronger, positive sense as suggesting the traces of the sages.

other-directed, there is no ground to renounce the external and seek stillness solely in the heart-mind. The sage's emotions have nothing to do with self-interest and thus do not deceive or manipulate. Yet, how does one ascertain what ought to be the case in matters of the heart? How can one be sure that one is responding to phenomena in the right way? Interestingly, like He Yan in his assessment of Yan Yuan, Cheng Hao singles out anger as the most difficult emotion to deal with. Anger is quick to rise and difficult to control, Cheng Hao says. What is needed is that one "forgets" one's anger (忘其怒) at the point when it arises and examines the principles of the case (而觀理之是非), the reasons that caused the heart-mind to stir in anger. The sage thus certainly experiences emotions, but in discerning the rightness of things he responds in impartiality and is in this sense, *wuqing*.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Perhaps Cheng Hao was concerned with certain Buddhist or Daoist teachings on interiority. Perhaps he was influenced by them. The *Dingxing shu* was written when Cheng Hao was about twenty-two or twenty-three, according to Zhu Xi;⁵⁴ perhaps it does not reflect his mature views. My point here is not to offer an account of Cheng Hao's philosophy. Rather, the point is more simply that as Confucianism unfolds, certain critical issues demand continual reflection and fresh interpretation. Cheng Hao was wrestling with the same issues, within very much the same hermeneutical parameters, that captivated the world of thought in early medieval China. Once it is recognized that *xing* plays a key role in understanding the truth of Dao, the question whether sage nature is distinct from that of the average person must be interrogated.

The Guodian material helps us see more clearly the vibrancy of early Confucian philosophy. The persistent interest in the place of *qing* in the sage ideal reflects, no doubt, deep concern about the potential destructive power of desire, regardless of whether it is understood in terms of deviation from one's authentic nature or as affective excesses arising from self-oriented value distinctions. At the same time, the evidence shows that there is strong resistance to eradicating the emotions from the sage ideal in the Confucian imagination. The contested middle furnishes fertile ground for philosophic innovation.

He Yan offers essentially a religious view of the sage, whose harmonious nature does not admit of partiality. In taking the emotions as differentiated *qing*, the problem of desire is kept well outside of the being of the sage. However, while the problem of desire may no longer be pressing, in defining sagehood in terms of an inborn sage nature, He Yan effectively renders the sage ethically irrelevant and shifts attention to the model of the near-sage, represented especially by Yan Yuan. To Wang Bi, this is probably too high a price to pay. The problem of desire can be

⁵⁴ *Zhuzi yulei*, 93, 2359.

resolved, if one recognizes that inborn nature at its core is characterized by stillness. From Guo Xiang's perspective, this imagined *xing* core has little basis, for the reality of *qi* is such that order is found in plenitude and diversity. To someone like Liu Mian 柳冕 (d. 805) in the Tang, the whole idea that the sage does not have emotions is simply nonsense, for *qing* is part and parcel of life endowed by heaven. "Both sages and worthies are within the realm of emotions" (聖與賢在有情之內). Nor is it true, according to Liu Mian, that the sage "forgets" his emotions; thus, Confucius could not but be sad when Yan Yuan died.⁵⁵ To Cheng Hao, this probably misses the finer philosophical points that need to be addressed. The suggestion is not that Confucius did not experience sorrow, but rather that his affective responses are never partial or inappropriate.

Judging from the *Dingxing shu*, there is a sense that stillness belongs to original nature. Confucius and Yan Yuan share the same essential nature, though they may take on different appearance -- whereas the former is like the "original *qi*," as Cheng Hao or his brother Cheng Yi 程頤 is reported to have said, the latter may be likened to the first signs of life in spring.⁵⁶ Yet, there is also a sense that self-interest -- the likes and dislikes of *xing* -- comes with the original package. It is this which leads to the application of intelligence for self-gain, which in turn incurs the burdens of *qing*.

The repeated admonition against repudiating the "external" suggests that Cheng Hao sought to present a balanced account of *xing*. The likes and dislikes of *xing* cannot be eradicated, but they should accord with the interest of the people. Thus, something is pleasing not because it satisfies a particular personal interest, but because it contributes to the common good. The assertion that the anger of the sage always accords with what is due similarly implies a universalizing principle that envisages a certain common sense of justice. This seems to add a new dimension to the earlier Wei-Jin discourse on *xing* and *qing*. In the final analysis, original nature alone may be insufficient for sagehood, because in Mencian fashion *xing* requires cultivation. The focus of cultivation cannot be on the "internal" alone, because *qing* is realized through the interaction with things. Once the "external" is brought into the ethical picture, it would entail some objective principles that form the basis of rituals and other forms of ethical measures. The learning of the *junzi* thus involves not only cultivating openness and impartiality within, but also an understanding of the way in which things and affairs come to be what they are, without which one would be unable to respond appropriately to phenomena in concrete situations. In this regard, Zhu Xi offers perceptively that the kind of

⁵⁵ Liu Mian, "Da Jingnan Pei Shangshu lunwen shu" 答荆南裴尚書論文書, in *Tang Wencui* 唐文粹, *juan* 84, *Wenyuange siku quanshu*, Taiwan reprint, volume 1344 (Taipei: Shangwu, 1983–1986), 276.

⁵⁶ *Er Cheng ji*, 76; also repeated in 1233.

stillness Cheng Hao speaks of represents the end state – sagehood -- where the distinction between the inner and the outer has been “forgotten,” i.e., no longer a factor in the operation of the heart-mind.⁵⁷ To get there, however, there is much work to be done, not only in rectifying one’s heart-mind but also in discerning the objective principles of things.

This is but a suggestion, approaching Cheng Hao’s *Dingxing shu* from Zhu Xi’s perspective. According to Liu Zongzhou 劉宗周 (1578 -- 1645), the *Dingxing shu* emphasizes the centrality of tranquility (*jing* 靜), which nonetheless does not exclude movement (*dong* 動). The way of the sage does not seek tranquility by shutting out the external world. As the *Liji* states, “When human beings are born, they are tranquil. This is the nature of heaven. When moved by things, they become aroused. This is the affect of *xing*” (人生而靜，天之性也。感於物而動，性之欲也).⁵⁸ Perhaps Liu Zongzhou was also thinking of Guo Xiang, who cited this passage in his *Zhuangzi* commentary as well.⁵⁹ In any event, the sage is firmly rooted in tranquility and in that state interacts with the world, which ensures that he remains impervious to the influence of desire.

During the Jiajing reign period (1522 -- 1566) of the Ming dynasty, Hu Song 胡松 (1503 -- 1566) lectured on the *Dingxing shu* in the Capital, which attracted an audience of over 5,000. According to Hu, Cheng Hao’s analysis addresses the stillness of *xing* at four different levels -- that of heaven and earth, that of the sage, that of the gentleman, and that of ordinary individuals.⁶⁰ Perhaps this need not be taken to mean that the nature of the sage is categorically different from that of the average person. It is enough to observe that the discourse on *xing* and *qing* continued to draw attention during the Ming dynasty. There is little reason not to believe that it will continue to play a critical role in contemporary reflections on Confucian interests and identities. The idea that *qing* informs *xing* stands in direct opposition to the assertion that emotions are a product of cultural construction and should contribute to a wider cross-cultural examination of human nature and the emotions.

⁵⁷ *Zhuzi yulei*, 95, 2441 and 2445.

⁵⁸ *Liji*, chapter 19, “Yueji” 樂記, as cited in *Song Yuan xue’an*, 13, 319–320.

⁵⁹ Chapter 6, 230, n.7.

⁶⁰ *Song Yuan xue’an*, 13, 320.

Chapter VII

Locating the Moral Self: Emotions and Human Agency in Song Neo-Confucian Thought¹

Curie Virág

Thinkers, in both East and West, have philosophized about the emotions for millennia, and they continue to do so to the present day. A large part of the attraction of this topic is its elusiveness and ambivalence: the emotions seem to represent purely subjective experiences, but give us access to some objective criteria of value. They seem to emanate from within, but often they are involuntary, arising from events in the external world. They seem to be unique and individual, but can also link us to the larger human community. The emotions, then, serve as a kind of interface between the self and the world, and they can represent both our passivity to the world, as well as the expression of our ability to assert our presence and our will upon our surroundings.²

This ontological ambivalence has been an intrinsic feature of early Chinese discourse on *qing* 情 -- the Chinese term that is most closely associated with the broader category of the emotions. As sinologists have frequently pointed out, *qing* has possessed a dual meaning since early times, referring both to “situation” and “reality” on the one hand, and “emotions” on the other. This dual meaning was potentially very useful: it could explain our individual emotions as objective and coherent responses to the world, and thus as furnishing a link between the subjective and objective realities. Such a conception achieved its classic formulation in the *Yueji* 樂記, or *Record of Music*, where it is written:

人生而靜，天之性也。感於物而動，性之欲也。

That man is still at birth is his Heaven-endowed nature.
That he is set into motion having been stirred by things is
the desires of his nature. (*Li Ji* 禮記 Ch. 37)

¹ This essay develops and sketches out some points I have made in my dissertation, “‘That Which Encompasses The Myriad Cares’: Subjectivity, Knowledge and the Ethics of Emotion in Tang and Song China.” (Harvard University: 2004).

² Ronald de Sousa discusses some of these ambivalent aspects of the emotions in terms of a series of “antinomies”: the antinomy of rationality, the antinomy of objectivity, the antinomy of activity and passivity, the antinomy of integrity, and the antinomy of determinism. See de Sousa 1987: 1-20.

The early Tang commentator of the *Wujing Zhengyi* 五經正義 elaborates:

言人初生，未有情欲，是其靜稟於自然，是天性也。
 [W]hen man is first born, he does not yet possess feelings (*qing* 情) and desires (*yu* 欲). This stillness is endowed from the state of what is so of itself, and this is his Heaven-endowed nature. (Kong Yingda 1999:1084)³

The assumption here is that the *xing* 性, or the moral nature, is originally still, and that the emotions, or *qing*, represent the arousal of this nature into a state of motion. Motion and stillness thus represent distinct and mutually exclusive aspects of human experience, connected either to the nature or to the realm of feelings.

The idea that emotions represented the self roused into motion by things and events in the world reflects a dualistic vision of the cosmos, in which the inner and outer worlds are corresponding realities. The political appeal of such a world picture is clear, and it was invoked in early times to legitimate the authority of state-organized ritual to shape the minds and bodies of the subjects. But from a philosophical perspective, this vision is somewhat problematic, for if all motion and change emanate from the outside, how can we account for the possibility of human agency and self-determination?

The Neo-Confucian search for an objective ground of morality was based on a kind of analogy between the human world and the cosmos, but thinkers like Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤 (1017-1073) and Zhang Zai 張載 (1029-1077) attempted to do away with the dualistic perspective of earlier aesthetic and cosmological theories.

They sought to eliminate such dichotomies as inner vs. outer, and motion vs. stillness in accounting for human experience. They explained our thoughts, feelings, and actions as emanating from within, not from without. In so doing, they opened theoretical possibilities for envisioning human beings as agents, and for explaining how human morality was a matter of inner self-cultivation.

In the *Tong Shu* 通書, Zhou Dunyi describes the properly cultivated self, not as being in a state of stillness (*jing* 靜), but as encompassing both motion (*dong* 動) and stillness. He makes his point by using motion and stillness as criteria for defining two other concepts: “*wu* 物,” thing, and “*shen* 神,” spirit. As Zhou explains, a thing is that which cannot be still when it is in motion, and cannot be in motion when it is still.

³ All translations, some of which appear in my dissertation, are my own. For the Neo-Confucian thinkers discussed below I have consulted the translations of Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963.

For mere things, motion and stillness are mutually exclusive. In contrast, spirit, the daemonic -- that which is *shen* -- possesses both motion and stillness within itself: it is still while being in motion, and it is in motion while being still.⁴ The assumption seems to be that human beings are situated somewhere in-between *wu* and *shen*, and that if they cultivate themselves to become sages, they can be *shen*. The perfectly cultivated individual thus embodies both motion and stillness -- in contrast to the myriad “things”, which can only embody one state at a time. The practical implication of this is that the individual is autonomously capable of virtuous and proper action without being moved by contact with external things. People are agents of transformation, and not the objects of transformation by things.

One of the implications of such a conception of the human is that it left little room for the emotions. Zhou had little to say directly concerning the realm of emotions, but what he did say suggests that he saw them as posing a threat to the moral health of the individual:

民之盛也，欲動情勝。利害相攻。不止則賊滅無倫焉。
故得刑以治。

When people prosper, their desires are set in motion and their feelings dominate. Because of their concern for self-interest, they attack one another. If this is not stopped, it will lead to destruction and the loss of proper human relationships. Thus, they receive punishments so that they may be governed. (Zhou Dunyi 36/38).

If Zhou provided the basis of a theory of human agency by recognizing motion as internally generated, the problem still remained as to how to manage the emotions so as to harmonize them with a life of virtue.

Zhang Zai provided another possibility for explaining how motion and change could originate from within the self. This was Zhang's famous *qi* 氣-based philosophy, which explained all phenomena in the universe by way of a single concept, *qi*, or vital force. According to Zhang, *qi* was the dynamic substance that pervaded everything, and all being and all change were

natural and spontaneous developments arising from the collection and dispersal of *qi*. This theory could provide an account of the emotions as well:

氣本之虛則湛本無形。感而生則聚而有象。有象斯有對，
對必反其為。有反斯有仇，仇必和而解。故愛惡之情同

⁴ “動而無靜，靜而無動物也。動而無動靜而無靜神也。動而無動靜而無靜非不動不靜也。物則不通神妙萬物。” Zhou Dunyi: 16/24.

出於太虛而卒歸於物欲。倏而生忽而成，不容有毫髮之間。其神矣。

In its original state, *qi* is vacuous, clear and without form. When there is stirring and coming into being, it collects together and there are images. If there are forms, there are also their opposites, and these opposites invariably oppose what they do. If there is opposition, there is strife, and if there is strife, there is invariably harmony and resolution. Therefore, the feelings of love and hate emerge together from the Great Void, and in the end they return as the desire that is bound up with things. They emerge suddenly and quickly come to completion, without admitting of the slightest interruption. This is how marvelous it is! (Zhang Zai 1978:1/10)

As Zhang explains here, the feelings of love and hate represented the collection of *qi* into forms. Since what possessed form invariably possessed opposing counterparts to which they were drawn into conflict, they were a source of contention and strife, both within the self and without. At this point they constituted the realm of “desire that [was] bound up with things.” While this was all part of the natural condition of things, the linking of *qing* with strife and vulnerability to “things” meant that the feelings posed a constant danger to our ability to exercise mastery over ourselves.

For Cheng Yi 程頤 (1033-1107), the conflict between morality and emotions was even more direct. Cheng Yi’s most important theoretical contribution was his elaboration of a concept that would become the cornerstone of Neo-Confucian thought: *li* 理. *Li* was the normative, coherent pattern underlying all things.⁵ “All things under Heaven,” he said, “can be understood by way of *li*. If there is a thing, there is invariably a standard, so each thing must have its *li*.” (Cheng Yi 2004:18/193). Moreover, *li* is the basis of the unity of all things: although each thing has its specific *li*, in the end all is one *li*. Such an idea had a dramatic impact on the conception of the self, for it meant that human beings possessed an identifiable normative structure in common with the rest of the cosmos. It was this structure that Cheng Yi equated with the notion of *xing* -- the nature. For Cheng Yi, the nature itself was originally and wholly good. In contrast, the emotions and desires represented the realm of *qi*, and as such, could be taken as categorically apart from the realm of *li* and *xing*.

Once the goal of self-cultivation became defined as the realization of the *li* within oneself, the emotions become marginalized as irrelevant for the achievement of union with the world. But in fact they were worse than

⁵ For a historical overview of the concept of *li* see Willard Petersen, “Another Look at *li*.” *Bulletin of Sung and Yuan Studies* 18 (1986): 13-32.

irrelevant: they were positively harmful to the realization of one's moral nature. Thus we see in Cheng Yi's early essay, "On what Yanzi loved to learn

(顏子所好何學論)" the rather contentious state of affairs between the nature and the feelings, in which each side is engaged in a struggle to dominate over the other:

天地儲精，得五行之秀者為人。其本也真而靜，其未發也，五性具焉。曰仁義禮智信。形既生矣，外物觸其形而動於中矣。其中動而七情出焉。曰喜怒哀樂愛惡欲。情既熾而益蕩其性鑿矣。是故覺者約其情始，合於中，正其心，養其性。故曰性其情。愚者則不知制之，縱其情而至於邪僻，梏其性而亡之。故曰情其性。

Heaven and Earth is a collection of refined essence, and man has received the most excellent of the Five Elements. In his origin, he is genuine and tranquil, and before he has stirred into activity, the five moral virtues are complete in him. These are humaneness, righteousness, ritual propriety, wisdom, and trustworthiness. When his form comes into being, the external things make contact with his form, and he stirs within. When he stirs within, the seven feelings emerge. These are joy, anger, sorrow, pleasure, love, hate, and desire. When his feelings become agitated and become increasingly numerous, his nature is injured. This is why one who is enlightened restrains his feelings so as to conform to the state of equilibrium, rectify his mind, and nourish his nature. *This is to impose the nature upon the feelings.* One who is stupid does not know to control [the feelings] and lets them reach the point of depravity and one-sidedness, and so fetters his nature and loses it. *This is to impose the feelings upon the nature.* (Ibid:8/577).

Here we see that there is a more or less absolute conflict between the nature and the feelings: one either succeeds in overcoming his feelings with his good nature, or else fails and allows his feelings to take over and overpower his nature. Over time Cheng Yi's views would become more moderate, and he would later admit that the nature and the feelings were interdependent rather than mutually exclusive, but he never succeeded in formulating a theory to fully explain their relationship, largely because his vision of reality could not really account for why the emotions were necessary.

One thing that Cheng Yi did insist on, however, was the agency of the moral subject. We can see this in his theory of *xin* 心, or the mind. According to Cheng Yi, the mind in its perfect state of original stillness was

something like the nature. As he explains, “The mind is originally good, but when it issues forth in thoughts, there is that which is good and that which is not good. Once it has issued forth, it can be called *qing*; it cannot be called *xin*.” (Ibid.:18/17). As for desire, Cheng Yi discusses it in various ways so as to distinguish it from the mind. One way of defining the desires is in terms of its movement to “pursue things” :

問: 人有逐物是心逐之否?

曰: 心則無出入矣逐物是欲

Question: “When people pursue things, is it the mind that does the pursuing?”

Answer: “The mind does not go out or come in. What pursues things is desire.” (Ibid: 22a/297).

Cheng Yi provides an even stricter criterion when he posits that even being stirred and “inclined” towards things is detrimental to self-cultivation:

養心莫善於寡欲。不欲則不惑。所欲不必沈溺，只有所向，便是欲。

In cultivating the mind, nothing is better than lessening your desires. If you do not desire, then you are not deluded. Desiring isn’t necessarily about indulgence; it is just that there is something one is inclined towards.” (Ibid: 15/145).

In accordance with his *qi*-based theory, Cheng Yi also maintains that the emotions are not derived from the outside, but are internally-generated. In response to the question, “How is it that joy and anger, sadness and joy come from the outside?” Cheng Yi states: They do not come from the outside. They are stimulated from the outside but issue forth from within (非出於外。感於外而發於中也) (Ibid: 18/1).” For Cheng Yi, individuals possessed the means to make ethical decisions, and should not place themselves at the mercy of things. His was a theory of virtue that strived towards the elimination of dependence on the outside world.

The particular problem that the emotions posed for the early Neo-Confucian thinkers, then, was that they signaled our vulnerability to forces beyond our control and undermined our moral agency. And it was Zhu Xi’s 朱熹 (1130-1200) philosophical achievement to formulate a theory of the human moral subject that could reconcile the idea of human agency with emotional experience. The most direct way in which he did this was to clarify the relationship between the nature and the feelings, the *xing* and the *qing*, in such a way that there was no necessary opposition between

the two. In his search for a solution he came upon the formula of Zhang Zai:

心，統性情者也。

The mind is what unites the nature and the feelings. (Zhu Xi 1985: 5/15).

As Zhu Xi himself would later recount, this phrase came to him like a revelation, since rather than conceiving of the relationship between the *xing* and *qing* as one of opposition, it placed *qing* within a tripartite structure, with the mind mediating between the two. Zhu himself realized what a breakthrough this was, for it explained how the nature and feelings were distinct and yet could be joined together as part of a single moral identity. This meant that the feelings were a necessary component of the moral life, and not simply a problematic aspect of our human constitution that we had to contend with in our quest for self-cultivation.

But the verb, *tong* 統, that characterized the activity of the mind, also had a more specific meaning than simply to encompass or unite. It also had the more active sense of ruling, and referred to the mind's role as ruler of the self:

心主宰之謂也。動靜皆主宰，非是靜時無所用，及至動時方有主宰也。言主宰則混然體統自在其中。心統攝性情，非籠侗與性情為一物而不分別也。

Xin is simply the name we give to a ruler. In motion and stillness there is always a ruler; it is not that it does not function in a state of stillness, and that only when it is in motion there is a ruler. When I speak of a 'ruler, I refer to its bringing together and fully embodying everything within itself. The mind unites and joins together the nature and the feelings. But this does not mean that it is a raw, undifferentiated mass together with the nature and the feelings, with there being no distinction. (Zhu Xi 1985: 5/20)

So here we see that Zhu insists on the moral agency of the self, achieved by the ruling and controlling function of the mind. In fact, "Without the mind," as he claims elsewhere, the self would have no ruler." (Zhu Xi 1985:12/1).

But if the mind acts as the ruler of the nature and feelings, what is the relationship between feelings and "things" (*wu* 物)? Is *qing* still essentially passive, indicating a level of human vulnerability to the dictates of things, and thus something that undermines the possibility of moral agency? If we examine what Zhu Xi had to say about other important dimensions of the self -- the mind, motion and stillness, centrality and

harmony -- we see that Zhu succeeded in formulating an ethical theory in which the emotions were not simply ambivalent, but necessary aspects of the moral life -- a life that may be directed from within, but oriented towards the world of things and of the larger human community.

One way in which he did this was to open up a space of meaning for the mind itself. For Zhu Xi, the mind was a space in which all the normative principles were present.⁶ But it was not simply an empty vessel that could contain things; it was characterized by a constant movement towards the world through the activities of perception, thought and understanding. It was this, rather than things *per se*, that endowed the space of the mind with a wondrous, divine quality. And it was through its perceptual faculties that the mind mediated between the self and the external world.

One of the implications of this was that the things of the world no longer represented objects that attracted or repelled us, and subjected us to their influence. Instead, they were the objects of our perception, our care, and our responsiveness. They are what engaged our faculties and thereby made these faculties come alive. The goal of self-cultivation was thus about being able to respond properly to the things and circumstances around us -- something that depended on our capacity to have feelings as well. A truly cultivated person was not one who escaped in the world and meditated in silence, but one who could still possess an underlying calmness while actively engaged with the people and things that made up his world. Thus, Zhu defined the virtue of "rightness," or *yi* 義, as "Being able to respond when things arrive, and being able to make decisions when situations arise." (Zhu Xi 1985: 12/28). He also emphasized that the true state of calmness -- *ding* 定 -- was one that did not exclude activity and motion, but that was capable of encompassing these both these states.

These ideas could be seen in Zhu's attempt to articulate the relationship among the nature, the mind, and the feelings in his "First letter

⁶ As Zhu explained: "Everything possesses a mind and the space within this mind must be empty. This is like a dish containing chicken hearts or pig hearts. Once you cut into it you can see them. The human heart is also like this. But this empty place still encompasses and stores the many moral principles that fill Heaven and Earth and embrace past and present. Extending this even further, nothing in the world -- be it in Heaven or on Earth -- does not come from this. This is the marvelous thing known as the human mind! The principles that reside in the mind are called 'the nature.' The nature is like the mind's field: it fills its space, and there is nothing but these principles within it. The mind is the dwelling place of the daemonic intelligence, and constitutes the ruler over the entire self. The nature is then the many moral principles; these are received from Heaven and fully contained in the mind. When they issue forth in the realm of wisdom, knowledge, recollection and contemplation, they are all feelings. Therefore, [Zhang Zai] said, 'The mind unites the nature and the feelings.'" (Zhu Xi 1985:98/14).

to the gentlemen of Hunan concerning ‘zhong’ and ‘he’” (與湖南諸公論中和第一書). Here he critiques Cheng Yi’s understanding of the central passage of the *Zhongyong* which elaborates the meaning of *weifa* 未發 and *yifa* 已發 -- the states before and after the arousal of the feelings:

The state before joy and anger, sadness and happiness, have been aroused is called ‘zhong (中)’, and when they have been aroused and all hit their proper measure, it is called ‘he (和)’.

喜怒哀樂之未發謂之中，發而皆中節謂之和。中也者，天下之大本也。和也者天下之達道也。

According to Cheng Yi, the mind represented *yifa* -- the state after the arousal of the feelings -- while the nature represented *weifa* -- the state before their arousal. Zhu Xi rejected this reading, however. For one thing, it equated the mind with the feelings and thus failed to recognize that the feelings did not simply arise from within, but arose in response to our encounter with things. Such a view suggested that it was possible to understand the feelings by observing the mind itself -- an activity Zhu considered to be quite absurd.⁷ It was only while engaging in the world of things that we could both understand the feelings and experience the operation of the mind.

Another problem with Cheng Yi’s reading was that it defined the goal of self-cultivation as returning to one’s original nature, something Zhu did not even think was possible. As he declared, “The state before the feelings are aroused cannot be sought.” For Zhu Xi, the truly cultivated individual was one who was capable of balancing and mediating inner and outer realities. Only by achieving understanding in the context of our interaction with the world of things could we hope to realize our moral potential: “As to self-examination when things occur and seeking understanding through inference when we come into contact with things, this must also serve as the foundation.”

This openness to things did not mean that we would lose our sense of autonomy, since it did not compromise the essential virtue of the mind to act as master not only of the self but also over the things we encountered. As Zhu insists:

夫心者人之所以主乎身者也。一而不二者也。為主而不為客者也。命物而不命於物者也。故以心觀物，則物之理得。

⁷ Zhu works out his reasoning in his “Discourse on observing the mind” (*Guan xin shuo* 觀心說), in Zhu Xi 2000: 67/3389.

The mind is that by which man rules himself. It is one, not two; it is a subject, not an object; and it commands things, rather than being commanded by things. Therefore, if the mind observes things, the principle of things will be attained. (Zhu Xi 2000: 67/3389)

But our minds endowed us with moral agency in yet another way. As Zhu elaborated in the opening passage of his “Discourse on humaneness” -- the *Ren Shuo* 仁說 -- the mind was a force of creation: “Heaven and Earth takes its production of things as its mind, and in the production of humans and things, each receives the mind of Heaven and Earth as its own mind.” (Zhu Xi 2000: 67/3391). By virtue of its original endowment of *ren* -- the virtue of humaneness -- the mind participated in the cycle of production and creative transformation (*sheng* 生) that that was constantly at work in the cosmos:

蓋仁之為道，乃天地生物之心即物而在。情之未發而此體已具，情之既發而其用不窮。誠能體而存之，則衆善之源，百行之本，莫不在是

Now, as for humaneness constituting the Way, it is the mind of Heaven and Earth to produce things being present in all things. Before the feelings have issued forth, this substance is already complete; after the feelings have issued forth, its operations are inexhaustible. If we are indeed able to embody and preserve it, then the origin of all goodness and the root of all action would always be present (Zhu Xi 2000: 67/3391).

Here Zhu brings up a distinction that is crucial for his moral thought, that of substance vs. function. This distinction was the basis of Zhu’s claim that *qing* was inseparable from the realm of *xing* -- that it represented another aspect of *xing* -- and it was also the basis of his interpretation of *ren*. Zhu’s argument was that the substance of *ren*, like the moral nature, was inherent within all human beings, and that their moral task was to allow this *ren* to function in the world. Thus, rather than returning to an original state of perfect goodness, we should strive towards the practical realization of this *ren* through our feelings of love and caring, and through the fostering of human flourishing.

For Zhu Xi, then, to be open to emotions did not mean that one was subject to the determinations of the external world. It was, in fact, an important part of what it meant to be a moral subject, since the very realization of our moral nature depended on its operation at a discernible level -- in other words, at the level of its emotional manifestation. Moreover, the human potential for goodness could only be truly realized when we were in active engagement with the world and with the larger human

community. Such an engagement expanded, rather than compromised, our power of moral agency. In contrast to his Neo-Confucian predecessors, then, Zhu Xi saw no inherent contradiction between emotional experience and the moral life, between openness to the world of things and the task of shaping our own destiny. In this way, Zhu Xi's vision succeeded in showing that our emotions, far from confining us, could take us beyond the borders of our own selves into a world that was coherent and filled with meaning.

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GLOSSARY

Cheng Yi 程頤

ding 定

dong 動

he 和

jing 靜

li 理

Li Ji 禮記

qi 氣

qing 情

ren 仁

Ren Shuo 仁說

shen 神

sheng 生

xin 心,

xing 性

tong 統

Tong Shu 通書

weifa 未發

Wujing Zhengyi 五經正義

wu 物

yi 義

yifa 已發

yu 欲

Yueji 樂記

Zhang Zai 張載

Zhou Dunyi 周敦頤

Zhu Xi 朱熹

Chapter VIII

Is Wang Yangming's Notion of Innate Moral Knowledge (*Liangzhi*) Tenable?

Yong Huang

INTRODUCTION

In this article, I shall examine one aspect of Wang Yangming's idea of *liangzhi*. There is no doubt that *liangzhi* is the singular most important idea in Wang's mature philosophy. He himself claims that "since Longchang [the turning point of his philosophy], my idea has never diverted from these two words *liang zhi*" (Wang: 1133; references to Wang hereafter in this article will be indicated with page numbers only). He often compares his enlightenment to *liangzhi* with Cheng Hao's to *tianli* (heavenly principle) (461). Cheng claims that, while he has learned a lot from earlier Confucians, the two words *tian li* are from his own inner experience (Cheng & Cheng: 425). Wang makes a similar claim about his *liangzhi*. Of course, just as Cheng does not mean that he is the first to use the two words *tianli*, nor does Wang mean that he is the inventor of the idea of *liangzhi*. After all, it is Mencius who says that "what a person can do without learning is *liangneng* [innate moral ability], while what a person knows without thinking is *liangzhi*. There are no children who do not know loving their parents, and, when growing up, respecting their elder brothers" (*Mencius* 7a15). Wang himself clearly acknowledges his debts to Mencius when he states that "*liangzhi* is what Mencius regards as heart/mind that everyone has to make distinction between right and wrong. This heart/mind of distinguishing between right and wrong is called *liangzhi*, because one knows it without thinking and is able to practice it without learning" (1063). However, Wang has a unique understanding of *liangzhi* and regards it as representing the most salient features of Confucianism. In the following, I shall first examine Wang's idea of *liangzhi* as moral knowledge innate in everyone, in contrast to non-moral knowledge that one has to learn; then I shall analyze Wang's view of distinction between sages and common people despite the fact that moral knowledge is innate in both; finally I shall explore the issue of the credibility of Wang's conception of moral knowledge as innate from a contemporary philosophical point of view.

MORAL KNOWLEDGE (*LIANGZHI*) AS DIFFERENT FROM COMMON KNOWLEDGE (*ZHISHI*)

Liangzhi literary means the good or moral (*liang*) knowledge (*zhi*). This is particularly clear when Wang makes the analogy between *liang* and

shan, both meaning “good,” in the following claim: “because no human’s nature is not good (*shan*), so no one’s knowledge is not moral (*liang*)” (65). Of course, this word *liang* also has the meaning of “innate” in the sense that Mencius uses it, which is also accepted by Wang when he says that the heart/mind of right and wrong is called *liangzhi* because it is something one knows without thinking and is able to practice without learning.¹ These two meanings of the word *liang* can help us have a better understanding of *liangzhi*. On the one hand, *liangzhi* is innate in the heart/mind, the great body, of everyone, whether a sage or a stupid man or woman (*yufu yufu*) (52). In Wang’s view, “knowledge is in the original state (*benti*) of the heart/mind. The heart/mind naturally has knowledge: it naturally knows filial piety when father is seen, brotherly love when elder brother is met, and commiseration when an infant is seen about to fall into a well. Therefore, one should not seek *liangzhi* from the outside” (8). On the other hand, because it is only moral knowledge, the knowledge necessary for a person to become a moral person, Wang makes it clear that no one, including the sage, is omniscient:

that nothing is beyond sages’ knowledge means that they know everything about the heavenly principle (*tianli*); that nothing is beyond sages’ abilities means that they can do everything according to the heavenly principle. Because sages know this fundamental (*benti*), they know the heavenly principle of everything and therefore can carry this principle to its full. However, it is not the case that, with the knowledge of heavenly principle, sages know and can do everything under heaven. Things under heaven, such as names, varieties, and systems, as well as plants and animals, are innumerable. Thus, although sages are clearly aware of the fundamental, how can they know everything? Yet, if there is no need to know something, sages will not bother to know it; and if there is something to be known, sages can certainly ask people about it. For example, “when Confucius entered the grand temple, he asked everything” [*Analects* 3.15]. A previous interpretation of it says that “the fact that Confucius asks the question to which he already has the answer shows how serious and careful he is.” This interpretation is unintelligible. (101-102)

So clearly, for Wang, in addition to *liangzhi*, the moral knowledge, innate in everyone’s heart/mind, there is other *zhi*, knowledge, not innate in

¹ Tang Junyi (Chun-I) argues that, etymologically, the primary meaning of *liang* is “original,” with “good” only as its derivative meaning (Tang 1970: 101). In Wang, however, these two meanings are at least equally important.

anyone's heart/mind. When he says that no knowledge is not good (*liang*), he refers to the moral knowledge innate in our heart/mind only. The non-moral (though not necessarily immoral) knowledge is not what we are born with and has to be learned if it is necessary.² Wang states here that sages need to learn some, but not all, such knowledge. The criterion to determine what sages need to learn and what sages do not need to learn is whether such knowledge is necessary for moral knowledge to function. Thus, when asked whether moral knowledge of filial piety is enough and whether we should also search for knowledge about how to get warm in the winter and how to get cool in the summer in serving parents, Wang states:

Why should we not search for such knowledge? We only need to know what is essential (*tounao*). We only need to search for such knowledge by getting rid of selfish human desires and preserving the heavenly principle. For example, to search ways to provide warmth [to parents] in the winter, we need to apply our heart/mind of filial piety to the utmost in case there is a slight selfish desire mixed in; to search ways to provide coolness [to parents] in the summer, we need also to apply our heart/mind of filial piety to the utmost in case there is a slight selfish desire mixed in. We only need to obtain this heart/mind. If our heart/mind is free from selfish desires, is in complete accord with the heavenly principle, and is sincere in serving our parents, then, in the winter, we will naturally be concerned about our parents being cold and naturally try to find ways to provide warmth; in the summer, we will naturally be concerned with our parents being hot and naturally try to find ways to keep them cool. They are detailed expressions of our sincere filial heart/mind. Only if there is such a sincere and filial heart/mind can there be such detailed expressions. As in a tree, the sincere filial heart/mind is the root, with many detailed expressions as its branches and leaves. There must first be root and only later can there be branches and leaves. It is not right to look for branches and leaves first and only then to plant the root. (4-5)

² Failure to realize this distinction between the innate moral knowledge and acquired non-moral knowledge leads Fang Keli to claim that Wang contradicts himself, after insisting on the innateness of knowledge, by saying that “only after tasting it can one know whether a food is good or not” and “only after traveling on it can one know whether a road is rough or smooth” (44) (Fang: 206).

In this example of filial piety, Wang emphasizes the importance of moral knowledge, by which we know not only that we should serve out parents but also that we should look for ways to better serve out parents. This knowledge is innate in us. However, the actual knowledge about ways to better serve our parents, for example, ways to keep our parents warm in the winter and cool in the summer, is not innate in us. It is something we have to learn. When he uses the term “naturally” in the above passage, he does not mean that our innate moral knowledge will naturally lead to such non-moral knowledge; it rather means that our innate moral knowledge will naturally urge us to search for such knowledge. In this sense, I think Mou Zongsan is right when he says that, for Wang, “the moral knowledge of the heavenly principle determines one to serve parents and at the same time to know parents” (Mou: 178), as it is impossible to serve parents without knowing parents (their desires, ideas, preferences, etc.) and other related things. Tang Junyi sees a closer relationship between innate moral knowledge and acquired non-moral knowledge when he compares the innate moral knowledge as a cube, with the non-moral knowledge necessary for the innate moral knowledge to function as one of its faces (Tang: 1993: 361). In his view, such non-moral knowledge is not only needed for the moral knowledge to function in the above sense, it is also necessary to make a judgment when one’s moral knowledge issues two conflicting commands. For example, by the innate knowledge, we know we should be both filial toward parents and loyal to the ruler. When these two are in conflict and cannot be fulfilled at the same time, we also need to have the non-moral knowledge to make a better decision (see Tang 1993: 365).³

So, in contrast to the view that Wang ignores or downplays non-moral knowledge,⁴ Wang recognizes the importance of such knowledge for moral knowledge. The only complaint that one can

³ Cheng Chung-ying also points out that “searching for knowledge and knowledge resulting from this search must always be instrumental for the performance of an action or a type of action which is characteristic as virtuous” (Cheng: 406). P. J. Ivanhoe, however, has a different understanding. In a comment on a previous version of this essay, he states, “Wang is expressing something like the difference between a faculty or sensibility and its expression. So vision does not include all the things we might see in the world, but clear vision will reveal such things in the course of experience. This is why I translate *liangzhi* as ‘pure knowing.’ It is an active faculty that is free from impurities and hence reveals what one should do in any specific case” (private communication).

⁴ For example, Meng Peiyuan says that Wang’s philosophy smacks of “obscurantism. He rejects knowledge of literature as well as science and technology” (Meng: 315). Chen Lai has a similar complaint: if such things as “political rituals, social institutions, astronomy and calendar, and religious sacrifice” are “all considered as the natural discovery,” then we will be unable to maintain the universality and continuity of such matters (Chen: 29-30; see also 44-45).

legitimately lodge, as Lao Siguang actually does, is that Wang tells us that non-moral knowledge should not be sought after if it is not useful for moral knowledge and therefore does not have an independent role (Lao: 397). As we can see from the above passage, it is true that Wang does not reserve any independent role for non-moral knowledge. He repeatedly emphasizes that we should only search for such knowledge when it is necessary for the moral knowledge to function and that we should seek such knowledge only under the guidance of moral knowledge. However, if we reflect upon this matter, we realize that all the non-moral knowledge that we normally think we should pursue today, including the sciences, medicine, arts, history, and literature, is necessary for the moral knowledge to function better. So Wang really does not exclude from his scope anything that we are actually pursuing today. The only thing that he wants to emphasize, which seems to me correct and important, is that our search for such knowledge should be guided by our moral knowledge so that we can ensure that such non-moral knowledge will not be put to immoral use. Otherwise, people with such knowledge may do more harmful things than those who do not have it. For this reason, Wang complains:

the later generations do not understand that the most fundamental in achieving sagehood is to be in complete accord with the heavenly principle. Instead they seek sagehood through [the non-moral] knowledge and abilities. They thought that, since sages know all and are able to do all, they have to first understand sages' such abilities to know and do things. Thus they do not direct their efforts toward the heavenly principle, but exert their energy, in vain, to scrutinize books, examine the names and varieties of things, and trace and imitate what is done [by sages]. The result is that, the more knowledge acquired, the more selfish desires accumulated; the higher their abilities, the more obscured the heavenly principle. (29)

In Wang's view, sages have both the innate moral knowledge and acquired non-moral knowledge, with the latter being guided by the former. However, "later generations" do not first make efforts to keep their moral knowledge as unobscured as sages do'. They merely try to acquire sages' non-moral knowledge, which therefore cannot perform its moral function for them as it does for sages. Thus, Wang states, without the guidance of the innate moral knowledge, "broad memorizations and recitations can only function to increase people's arrogance, extensive knowledge can only serve them in evil deeds; enormous information can only help them in

quarrels, and rich techniques of flowery composition can only assist them to cover up their artificiality” (59).⁵

Because what people are born with is moral knowledge, people with such knowledge of course know how to act morally in a given situation. However, how they will actually act depends upon what kind of actual situation they are in, which they can only know through experience (see Tang 1990: 339-340). For this reason, Wang’s innate moral knowledge is not foreknowledge. People with such knowledge cannot predict what actual actions they will perform, although they know that they will perform moral actions. Thus, when asked whether being absolutely sincere can bring out foreknowledge, Wang replies:

Sincerity is a real principle. It is nothing but the innate moral knowledge. When it acts wonderfully in the world, we regard it as divine (*shen*).... Sages do not value foreknowledge. They cannot avoid calamities and happiness when they come. They only know the beginning of things and are good at handling them situationally. Moral knowledge is neither foreknowledge nor retrospective knowledge. It is knowledge about what is going on. (114)

THE ORIGIN OF THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN SAGES AND COMMON PEOPLE

We have seen that Wang gets his idea of the innate moral knowledge, *liangzhi*, from Mencius, who talks about *liangneng*, innate moral ability, in addition to *liangzhi*. We may therefore wonder why *liangneng* does not become a central idea in Wang. The answer is perhaps that, for Wang, people who have the innate moral knowledge will necessarily be able to act. In his view, to have moral knowledge and yet be unable to act morally is a self-contradiction, for knowledge and action are one and the same thing: “as long as knowledge is mentioned, action is already there, and as long as action is mentioned, knowledge is already there” (5). If this is the case, however, a new question arises: since according to Wang, everyone is born with moral knowledge, and everyone who has this moral knowledge will act morally, then why are there morally

⁵ Thus, when comparing the scientific knowledge stressed in the Western tradition and moral knowledge emphasized in the Confucian tradition, in his discussion of Wang Yangming and Zhu Xi’s notion of knowledge of/as virtue (*dexing zhi zhi*) in contrast to knowledge of hearing and seeing (*wenjian zhi zhi*), Tang Junyi points out, “without knowledge of/as virtue as the master, today’s scientific knowledge and technology may also be used to kill people instead of perfecting human life” (Tang 1993: 356).

bad people? In other words, what is the source of immorality? To this, Wang's answer is:

The innate moral knowledge is *dao*. The moral knowledge is innate in human heart/mind. This is true not only of sages and worthy people but also of common people. If there are no material desires to obscure the innate moral knowledge, which is followed and left to function in its way, then everything will be in accord with *dao*. However, common people are often obscured by material desires and therefore cannot follow the innate moral knowledge. (71)

In Wang's view, while moral knowledge is indeed innate in everyone, it can be obscured by selfish desires, just as the bright sun may be blocked by clouds,⁶ and a shining mirror may be covered by dust.⁷ Thus, it is important for common people to remove such material desires to regain the lost sight of their innate moral knowledge (*zhi liangzhi*). Thus *zhi liangzhi* becomes a key in Wang's philosophy. As a matter of fact, he even claims that, "teaching students to learn throughout my life, I have only these three words: *zhi liang zhi*" (543).

However, I shall leave this important topic of *zhi liangzhi* for a different occasion. In this section, I shall instead explore a different but equally important question: where do such material desires, which obscure people's innate moral knowledge, come from? While many scholars think that Wang fails to provide an adequate answer to this question (see Hou: 215 & 224, Nivison: 224, Chen: 81, and Cheng: 410), P. J. Ivanhoe argues that Wang accepts the view that "*qi* naturally occurs in varying degrees of 'coarseness' or 'turbidity' and that the quality of the *qi*, which different people receive at birth, varies" (Ivanhoe: 82). He further argues that "most neo-Confucians believed that *qi* necessarily 'darkens and obscures' one's pure and perfect innate moral nature and that because *qi* occurs in various degrees of 'coarseness' and 'turbidity,' different people are 'obstructed' to varying degrees as a matter of principle" (ibid.). Based on this interpretation, Ivanhoe observes that, in Wang's view, "a given individual's goodness or wickedness -- at least at birth -- is a wholly contingent matter" (Ivanhoe: 87). For Ivanhoe, this "presents problems for Wang's claim that everyone can become Yao or Shun and raises serious questions about how much of the task of moral self cultivation is truly within an individual's power to control" (Ivanhoe: 82).

⁶ "The knowledge of the sage is like the sun in a clear day, the knowledge of the worthy is like the sun in a day with a few moving clouds, while the knowledge of the stupid people is like the sun in a cloudy day" (115).

⁷ "The sage's heart/mind is like a shining mirror without any dust ... while a common person's heart/mind is like a mirror with layers of dust" (386).

It is true that Wang follows the neo-Confucian tradition to appeal to *qi* to explain the problem of evil. However, my observation is that Wang's theory is much more complicated. Wang does attribute evil to coarseness and turbidness of *qi*. For example, he says that

the innate moral knowledge is originally transparent. Those whose physical *qi* (*qizhi*) is not excellent are not easily enlightened to it because of the large amount of dregs and heavy layers of obscurity. Those whose physical *qi* is excellent have few dregs and little obscurity. Thus, with a little effort to regain the innate moral knowledge, this innate moral knowledge becomes transparent to them. (70)

In another place, he also says that

the physical *qi* (*qizhi*) is what both houses and obscures the human nature (*xing*). The physical *qi* varies and the human nature follows. Human nature is like a ball. It is bright when falling into a clear pool, becomes blurred when falling into turbid water, and becomes filthy if falling into filthy water. The wise people above are in the clear pool, common people are in the turbid water, and stupid people below are in the filthy water. (1035-1036)

In such passages, Wang seems to say that different people are endowed with different *qi*, which determine whether they are able to see their innate moral knowledge clearly or not, and whether they will be moral or immoral persons. They seem to confirm what Ivanhoe says.

However, in some other passages, we find Wang saying that all humans are endowed with the same pure *qi* as their distinguishing mark, in contrast to the turbid *qi* received by animals. Such pure *qi*, in Wang's view, is identical to human nature. In a poem, Wang expressed this idea: "human beings and other beings both have their endowments. Their principle (*li*) is the same but their *qi* are different. To say that their *qi* are different does not mean that they are two different kinds of *qi*. There is only the difference between purity and turbidness" (1103). From here, we can see that the *qi* that all human beings are endowed with is pure *qi*. He does not mention that different people are endowed with *qi* of different degrees of purity (people may be endowed with different amounts of such pure *qi* but this will only result in the difference in their intellectual, artistic, technical, physical, and other non-moral abilities but not in their moral qualities).⁸ Only because of

⁸ Ivanhoe disagrees with me on this interpretation. In his view, "what he [Wang] is saying is that the endowment of humans is more pure and the endowment of other animals is more turbid. The turbidity of the latter prevents

this can Wang claim that *qi* is compatible with human nature which is good, since “the good human nature can only be seen from *qi*. Without *qi*, good human nature cannot be seen. Feelings of commiseration, shame and dislike, deference and compliance, and right and wrong are all *qi*”; commenting on the Cheng Brothers’ famous statement that “to talk about human nature without talking about *qi* is not complete, and to talk about *qi* without talking about human nature is not illuminating,” Wang makes a more radical claim: “human nature is *qi*, and *qi* is human nature. Originally there is no distinction between human nature and *qi*” (63-4). Obviously, Wang cannot make such an identification between human nature and *qi* if human *qi* has certain degree of coarseness and turbidity, as Ivanhoe argues. If so, how does Wang explain the origin of evil in terms of *qi*? Chen Lai, for example, argues that such a conception of *qi* can only explain the manifestation of the four beginnings, but “there are also various *qi* that are not good,” which Wang does not analyze. Thus, Chen thinks that Wang’s conception of heart/mind with moral knowledge as its fundamental excludes the possibility of the arising of selfish desires and thus concludes that Wang’s explanation of the problem of evil is unsatisfactory (Chen: 90).

It is possible that Wang indeed does not have a satisfactory explanation of the evil. However, instead of giving up on this issue too quickly, I would like to present an experimental interpretation. My hunch is that Wang talks about two kinds of *qi* in relation to human beings. One is the *qi* constitutive of human beings, which makes it possible for human beings to appear as beings with shape (*you xing*). All human beings are endowed with this same *qi* that makes human beings different from animals and other beings. Wang apparently refers to this *qi* when he claims that human *qi* is identical to human nature. We may call *qi* in this sense the host

them from getting a glimpse of all the *li* as humans can. This prevents animals in principle from understanding the Dao. (Though they can and do manifest aspects of it)... Contrary to what some people think, differences in degree can constitute differences in kind. We talk this way all the time. For example: John is very healthy, John is not 100% healthy, John is sick, very sick, terminally ill, dead... In the same way extremely pure *qi* is something different than really turbid *qi*, In the same way that we think of pure or potable water as something different than polluted water” (private communication). This seems to be also a plausible interpretation. The problem with this interpretation is that sometimes Wang, like many other Confucians both before and after him, thinks that “people who have violated the heavenly principle are no different from beasts. If they can steal a life of hundreds or a thousand of years in this world, they simply live such a long life of beasts” (108; see also 786-787). However, in Wang’s view, even such people can still become sages as long as they make efforts. However a dead person cannot be brought back to life and an animal cannot be made into a human being, to say nothing of a moral person, whatever efforts are exerted. This, it seems to me, shows that, for Wang, the difference between human beings and other animals is not a difference of degree but of kind, the kind not resulted from accumulated degree.

qi (*zhu qi*). This *qi* obviously cannot explain the origin of evil. Being completely pure, it is what distinguishes human beings from other beings and unites all human beings together. However, it seems that Wang has in mind a different *qi* that is also related to human life, which he calls alien or guest *qi* (*wai qi*), a term that frequently appears in his (as well as in his student Wang Longxi's) writings and conversations. In Wang's view, it is precisely this alien or guest *qi* that accounts for the origin of evil. For example, he says: "selfish desires and alien *qi* are what obscure the human nature" (71); "since we now all know the key to learning, we do not need to worry where to get started. However, burdened by the alien *qi*, we are not willing to reach our innate moral knowledge" (428); when one of his students says that it is the alien *qi* that interrupts the original joy (*le*) enjoyed by human beings together with other beings, he replies with a resounding "yes" (436).

While Wang has never told us clearly what this alien or guest *qi* is, we can be sure that it is not the *qi* that he identifies with human nature. It is also clear that it is this alien or guest *qi* that is responsible for human evil. In order to understand what this alien or guest *qi* is and how it causes us to have selfish desires that obscure our innate moral knowledge, it is helpful to see how this word is used by some neo-Confucians before him. To my knowledge, this word has been occasionally used by Zhang Zai and Zhu Xi. However, more helpful clues to its meanings can be found in the Cheng Brothers. Cheng Hao uses the same word, alien *qi* (*keqi*), saying that "the principle of rightness (*yili*) and the alien *qi* conquer each other frequently. The distinction between superior persons (*junzi*) and inferior persons (*xiaoren*) is made according to the degree to which one is conquered by another. The more the principle of rightness gains the upper hand...the more the alien *qi* is extinguished" (Cheng & Cheng: 4-5). This passage reinforces our idea that alien *qi* is responsible for human evils, but it still does not tell us what this alien *qi* is. This is made clearer by his younger brother Cheng Yi, who uses a different but similar term, external *qi* (*wai qi*), and clearly distinguishes it from the internal or host *qi* constitutive of human being, which he regards as the *qi* of genuine origin (*zhenyuan zhi qi*). In his view, this *qi* of genuine origin

is not mixed with external *qi* (*wai qi*), but absorbs nourishment from the external *qi*. Let us take the fish in water as an analogy. The life of fish is not caused by water. However, only by absorbing nourishment from water can fish live. Human beings live between heaven and earth in the same way as fish live in water. The nourishment humans receive from drinking and food is all from external *qi*. (170)

This passage is extremely helpful. It not only clearly distinguishes between the two *qi*: (1) the *qi* that makes it possible for a human being to

appear as something with shape (*you xing*), the *qi* of genuine origin, and (2) the *qi* in which human beings live, the external *qi*. Moreover, it explains the relationship between these two kinds of *qi*: the *qi* of genuine origin is not mixed with the external *qi* (so they are separate) but depends upon the latter for nourishment. Thus, if the external *qi* is not turbid, it may contaminate the internal *qi* by causing it to have inappropriate material desires (*wu yu*). There is no clear textual evidence to show whether Wang uses the term alien *qi* in the same sense and whether he means the same thing when he says that such alien *qi* causes people to have inappropriate desires, which obscure the moral knowledge innate in their heart/mind. However, it is at least not entirely unreasonable to assume that Wang may indeed hold a similar view, given his familiarity with and influence by the writings of the Cheng brothers. Moreover, it is at least also a plausible way to make Wang's various discussions of *qi* consistent with each other and with his more general philosophical views. For example, it is in this context that we can understand why he often uses the term alien *qi* and material desires together (436) and sometimes even regard them as essentially one thing (70). His discussion of Mencius' "night *qi* (*yeqi*)" can also be better understood in this context. In the famous passage where Mencius makes the analogy between people letting go of their true heart/mind with mountains letting go of their trees, he develops his idea of night *qi*:

If, in spite of the respite people get in the day and in the night and of the effect of the morning air on him, scarcely any of their likes and dislikes resemble those of other people, it is because what they do in the course of the day once again dissipates what they have gained. If this dissipation happens repeatedly, then the influence of the night air will no longer be able to preserve what was originally in them, and when that happens, they are not far removed from an animal. (*Mencius* 6a8)

What is so good about the night *qi*? Wang points out, "the moral knowledge arising in the night *qi* is its original state, because it is not mixed with material desires" (111); and there is no mixture of material desires in the night *qi*, because people [asleep in the night] "see nothing, hear nothing, think nothing, and do nothing" (120). However, in his view, "Mencius' talk about 'night *qi*' is only intended for those whose good heart/mind has already been lost, to point out where this good heart/mind arises so that it can be cultivated and nourished from this point on. Today we have already clearly known about the moral knowledge and so we only need to always exert efforts to reach it. There is no reason to talk about night *qi*" (69; see also 19). The point is that, while it is good to live in the night *qi*, as we will then not be contaminated by the alien *qi*, we cannot always live in the night *qi*, i.e., always sleep, so that we see, hear, think, and do nothing. After all, what is important is not to live in separation from the alien *qi*, but to get

nourishment from and yet not be controlled by it. Living in complete separation from the alien *qi*, of course we will not have any selfish desires, but then we will have nowhere to get nourishment.

How is this possible? In Wang's view, the most important thing is to take hold of the will (*chi zhi*): "Bad thoughts come from popular *qi* (*xiqi*), while good thoughts come from the original nature. The original nature is conquered by the popular *qi* because the will is not established" (24). Thus, commenting on Mencius' view of the relationship between *qi* and will (*Mencius* 2a2), he says that the *qi* is cultivated by taking hold of the will, because (as Mencius also says) the will should be the commander over *qi* (24). The importance of establishing the will is most emphatically expressed in the following passage:

The will is the commander over *qi*, the life of a person, the root of a tree, and the source of water. When the source is blocked, water will cease to flow; when the root is not planted, a tree will wither; when the life is not continued, a person will die, and when the will is not established, the *qi* will make one lose consciousness.... Therefore, as soon as a slight selfish desire arises, immediately blame the non-establishment of the will and then the private desires will recede; as soon as a slight alien *qi* is heard moving, immediately blame the non-establishment of the will and the alien *qi* will be gone. When lazy, blame the will and one will not be lazy; when negligent, blame the will and one will not be negligent; when agitated, blame the will and one will not be agitated; when envious, blame the will and one will not be envious; when angry, blame the will and one will not be angry; when greedy, blame the will and one will not be greedy; when arrogant, blame the will and one will not be arrogant; when stingy, blame the will and one will not be stingy. (891)

IS WANG'S NOTION OF THE INNATE MORAL KNOWLEDGE TENABLE?

A contemporary reader is unlikely to be easily convinced of Wang's view of the innate moral knowledge and would perhaps also regard his theory of *qi* as something merely *ad hoc*. In the West, John Locke, who devotes the whole of Book I of his *An Essay Concerning the Human Understanding* to this matter, has made perhaps the most devastating attack on the idea of innate knowledge. It is therefore interesting and important to see whether Wang can withstand this attack. In Locke's view, the strongest support for the theory of innate knowledge is that such knowledge is universally held. As we have seen, it seems to be also the reason for Wang to regard moral knowledge as innate, for he thinks that all people naturally

have filial piety when seeing their fathers, brotherly love when seeing their elder brothers, and commiseration when seeing an infant about to fall into a well. In Locke's view, however, even if universal consensus indeed exists on such matters, it cannot be directly counted as a proof for their being innate, "if there can be any other way shown, how men may come to that universal agreement in the things they do consent in, which I presume may be done" (Locke: I. II. 3).

Yet, Locke's main effort is to argue that no such consensus exists. While he attacks a much broader theory of innate knowledge, he also uses a whole chapter (Locke: I. III) to argue against the innate moral knowledge, which is the concern of this article. Here, Locke argues that there is no universal consensus on moral matters by citing such immoral and indeed cruel things as people leaving their children in the fields to perish by want or wild beasts, people killing their parents reaching a certain age, people carrying the sick out and laying them on the earth before they are dead, people burying children alive or even eating their children, etc., without any remorse (see Locke: I. III. 9). In this aspect, it seems that Wang's theory of innate moral knowledge does not fare much better. As Wu Zhen points out, "some serious theoretical defects of Mencius' argument for the goodness of human nature from children's natural feeling of love and respect are fully exposed in Wang Yangming's conception of ready-made (*xiancheng*) moral knowledge" (Wu: 16). Wu further cites Zhan Ruoshui, a contemporary of Wang, that, in contrast to people loving their parents, respecting their elder brothers, and showing commiseration to people, there are also people who beat and yell at their parents, who twist their elder brothers' arms in order to grab their food to eat (originally in *Mencius* 6b1), and who, loving their own parents and respecting their own elder brothers, kill others' parents and elder brothers (see *ibid.*).

Advocates of innate knowledge, of course, are aware of such counter-examples. In their view, this does not show that there is no such innate knowledge. In the west, Plato argues that knowledge (in contrast to opinions) is indeed innate and is only forgotten when born. Thus, all people "know and assent to them, when they come to the use of reason" (Locke: I. II. 6). At least in appearance, Wang takes the same strategy. He argues that moral knowledge is indeed innate, but it is obscured by selfish desires as soon as one is born. Thus, there is a need for people to regain the sight of the innate moral knowledge (*zhi liangzhi*) by removing such selfish desires. In Locke's view, however, such a defense is defective. One of its many problems is that "by this they [innate ideas] are not distinguishable from other knowable truths" (Locke: I. II. 13). In other words, if so, we can claim that any knowledge, even such knowledge as "it rained yesterday," is innate by saying that this knowledge is originally in our mind but is later forgotten until yesterday we discovered it. As we have seen, Wang intends to make a clear distinction between moral knowledge which he claims is innate and non-moral knowledge which he believes is learned. Now from the Lockean point of view, since Wang thinks that people have to clear up their private

desires to see their originally innate moral knowledge, just as we have to clear up the clouds to see the sun, why cannot we make a similar claim about the non-moral knowledge (perhaps by removing a different type of cloud)?

Does this mean that Wang's idea of innate moral knowledge is thus entirely untenable? It would indeed be should Wang intend to provide an empirical description of human heart/mind. As we have seen, as a psychological description, such a theory may be disconfirmed.⁹ However, it is my contention that Wang's theory of innate moral knowledge is not an empirical theory. It is rather a metaphysical theory, as it is about the original state (*benti*) of the heart/mind. Moreover, it is not a metaphysical theory that tries to tell us what human heart/mind objectively is. The heart/mind described in such metaphysics, as a metaphysical reality, is something, in Richard Rorty's word, "we can never know ourselves to have reached, and which we can never know we are closing in on rather than veering off from" (Rorty 1996: 75). It is rather to suggest to us what our heart/mind originally should be. In other words, what we have in Wang is primarily a normative, rather than descriptive, metaphysics. It expresses Wang's confidence in human perfectibility, something similar to what Richard Rorty calls "a faith in the future possibilities of moral humans, a faith which is hard to distinguish from love for, and hope for, the human community" (Rorty 1999: 160). One cannot have such a faith in human perfectibility unless one also believes in the original goodness of human heart/mind. On this point, David Nivison has made an interesting analogy. According to Nivison, Plato's theory of recollection is supposed to solve this puzzle in epistemology: to learn I must be aware of what it is I am to learn, and this implies that I already know it. According to Nivison, Wang's goodness of human heart/mind is supposed to solve a parallel puzzle in moral education: "Confucius' problem as a moral teacher is, in effect, this: the crucial element in being moral is, obviously, *wanting* to be. How can one teach a person to be moral? For to respond to the lesson the student must see it as a lesson to be learned; and if the student sees that, he or she is already moral" (Nivison: 237).

⁹ Even so, there is still something in Wang that is not squarely met by Locke's criticism. In Wang's view, while one's selfish desire can indeed obscure the innate heart/mind, it can never do so completely, just as the cloud can never fully block the sunshine (however dark a cloudy day is, there is still some sunshine going through clouds). Thus, in one place, Wang points out that "the thieves also know that they ought not to steal. If you call them thieves, they will blush" (98). In another place, he says: "therefore, although inferior persons (*xiaoren*) do immoral things everywhere, when seeing superior persons, they will naturally cover their immoral things and show the moral things. This shows that the moral knowledge has something of which one cannot be ignorant" (1063).

For this reason, Wang often talks about belief or faith (*xin*) in the innate moral knowledge. Superior persons “do not worry about other people lacking faith in them; they just always have faith in the innate moral knowledge” (76). In his view, this is also the central message of Confucian classics: “if you have faith in the innate moral knowledge, and make efforts only according to this innate moral knowledge, then however many classics and canons there are, they all conform to it, and all heresies and incorrect doctrines will be seen through” (73). A question might be raised as to how one can believe or have faith in something whose existence is not first established. To this, I believe the best answer is provided by Kant. In epistemology or theoretical reason, our belief in the existence of an object is determined by our prior experience of the object. However, in morality or practical reason, the situation is different:

By a concept of an object of practical reason I understand the idea of an object as an effect possible through freedom. To be an object of practical knowledge as such signifies, therefore, only the relation of the will to the action whereby it or its opposite is brought into being. To decide whether or not something is an object of the pure practical reason is only to discern the possibility or impossibility of willing the action by which a certain object would be made real, provided we had the ability to bring it about. (Kant: 59)

Without going into the complicated details of Kant's ethics, we only need to pay attention to one thing that is immediately relevant to our current discussion: the object of moral belief is not something that exists prior to our action according to this belief; it is rather the effect of such an action. So the truth of our faith in the innate moral knowledge cannot be determined independent of or antecedent to our action according to this belief. Now, in Wang's view, if we have the belief or faith in the innate moral knowledge and act according to this faith, we will see this faith is true, for one will be a moral person. Wang thus relates his own experience: “Now I have faith in the innate moral knowledge of what is truly right and what is truly wrong. Thus I can act naturally without any need to cover up or conceal anything” (120). In his view, this should be true of everyone: “if one has faith in the innate moral knowledge and is not disturbed by *qi*, one can always be a person in the world of Fuxi or even better” (*ibid.*).

It is important to point out that, while Wang believes in the human moral perfectibility: everyone can become a sage, he does allow the possibility of people born with different non-moral capabilities (*cai*). The former is so because all human beings are endowed with the same pure *qi*, which is the distinguishing mark of being human. The latter is so because different people are endowed with different amounts of the equally pure *qi*. This point, that all humans are endowed with the same quality of *qi* which

makes it possible for everyone to become a sage, and yet with different amounts of *qi*, which explains different abilities people have, is made most vividly clear in the famous passage with the analogy of gold. When asked why Boyi and Yiyin are also called sages when their abilities and strengths are far below those of Confucius, Wang says:

Sages are sages because their heart/minds are in complete accord with the heavenly principle, not mixed with any human desires. This is just as pure gold is pure gold because of its perfection in quality, not mixed with any copper or lead. People who have reached the state of being in complete accord with the heavenly principle are sages, just as gold that has become perfect in quality is pure gold. However, sages are different from each other in terms of ability and strength, just as different pieces of pure gold are also different from each other in terms of the weight.... While different in terms of ability and strength, people are all sages as long as the heavenly principle in them is pure, just as different pieces of gold are pure gold as long as they are all perfect in quality, even though they weigh differently.... To learn to become sages, learners only need to get rid of human desires and preserve the heavenly principle, just as to become pure gold, the gold only need to be purified to be perfect in its quality.... Later generations do not understand that the fundamental to become sage is to be in complete accord with the heavenly principle. Instead they seek to become sages by merely focusing upon sages' abilities and strengths.... [As a result] the more knowledge they acquire, the more human desires they produce; the more abilities they obtain, the more obscured the heavenly principle is. This is just like a man, seeing someone with a piece of pure gold of 10,000 pounds, does not make efforts to refine his own gold so that its quality can match that of the other person's. Instead he foolishly pays attention to the weight so that he will also have 10,000 pounds. For that purpose, he mixes it with pewter, lead, copper, and iron. The heavier it becomes, the lower the degree of purity it has. At the end, the gold is nowhere to be seen. (62; see also 32)

In this passage, Wang makes it clear that, while everyone is born with the innate moral knowledge, and therefore can equally be a sage, different people are born with different degrees of physical, intellectual, artistic, and other non-moral abilities. In appearance, Wang seems to say that some people have higher abilities than others. Wang's emphasis is, however, clear: whatever abilities they have, all sages are morally equal.

We should not rank those with higher abilities above those who have lower abilities. A sage who has higher intellectual, physical, and other non-moral abilities can of course accomplish more things than a sage who has lower such abilities, but we cannot say that the former is a more moral person than the latter.¹⁰ Their moral quality is exactly same. To use John Rawls' term, whether a person is born with high or low intellectual, physical, artistic, etc., abilities is entirely a "natural accident" (Rawls: 64). I think Wang will even agree with Rawls that the natural talents of those lucky people should be regarded as "public asset" to be shared by those unlucky people, just as the unfortunateness of those unlucky people should be regarded as something public to be shared by those lucky people (see Rawls: 87).

In addition to the above-discussed different degrees of non-moral abilities people are born with, Wang also acknowledges the possibility of different people born with different kinds of non-moral qualities. For example some people tend to be fast-acting (*xing ji*), while some tend to be slow in action (*xing huan*); some tend to be firm (*xing gang*), while some tend to be soft-hearted (*xing rou*); some tend to be generous (*she*), while some tend to be thrifty (*jian*), etc. (see 894). While Wang does not think that such inborn temperaments cannot or should not be changed in terms of their partiality (*pian*), just as he does not think that one cannot learn to increase the above-mentioned non-moral abilities, he does think that there is a limit to such change of temperament (a person born with the temperament of being fast-acting can hardly be changed into a person with the temperament of slow-acting), just as there is a limit to the increase of the non-moral abilities (not everyone can obtain Einstein's intellectual abilities, however hard one tries, although everyone can become a sage). We should instead pay attention to two things. First, make sure that no one's innate moral knowledge is obscured by selfish desires, so that whatever temperament one is born with can be used to do good things: "those who are firm, when doing good things, will have firm good (*gang shan*)... while those who are soft-hearted, when doing good things, will have soft good (*rou shan*)" (128). Second, people with different temperaments are good at different things. For example, "some are good at

¹⁰ Commenting on the above passage with the analogy of gold with sage, Ivanhoe argues that Mengzi and Confucian thinkers in general "recognized and advocated the importance of natural kinds, to them it was obvious that, among human beings, there was a natural diversity of abilities: physical, mental, artistic, and moral" (Ivanhoe: 51-52). In my view, at least in the case of Wang, the idea of natural diversity of *moral* abilities among human beings is non-existent. The different amounts of gold in the passage are meant to show that different sages have different non-moral abilities, which of course, will affect how many moral things a sage can do. However, as Qian Mu points out, "sages are judged in terms of virtue and not in terms of abilities (*cai*)" (Qian: 211).

rituals and music, some at government and education, some at agriculture” (57-58, see also 23). So, with the heart/mind not obscured, people should all work at positions they are best at. Those who employ people should only “consider whether people’s abilities are suitable to their positions, without regarding a high position as important and a low position as unimportant, or a busy job as good and leisure job as bad” ; while those who are employed, “if their abilities match their position, will work throughout their life in busy and heavy job without regarding them as toilsome and will be content in doing lowly and odd jobs without regarding them as mean” (57).

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In concluding this article, instead of summarizing what I have argued above, I would like to make two further points essential to Wang’s idea of the innate moral knowledge that I have not been able to discuss so far. The first is his idea of inner experience (*tiren*) with the innate moral knowledge in our attempt to regain the sight of it (*zhi liangzhi*) after it is obscured by selfish desires. So to regain the sight of the innate moral knowledge is not an intellectual enterprise. It is rather an inner experience, a Gestalt switch, in one’s heart/mind, which “means to really get it in oneself (*zide*)” (461). The second is his idea of joy in acting according to one’s moral knowledge. We have briefly mentioned that, for Wang, whoever has the moral knowledge will never fail to act in accordance with such knowledge. However, instead of urging people, as Kant does, to overcome their natural inclinations in performing such moral actions, Wang argues that a truly moral person will take delight in doing moral things and hating evil things as one does in “loving the beautiful colors and hating the bad odors” (6, citing the *Great Learning*). Of course, to go to any further detail on these two topics will be tasks of two separate articles.

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CHINESE GLOSSARY

benti 本體

cai 才

Chen Lai 陳來

Cheng Hao 程顥

Cheng Yi 程頤
 chi zhi 持志
Cong Lu Xiangshan dao Liu Jishan 從陸象山到劉戡山
 dexing zhi zhi 德性之知
Er Cheng Ji 二程集
 Fang Keli 方克立
 gang shan 剛善
 Hou Wailu 侯外蘆
 jian 儉
 junzi 君子
 keqi 客氣
 Lao Siguang 勞思光
 le 樂
 li 理
 liang 良
 liangneng 良能
 liangzhi 良知
Lixue de Yanbian 理學的演變
 Mei Peiyuan 蒙培元
 Mou Zongsan 牟宗三
 pian 偏
 qi 氣
 qizhi 氣質
 rou shan 柔善
 shan 善
 she 奢
 shen 神
Songming Lixue Shi: Xia 宋明理學史：下
 tiren 體認
 Tang Junyi 唐君毅
 tianli 天理
 tounao 頭腦
 waiqi 外氣
 Wang Longxi 王龍溪
 Wang Yangming 王陽明
Wang Yangming Quanji 王陽明全集
 wenjian zhi zhi 聞見之知
 wu yu 物欲
 Wu Zhen 吳震
 xiaoren 小人
 xiancheng 現成/見成

xin 信

Xinbian Zhongguo Zhexueshi: San Shang 新編中國哲學史：三上

xing 性

xinggang 性剛

xingrou 性柔

xiqi 習氣

Yangming Houxue Yanjiu 陽明後學研究

ye qi 夜氣

yili 義理

Youwu Zhijian 有無之間

you xing 有形

yufu yufu 愚夫愚婦

Zhan Ruoshui 湛若水

Zhang Zai 張載

zhenyuan zhi qi 真元之氣

zhi 知

zhi liangzhi 致良知

zhishi 知識

Zhongguo Zhexueshi Shang de Zhixing Guan 中國哲學史上的知行觀

Zhongguo Zhexue Yuanlun: Yuanjian Pian 中國哲學原論：原教篇

Zhongguo Zhexue Yuanlun: Daolun Pian 中國哲學原論：導論篇

zhu qi 主氣

Zhu Xi 朱熹

zide 自得

Chapter IX

On Mou Zongsan's Idealist Confucianism

Wing-cheuk Chan

In contemporary Neo-Confucianism Mou Zongsan (1909-1995) has been identified as a leading figure. His idealism became a paradigm in the modern development of Confucianism. Historically, such an idealist trend claims to succeed Mencius, Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming. What is innovative in Mou Zongsan's contribution is the employment of a Kantian theoretical framework. In terms of the Kantian transcendental distinction of things-in-themselves and phenomena, he develops a Confucian moral metaphysics. In reality, this results from his hermeneutical application of the *tathagata-garbha* system of the *Awakening of Faith*. In other words, Mou Zongsan's adherence to this Buddhist monist doctrine of mind enables him to transform Kant's transcendental philosophy. As a result, it gives rise to a new form of Confucian idealism which centers on the notion of pure moral mind. In particular, Mou Zongsan's deontology and *Richtungsethik* grants a primacy to the autonomous will. In justifying his idealism, Mou Zongsan criticizes Zhu Xi's realism.¹

This paper aims to show how Mou Zongsan's Confucian position results from his hermeneutical application of the *Awakening of Faith* in transforming Kant's transcendental philosophy. Reflectively, two observations will be made on Mou Zongsan's Confucian idealism. First, it will pinpoint some essential affinities between Mou Zongsan's and Fichte's subjective idealism. Second, after highlighting Mou Zongsan's critique of the Buddhist distinctive teachings, it will point out that there is a conflict between his idealist Confucianism and his praise for the Buddhist perfect teachings. As a result, Mou Zongsan has to face a dilemma. His way out, however, seems to repeat the position of the External School in Tiantai Buddhism.

I.

The origination of Mou Zongsan's idealist Confucianism can be illustrated in a double manner. Negatively speaking, it aims to radicalize Kant's transcendental philosophy. Positively speaking, it represents a reconstruction of Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming's School of Mind in Sung-Ming Neo-Confucianism. According to Mou Zongsan, Kant's introduction of the transcendental distinction between things-in-themselves and phenomena signifies a ground-breaking insight. Kant himself

¹ Cf.: Mou Zongsan, *Xin ti yu xing ti (The Mind-Substance and the Nature-Substance)* (Taipei: Zhengzhong, 1968), Vol. 1, p. 105ff.

nonetheless fails to appropriately articulate such an important insight. This is because Kant assigns intellectual intuition only to God. As a consequence, for human beings things-in-themselves remain transcendent. But insofar as human beings, with the sensible intuition, can never evidently grasp things-in-themselves, the Kantian transcendental distinction lacks a solid justification. This indicates that there is an *aporia* in Kant's philosophy. In short, a major cause of such a limitation of Kant's philosophy lies in his shaky doctrine of morality.² When addressing free will, Kant can only conceive of it as a fact of reason. He only identifies free will as a postulate for the possibility of morality. Accordingly, free will can never become an intuitive presentation for human beings. This is not only because free will is beyond the reach of sensible intuition, but also because intellectual intuition escapes human beings. In the face of such an *aporia* in Kant's approach, Mou Zongsan sees the granting of intellectual intuition to human beings as the only way out. Such a bold move has a double consequence. First, it would make possible an intuitive presentation of free will. Second, it would enable human beings to evidently grasp things-in-themselves. While the first is essential for a complete account of the possibility of morality, the second points to an evidential justification of the Kantian transcendental distinction. If the first is primarily a concern in ethics, the second is related to the idea of moral metaphysics. In short, for Mou Zongsan, our moral consciousness represents a free, infinite mind, and hence should be promoted as intellectual intuition. As a moral subject, the free, infinite mind founds the possibility of morality. As a metaphysical principle, the free, infinite mind creates things-in-themselves. Ultimately speaking, apart from assigning intellectual intuition to human beings, neither metaphysics nor ethics can become genuinely possible.

From the perspective of Western culture, Kant's limitation of intellectual intuition to God is well-justified in views of Christianity. For the latter, it is only God that is infinite, and the gap between God and human beings can never be overcome. In complying with the creativity of intellectual intuition, it is logical for Kant to grant it to God -- the creator of the world. Correlatively, the lack of intellectual intuition in human beings should be understood as a sign of their finitude. At this juncture, Mou Zongsan discovers an essential difference between Western and Chinese philosophy. He claims that according to the major schools of Chinese philosophy (Confucianism, Daoism and Buddhism), in spite of their finitude, human beings can become infinite. That is, there is no unbridgeable gap between the finite and the infinite mind for the major trends of Chinese philosophy. In particular, the Confucian moral consciousness signifies an infinite mind. Historically, it is in the hands of philosophers of the School of Mind, such as Lu Xiangshan and Wang Yangming, that such a conception of moral consciousness as an infinite

² Mou Zongsan, *Xian xiang yu wu zi shen (Phenomena and Thing-in-itself)* (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1984), p. 6ff.

mind is properly developed. In identifying our original mind as principle (*li*) and nature (*xing*), the School of Mind is able to simultaneously expound the moral and ontological significance of our infinite original mind. Particularly, the School of Mind introduces the following two major theses:

(1) "The universe is my mind, and my mind is the universe" (Lu Xiangshan);

(2) "In me is *Qian* (Heaven), in me *Kun* (Earth). I need not seek elsewhere -- The thousand sages pass as shadows, *Liang zhi* alone is my guide" (Wang Yangming).³

For this school, it is the infinite original mind which grounds the possibility of morality as well as the cosmos. Confucians basically understand our cosmos as moral. Accordingly, moral creativity is at the same time cosmological creativity. In reality, in attributing intellectual intuition to human beings, Mou Dongsan replaces God with an infinite moral consciousness.

Although Mou Zongsan's idealism is Confucian, his theoretical framework is taken from the *Awakening of Faith*. As is well-known, this popular but important text in Chinese Buddhism is a systematic articulation of the doctrine of the *tathagata-garbha*.

Let us start with an exposition of Mou Zongsan's understanding of the *Awakening of Faith* and then show how he reinterprets its doctrine in generating his own idealist Confucianism. In an appendix of the *Xin ti yu xing ti (The Mind-Substance and the Nature-Substance)*, Mou Zongsan points out:

From the very beginning, the *Awakening of Faith* tries to explicate the fundamental position of Mahayana Buddhism in terms of the framework of 'one mind and its two aspects': 'The revelation of the true meaning (of the principle of Mahayana can be achieved) by unfolding the doctrine that the principle of One Mind has two aspects. One is the aspect of Mind in terms of the Absolute (*tathata*, Suchness), and the other is the aspect of Mind in terms of phenomena (*samsara*, birth and death). Each of these two aspects embraces all states of existence. Why? Because these two aspects are mutually inclusive.'⁴

³ Wing-tsit Chan, *A Source Book in Chinese Philosophy* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1963), p. 579; Julia Ching, *To Acquire Wisdom: The Way of Wang Yang-ming* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1976), p. 246.

⁴ Mou Zongsan, *Xin ti yu xing ti (The Mind-Substance and the Nature-Substance)*, Vol. 1, p. 580. For the English translation of the *Awakening of Faith* we follow: Asvaghosha, *The Awakening of Faith*, trans. Yoshito

He maintains that the term “One Mind” refers exclusively to the transcendental true mind and not to the *alayavijnana*. For the latter is only a mind in the sense of an empirical, psychological mind.

In the *Awakening of Faith* it is further written:

The Mind in terms of the Absolute is the one World of Reality (*dharmadhatu*) and the essence of all phases of existence in their totality. That which is called ‘the essential nature of the Mind’ is unborn and is imperishable.⁵

According to Mou Zongsan, the concept of “the Mind in terms of the Absolute” indicates that the mind is absolutely pure. The *tatha* is therefore something more than the *sunyata* of the five *skandhas* (aggregates). It represents the unity of the true mind and the *tatha* as the absolute principle. With the rise of the system of the *tathagata-garbha*, the *tatha* as the absolute principle is identified as our mind. Our mind is then essentially the mind of the *tatha*. That is, the Suchness is the mind of Suchness. More importantly, such a transcendental true mind is identified as the ground and the origin of all *dharmas*. In this sense, the *Awakening of Faith* declares: “The Mind in terms of the Absolute is the one World of Reality (*dharmadhatu*) and the essence of all phases of existence in their totality.”

Further, in the *Awakening of Faith* it is written:

It is only through illusions that all things come to be differentiated. If one is freed from illusions, then there will be no appearances (*lakṣana*) of objects [regarded as absolutely independent existences]; therefore, all things from the beginning transcend all forms of verbalization, description, and conceptualization and are, in the final analysis, undifferentiated, free from alternation, and indestructible. They are only of the One Mind; hence the name Suchness.”⁶ For Mou Zongsan, the concept of “only of the One Mind” means that there is only one single transcendental true mind. On the one hand, the mind of the *tatha*, or the true mind, represents reality. On the other hand, the appearance and conceptualization of all things (*dharmas*) are caused by illusions. Illusions must therefore be differentiated from the true mind itself. From the Buddhist standpoint, illusions signify the wind of ignorance, or non-enlightenment. This indicates that the

Hakeda (New York: Columbia University Press, 1967), p. 31.

⁵ *The Awakening of Faith*, p. 32.

⁶ *Ibid*, p. 33.

cause of the rise of appearance is empirical and psychological. Appearance that is caused by illusions is essentially unreal. When one overcomes illusions and return to the true mind, then one can discover that all *dharmas* are essentially *sunya*. On the other hand, as reality, the true mind is absolute and imperishable.⁷

All in all, according to the system of the *tathagata-garbha*, “the Mind in terms of the Absolute” is at the same time the truth (*tatha*) and the mind. As a consequence, the true mind is something more than *sunyata* as an objective principle. While Madhyamika stick to the thesis that whatever is dependently co-arisen is *sunya*, the *Awakening of Faithful* introduces the concept of the true mind. Besides the concept of emptiness, the doctrine of the *tathagata-garbha* also speaks of non-emptiness. On the one hand, with the concept of emptiness, it aims to eliminate all illusions in order to manifest the reality of the mind. On the other hand, with the concept of non-emptiness, it urges us to return to the true mind. For the doctrine of the *tathagata-garbha*, the true mind has innumerable virtues and hence is non-empty.

Although there is, in reality, only one true mind, “since all unenlightened men discriminate with their deluded minds from moment to moment, they are alienated [from Suchness]; hence, the definition ‘empty;’ but once they are free from their deluded minds, they will find that there is nothing to be negated.”⁸ According to Mou Zongsan, this shows that all the distinctions caused by illusions do not properly correspond to the true mind. Therefore, these distinctions must be differentiated from the true mind. When all distinctions caused by illusions are overcome, then it is empty (*sunyata*). But the elimination of these distinctions at the same time gives rise to the achievement of the positive virtues of the true mind. In this way, what is truly non-empty is manifest.⁹ That is the reason why the *Awakening of Faith* also characterizes the true mind as “eternal, permanent, immutable, pure, and self-sufficient.”¹⁰ As Mou Zongsan points out, such a quasi-substantialist formulation of the true mind is necessary, for the system of the *tathagata-garbha* not only maintains the pure essence of the true mind, but also grants innumerable undefiled and excellent qualities to its very essence. In order to differentiate this system from Brahmanism, Mou Zongsan stresses that such an “endowment” of innumerable undefiled and excellent qualities by the true mind “must be understood to be ‘potential,’ for it refers to Buddha-nature as the ground [of attaining Enlightenment].”¹¹ That is to say, it is from the standpoint of

⁷ *Xin ti yu xing ti*, Vol. 1 p. 581.

⁸ *The Awakening of Faith*, p. 35.

⁹ *Xin ti yu xing ti*, Vol. 1, p. 582.

¹⁰ *The Awakening of Faith*, pp. 35-36.

¹¹ *Xin ti yu xing ti*, Vol.1, p. 582.

Buddha-nature as a fruit that one can say that the true mind is endowed with these qualities. Apart from practice, none of them can be achieved.

At this juncture, Mou Zongsan also notes that there is an essential distinction between the system of the *tathagata-garbha* and Yogacara Buddhism. First, the true mind is more than “the practical Buddha-nature” in the sense of Yogacara Buddhism. For the true mind guarantees the necessity of attaining Buddhahood for all sentient beings. Second, in the case of Yogacara Buddhism, the achievement of excellent qualities is merely out of contingency. In contrast, with the system of the *tathagata-garbha*, one can speak of an original endowment of excellent qualities -- in the sense of potentiality.

After the characterization of the essential nature of the true mind the *Awakening of Faith* gives the following description of the defiled phenomena (*samsara*):

The Mind as phenomena (*samsara*) is grounded on the *tathagata-garbha*. What is called the Storehouse Consciousness is that in which ‘neither birth nor death (*nirvana*)’ diffuses harmoniously with ‘birth and death (*samsara*),’ and yet in which both are neither identical nor different.¹²

Mou Zongsan explains that it is because of illusions that the true mind becomes the mind of phenomena. He further illustrates this point in terms of the water-ripples metaphor:

Although the mind of phenomena (*samsara*) must be grounded in the true mind, its direct cause is ignorance, just like water in a pool was stirred by the wind. While the absolutely true mind is like water in tranquility, ignorance is like the wind. When the wind blows, it gives rise to ripples. This signifies the rise of the mind as phenomena. Clearly, the ripples are inseparable from water. That is to say, though their rise must be grounded in water, the direct cause of their rise is the blowing of the wind. Similarly, the rise of the mind of phenomena (*samsara*) is inseparable from the true mind.¹³

As a result, as far as the rise of the aspect of *samsara* is concerned, it is necessary for us to make a distinction between its “cause” and its “ground.” But Mou Zongsan warns us not to construe the relation of the true mind and phenomena in terms of production. In reality, according to the system of the *tathagata-garbha*, it is the *alayavijnana* which produces

¹²*The Awakening of Faith*, p. 36.

¹³*Xin ti yu xing ti*, Vol. 1, p. 582.

phenomena. Certainly, since the *alayavijnana* itself is grounded in the true mind, the true mind is indirectly responsible for the rise of phenomena. On the other hand, to the extent that the system of the *tathagata-garbha* does not identify the true mind as the cause or producer of the world, it must be differentiated from Brahmanism. Mou Zongsan stresses that in spite of the fact that the language of the *Awakening of Faith* is “substantialist,” it is not a metaphysics of substance

Meanwhile, Mou Zongsan reminds us that although the true mind is said to be covered by obstructions, there is no essential connection between them. That is to say, in itself, the true mind is never really contaminated by any obstructions. He says:

What one finds here is the fact that the rise of the defiled *alayavijnana* is founded on the true mind. But even after such a rise of the *alayavijnana*, the true mind only retreats itself into the background. Although it seems that the true mind is entirely covered by obstructions, there is no real contamination at all. ... When ignorance is extinguished and the true mind manifests itself, then the *alayavijnana* must be extinguished as well. All the ripples must become extinguished in order to return to the true mind in tranquility.¹⁴

In sum, Mou Zongsan understands the doctrine of the *tathagata-garbha* of the *Awakening of Faith* as a transcendental analytic. While the true mind is self-grounding, it is the transcendental condition of the possibility of the defiled mind and the phenomenal world. To the extent that such a doctrine does not identify the true mind as the producer of the world, it has to be differentiated from Brahmanism. Armed with this understanding of the doctrine of the *tathagata-garbha*, Mou Zongsan starts to radicalize Kant's transcendental idealism. With the identification of *prajna* as intellectual intuition, he proclaims that in contrast to Western philosophy, Buddhism enables us to develop a positive attitude towards things-in-themselves. As it is particularly shown in the system of the *tathagata-garbha*, things-in-themselves belong to the dimension of the *tatha*. The identity of the true mind and the *tatha* implies the possibility of the absolute knowledge of things-in-themselves. Epistemologically, with the help of *prajna* human beings can intuitively grasp the Suchness of things, i.e., the *tatha*. To this extent, it functions as intellectual intuition in the Kantian sense. Ontologically, the true mind makes *noumena* possible. While the mind of the *tatha* is a form of the Kantian intellectual intuition, the *tatha* is an equivalent of *noumena*. As a Confucian, Mou Zongsan now replaces the Buddhist concept of *prajna* with the notion of *Liang zhi*. Intellectual intuition in the form of *Liang zhi* is fundamentally moral in

¹⁴ Ibid.

import. More importantly, with the help of *Liang zhi*, it is possible for human beings to develop knowledge of things-in-themselves.

On the other hand, Mou Zongsan tries to account for the possibility of the knowledge of phenomena in terms of the *alayavijnana*. Since the *alayavijnana* is the cause of the phenomenal world, it can ground the possibility of a phenomenal ontology. Following Kant, Mou Zongsan further replaces the role of the *alayavijnana* with understanding (*Verstand*). But instead of seeing understanding as the cause of the phenomenal world, he identifies the categories of understanding as the conditions of the possibility of knowledge and of objects of knowledge. At this juncture, Mou Zongsan is particularly influenced by Heidegger's "ontological interpretation" of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*.¹⁵ Like the *alayavijnana*, understanding is also conceived of by Mou Zongsan as a derivative mode of the true mind. Since the phenomenal world grounds its possibility in the categories of understanding, it must be finally grounded in the true mind as well. Phenomenal ontology is accordingly founded on *noumenal* ontology. In brief, Mou Zongsan develops an idealist Confucianism in the form of a two-layer ontology.

Furthermore, instead of explaining the rise of the *alayavijnana* and hence the phenomenal world with the help of the concept of the non-enlightenment, Mou Zongsan introduces a Hegelian teleology. According to the *Awakening of Faith*, it is a sudden non-enlightenment of the true mind that results in the mind as phenomena (metaphorically, the rise of the ripples). Now for him, it is because of the self-negation of the true mind that the phenomenal world is made possible. The rise of the phenomenal world is then not due to ignorance or non-enlightenment. Originally, if one asks for the origination of the wind of ignorance, one can expect no further explanation from the system of the *tathagata-garbha*. The *Srimaladevisimhanada-sutra* thus declares: "It is very difficult to understand the fact that the true mind gives rise to defilement."¹⁶ In contrast, Mou Zongsan argues that there is a two-fold reason for the necessity of such a self-negation of the true mind. First, even a sage (who represents the true mind) needs knowledge. Second, in order to manifest its essence, it is necessary for the true mind to concretize itself as understanding.¹⁷ Such a thesis reminds us of the Christian account for God's creation of the world. For the latter, God creates the world in order to manifest Himself. Likewise, in terms of the dialectical self-negation of the true mind, he tries to account for the possibility of science and democracy. For him, the rise of science and democracy, as part of the phenomenal

¹⁵ Cf.: Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, trans. James Churchill (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1962); Mou Zongsan, *Zhi de zhi jue yu zhong guo zhe xue (Intellectual Intuition and Chinese Philosophy)* (Taipei: Xiangwu, 1971).

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 583.

¹⁷ Cf.: *Xian xiang yu wu zi shen*, pp. 122-123.

world, is *teleological* in manifesting the true mind. Accordingly, unlike the defiled mind and appearance as ripples that are subjected to elimination, science and democracy will form the excellent qualities of the true mind in the moral sense. Going beyond Buddhism, he claims that the true mind in the moral sense is the substance, while the phenomenal world (including science and democracy) is its function. According to the system of the *tathagata-garbha*, after returning to the true mind, there is only one mind and no more *alayavijnana*. This would imply the elimination of the aspect of *samsara* and hence that of the phenomenal world. By contrast, in granting an identity of the true mind and its function, Mou Zongsan is able to secure a two-layer ontology. Methodologically, he opts for a top-down approach.

Mou Zongsan's employment of the *Awakening of Faith* as a philosophical framework in developing a new Confucian idealism undeniably constitutes a major step in the development of contemporary Neo-Confucianism. This signifies a reconstruction of the School of Mind in Confucianism. Globally, this represents a synthesis of Chinese and Kantian philosophy. In particular, Mou Zongsan can now show that like the mind of the *tathagata-garbha*, the moral free will is capable of self-presentation. This might well support his claim that intellectual intuition is also attributed to human beings. To the extent that human beings can have knowledge of things-in-themselves, it is possible for him to theoretically justify the validity of the Kantian transcendental distinction.

II.

From a reflective standpoint, two observations can be made on Mou Zongsan's idealist Confucianism.

First of all, from the perspective of history of Western philosophy, Mou Zongsan's Confucian moral metaphysics is reminiscent of Fichte's subjective idealism. For both of them, human beings can become infinite. They are common in granting intellectual intuition to human beings. As a result, human beings can take the place of God. Secondly, both maintain that it is in terms of moral praxis that human beings can become an absolute ego. Human beings are said to be able to attain the status of holy will in the Kantian sense. Intellectual intuition is primarily conceived of by Mou Zongsan and Fichte to be moral in character. Finally, for both of them, the absolute ego, as a moral self-consciousness, is responsible for the creation of our cosmos. Intellectual intuition is hence characterized by them to be at the same time moral and ontological.¹⁸ But this by no means indicates that Mou Zongsan's moral metaphysics is entirely identical with Fichte's subjective idealism. The former basically differs from the latter in the

¹⁸ Cf.: Fichte, *Science of Knowledge (Wissenschaftslehre) with First and Second Introductions*, ed. and trans. Peter Heath and John Lachs (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1970).

following two regards. First, it results from a hermeneutical application of the doctrine of the *tathagata-garbha*. Second, it aims to account for the possibility of democracy and science. Nonetheless, one can discern that Mou Zongsan's Confucianism generally opts for a direction towards German Idealism.

Secondly, in the consequence of his hermeneutical application of the *Awakening of Faith* in articulating his idealist Confucianism, Mou Zongsan should identify the system of the *tathagata-garbha* as the peak in the development of Buddhism. However, contrary to our expectation, in his *Foxin yu boye (Buddha-Nature and Prajna)* he argues that the system of the *tathagata-garbha* is inferior to the Ti'en T'ai Buddhist perfect teachings.¹⁹

Historically, in contrast to Ouyang Jingwu and Lucheng's suspicion of the system of the *tathagata-garbha*, Mou Zongsan strongly defends its authentic Buddhist character. He sees the strength of the *Awakening of Faith* in introducing the doctrine of the true mind. For the true mind is not only the ontological ground of *samsara*, but also the transcendental condition of the possibility of enlightenment. While the problem of the possibility of attaining Buddhahood is not raised in Madhyamika, the solution proposed by Yogacara Buddhism remains unsatisfactory. Briefly, Yogacara Buddhism tries to account for the possibility of attaining Buddhahood in terms of the rise of pure seeds. However, due to the contingency in the rise of pure seeds, it is impossible for Yogacara Buddhism to provide a universal and necessary ground for the sentient beings to attain Buddhahood. By contrast, with the introduction of the true mind of the *tathagata-garbha*, the *Awakening of Faith* provides an innate transcendental ground for the attainment of Buddhahood. Particularly, due to its internal power of self-presentation, the true mind of the *tathagata-garbha* is able to make sudden enlightenment possible. In this way, the doctrine of the true mind of the *tathagata-garbha* affirms that every sentient being can become a Buddha.

It is worthy to note that in a new syncretism of Buddhism Mou Zongsan classifies the doctrine of the *tathagata-garbha* of the *Awakening of Faith* as "distinctive teachings." Namely, he puts the *Awakening of Faith* together with Huayan Buddhism. From a historical standpoint, such a move is innovative. As a matter of fact, Fazang, the founder of Huayan Buddhism, though producing a significant commentary on the *Awakening of Faith*, merely attributes the system of the *tathagata-garbha* to the "final teachings."²⁰ This is because, for Fazang, the system of the *tathagata-garbha* introduces the idea of the non-empty. But, in the eyes of Mou Zongsan, since both Huayan Buddhism and the doctrine of the *tathagata-garbha* are common in being founded upon the notion of the true

¹⁹ Cf.: Mou Zongsan, *Foxin yu boye (Buddha-Nature and Prajna)* (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1977), p. 561.

²⁰ This point is also noted by Mou Zongsan. Cf.: *ibid.*

mind, they must belong to the same lineage. More importantly, contrary to Fazang's self-characterization of Huayan Buddhism as perfect teachings, he attributes it -- together with the *Awakening of Faith* -- as belonging to the lineage of distinctive teachings.

According to Mou Zongsan, distinctive teachings have the following essential characteristics.

First, distinctive teachings stress the idea of "self-dwelling." As pointed out by Zhanran -- a key figure of Tiantai Buddhism in the Tang Dynasty,

This indicates that affliction and the *dharmata* are different in essence. That is, affliction and the *dharmata* dwell from each other. Each is regarded as autonomous. Apart from affliction, there is *dharmata*. To this extent, the *dharmata* is the other [of affliction]. Conversely, the *dharmata* is autonomous. Apart from the *dharmata*, there is affliction. To this extent, affliction is the other [of the *dharmata*]. Therefore, these two kinds of self-other relation are not understood in the sense of perfect teachings. At this juncture, affliction constitutes an obstruction.²¹

Mou Zongsan further explains: "To say that the notion of 'difference in essence' implies that each of the two is independent."²² Such a kind of independence does not exclude an inter-relationship between the two. When affliction covers the true mind, then affliction is independent. To this extent, affliction dwells autonomously. But, in reality, the rise of affliction must depend upon the true mind. To this extent, they are interrelated. Since the rise of affliction is not intrinsic to the true mind, there is an essential separation between the two.

Second, affliction and the *dharmata* constitute an opposition. Just like the two sides of a coin, it is only by turning over that one can reach the other. In general, according to the Buddhist classification, there are ten realms: *Buddhas*, *Bodhisattvas*, *Pratyekabuddhas* (buddhas-for-themselves), *Sravakas* (direct disciples of the Buddha), heavenly beings, *asura* (spirits), human beings, departed beings, animals (beasts), and depraved men (hells). For distinctive teachings, while the first is identical with the truth, the other nine are in the state of non-enlightenment. In order to attain Buddhahood, it is necessary for us to destroy all the other nine. Particularly, in the *Awakening of Faith*, the aspect of the mind of the *tathgataga-garbha* signifies the realm of Buddhas, while the aspect of *samsara* represents the

²¹ Zhanran, *Wei mo jie jing shu ji (An Exegesis of the Vimalakirti Sutra)*, *Manzizokyo*, Vol. 28, p. 829. This passage is quoted in *Foxin yu boye (Buddha-Nature and Prajna)*, p. 693.

²² *Foxin yu boye (Buddha-Nature and Prajna)*, p. 684.

other nine realms. That is to say, it is in terms of the destruction of the aspect of *samsara* that one can return to the true mind. Ontologically, the true mind is the ground for the rise of the other nine realms. But it is only when these nine realms are extinguished that the true mind can manifest itself in attaining Buddhahood.²³

Third, for distinctive teachings, the Buddha consists of infinite virtues. That is to say, Buddha-nature is absolutely pure, and the other nine realms do not belong to its essence. It is only in virtue of overcoming these nine realms that the Buddha can achieve the positive virtues.

Fourth, from a practical standpoint, in order to manifest itself, the true mind must free itself from all evil means to salvation. This is because the very essence of the true mind is absolutely pure.

Finally, distinctive teachings end up with a doctrine of the appearance of pure Nature (*xing qi*). In reality, such a pure Nature (*xing*) is nothing but the true mind. Accordingly, for Mou Zongsan, it gives rise to an idealism.²⁴ In the consequence of the methodology of the *Awakening of Faith* as “transcendental-analytic,” the system of the *tathagata-garbha* results in a transcendental idealism.²⁵

Mou Zongsan however maintains that distinctive teachings cannot represent the peak of Buddhism. For, if there is only a contingent connection between the realm of Buddhas and the other nine realms, and the destruction of these nine realms preconditions the attainment of Buddhahood, then one can hardly justify the necessity of their existence.²⁶ More importantly, since the Buddha has separated himself from the other nine realms, his essence remains imperfect.²⁷

On the other hand, Mou Zongsan praises Tiantai Buddhism as the perfect teachings in an authentic sense. It is because such perfect teachings affirm that all the nine realms are ontologically equipped in the realm of Buddhas. In order to attain Buddhahood, what Tiantai Buddhism asks us to remove is merely our attachment to the world, but not the world itself.²⁸

In brief, perfect teachings must have the following characteristics: (1) The *dharmata* is “identical” with affliction. Apart from the *dharmata*, there is no affliction, and *vice versa*; (2) Mind is first of all understood in the sense of a mind of affliction. Even a single instance of mind consists of affliction and the *dharmata*. Accordingly, the mind consists of pure and impure possibilities; (3) All *dharmas* originate in the non-dwelling ground. That is to say, there is no ultimate foundation for the world.²⁹ Particularly, the mind does not function as the ground of the world.

²³ Ibid, pp. 695-696.

²⁴ Ibid, p. 901; p. 875.

²⁵ Ibid, p. 561.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 698.

²⁷ Ibid, pp. 982-983.

²⁸ Cf.: Ibid, pp. 697-699.

²⁹ Cf.: Ibid, p. 685; p. 829; p. 989; p.1033.

Mou Zongsan insists that Confucianism should be developed in the form of perfect teachings.³⁰ Examined against the above criteria, one surprisingly discovers that Mou Zongsan's idealism satisfies none of them. First, sticking to the framework of "one mind having two aspects" in the *Awakening of Faith*, Mou Zongsan grants a primacy to the aspect of the moral mind which is comparable to the *dharmata*. As a result, the phenomenal world, which is the counterpart of *samsara*, is only secondary to the moral mind. Such an ontological dependence of phenomena upon the moral mind precludes the possibility of an identity between them in the sense of perfect teachings. Second, since Mou Zongsan identifies the moral mind with intellectual intuition, it must be purged of any sensibility. Accordingly, it is an infinite mind rather than a mind of affliction. Like the true mind in the sense of the *Awakening of Faith*, his moral mind is absolutely pure. Finally, for Mou Zongsan, the moral mind functions as the transcendental ground of all *dharmas*. But, in stressing an infinite mind as the ultimate foundation of the world, he deviates from the Tiantai thesis that all *dharmas* originate in the non-dwelling ground. The latter thesis aims at saying that there is no ultimate foundation for the possibility of the world. On the methodological level, Mou Zongsan's idealist Confucianism, however, commits to the transcendental approach. In reality, the transcendental analysis aims at uncovering the conditions of the possibility of the world. In the attempt to go beyond Kant's original transcendental idealism by granting the possibility of intellectual intuition to human beings, he even claims that the moral mind as the ultimate foundation of the world must be intuitively given. To this extent, he is faithful to the system of the *tathagata-garbha*. In addition, he adopts a Hegelian notion of "self-negation" in accounting for the relation between the pure mind and the phenomenal world. But such a teleological account does not enable him to reach the Tiantai Buddhist position that the phenomenal world is ontologically equipped by the mind of a single instance. According to the perfect teachings of the Tiantai type, apart from the phenomenal world, there would be no Buddhahood. In founding the possibility of the phenomenal world upon the pure mind, Mou Zongsan's approach nevertheless remains "idealist" in the Fichtean sense. It is true that now the phenomenal world, as a result from the self-externalization of the pure mind, is real, and hence not illusionary. Nonetheless, though the pure mind constitutes the Being of the phenomenal world, the phenomenal world does not belong to the Being of the pure mind. For Mou Zongsan, apart from the phenomenal world, what the pure mind lacks is merely its "concreteness."³¹ Accordingly, he can hardly justify the intrinsic necessity of all *dharmas* in the manner of the perfect teachings in the Tiantai Buddhist sense. For the latter, the ontological identity between mind and *dharmas* implies that all

³⁰ Cf.: Mou Zongsan, *Yuan shan lun (Theory of the Perfect Good)* (Taipei: Xuesheng, 1985), p. 308.

³¹ Cf.: *Xin ti yu xing ti*, Vol. 1, p. 653.

dharmas arise from the non-dwelling ground. Methodologically, the perfect teachings in the Tiantai Buddhist sense goes beyond the idea of grounding in the transcendental as well as teleological sense.

All this indicates that Mou Zongsan's idealist Confucianism cannot be qualified as the perfect teachings in the sense of Tiantai Buddhism. Therefore, he must face the following dilemma:

On the one hand, if he maintains that his idealist moral metaphysics represents the orthodox of Confucianism, he should praise the idea of the pure mind in the system of the *tathagata-garbha*. On the other hand, if he is faithful to his thesis that Confucianism should be developed in the form of perfect teachings in the sense of Tiantai Buddhism, he has to give up his claim that his idealist trend signifies the orthodox in Confucianism. Methodologically, he should abolish the grounding approach. If he could stick to the Tiantai doctrine of Buddha-nature, he should then discover that the mind of the Confucian Sage must also be equipped with the evil *dharmas*. That is to say, such a mind can no longer be absolutely pure in essence. Rather, it should be finite, rather than infinite.³²

In reality, when Mou Zongsan claims that "Perfect teachings can only be possible by reaching the infinite mind," he might have committed to a position similar to the doctrine of the External School in T'ai T'ien Buddhism.³³ Like the latter, he finally interprets the perfect teachings in the Tiantai Buddhist sense in terms of a doctrine of pure mind.³⁴

³² This also gives rise to some internal difficulties in Mou Zongsan's typology of Sung-Ming Neo-Confucianism and his Confucian theory of the highest good. Cf.: Wing-cheuk Chan, "On Mou Zongsan's Hermeneutical Application of Buddhism" (Forthcoming).

³³ *Yuan shan lun (Theory of the Perfect Good)*, p. 332.

³⁴ Cf.: *Foxin yu boye (Buddha-Nature and Prajna)*, p. 1125.

Part II

Confucian Ethics in

Comparative Context and in Prospect

Chapter X

Between the Good and the Right: The Middle Way in Neo-Confucian and Mahāyāna Moral Philosophy

Jinfen Yan

INTRODUCTION

For our purpose we can say “the right” is that which morality requires and “the good” is that which is worth seeking. A virtue is a disposition to do what is right in a particular respect or to seek what is good in a particular respect. Although some would draw our attention to the *corrective* side of virtues,¹ some would believe that virtue is moral excellence, a settled attitude that conduces to habitually good action in some aspect, and that virtues could be classified as intellectual virtues and practical virtues.² Confucius and Aristotle have almost the same idea of what virtues are: they are especially exhibited by what is difficult for humans; they are dispositions and modes of choice or involve choice; they are states of character concerned with choice, lying in a mean.³ The concept of virtue might have been altered or enriched when what Confucius taught was developed into a doctrine of Neo-Confucianism and when Buddhism was naturalized in the soil of Chinese culture.

Let us examine the positions of Neo-Confucian and Mahayana ethics on virtues in relation to the good and the right in the context of contemporary philosophy, in particular, in the context of the criticism made of rule-action-based ethics since the 1950s by Western supporters of

¹ Philippa Foot, *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978) 8. Such an emphasis might be thought to bespeak a rather negative view of the nature and tendencies of human beings. This calls to mind Xunzi’s theory on human nature. Xunzi, however, was quite optimistic about the possibility of what humans might achieve.

² Macquarrie, J. *A Dictionary of Christian Ethics* (London: SCM Press, 1967) 354. This description of virtue in the Western tradition seems similar to Mencius’ theory on human nature.

³ D. C. Lau, trans., *Confucius: The Analects* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979) 9:29, 9:30; Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, David Ross, trans., (New York: Oxford, 1998) 1105b28-1106a17, 1106b36-1107a25. At least David Hume listed moral discretion as one kind of virtues in *Enquiry Concerning the Principle of Morals* (1751) 2:1. For a list of virtues in Confucianism see B. W. Van Norden “Virtue Ethics and Confucianism,” in Bo Mou, *Comparative Approaches to Chinese Philosophy* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2003) 108-109.

virtue-based ethical theories, and of the criticism of Mahāyāna ethics by contemporary Confucians in more recent decades. I have chosen as a focus the Confucian concept *quan*, especially in its Neo-Confucian moral implications, and the equally complex Mahāyāna notion *upāya* (*upāya-kauśalya/kusala*), and their relation to the good and the right.

I will argue that many studies have excessively emphasized the meaning of *quan* and *upāya* as means (expediency or the expedient) while overlooking their essence as end (*ren*, *yi* or *kusala*), as quality of actions and as virtues of persons. As dispositions they “come to us by nature, we first acquire the potentiality and later exhibit the activity” through repeated practice.⁴ As a state of character each is expressed as moral perception, moral reasoning, moral judgment, and moral decision; as well as proper action directed by the virtues; they each fit into a comprehensive ethical system rooted in certain cardinal virtues. As the unification of the affective and cognitive virtues of a person, *quan* and *upāya* ideally ensure that acts will be right and good as the practice, respectively, of *yi* (obligatoriness, oughtness or righteousness) and *kusala* (wholesome, wise and skilful action). They represent the unification of the two “incommensurable” values, the good and the right, and they are respectively identical with the Middle Way and the ultimate Dao -- the proper *quan*.⁵

Quan has been interpreted as expediency, or the expedient; or as virtue, good disposition “in the exercise of moral discretion,” “choosing between goodness and badness,” or appropriately overriding *li* (observance of rites); or, adapting to the circumstances, or doing as the occasion requires, or “weighing occurring events,” or “weighing circumstances.”⁶

⁴ Compare *Nicomachean Ethics* (1998): 1103a18-b2; *Analects*: 17:2 with *Majjhima Nikaya*, Bhikkhu Nanamili and Bodhi, trans. (Boston: Wisdom 2001) *Madhupindika*: 18:204.

⁵ “Dao is the proper principle/*zhengquan* for judging the past and present. (*gujin zhi zhengquan*)” *Xunzi*: *Zhengming*:22. Watson, Burton. *Hsun Tzu: Basic Writings* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963) 153 and *Xunzi: A Translation and Study of the Complete Work*, vol. 3, John Knoblock trans. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1994)

⁶ Compare D.C. Lau’s translation of *the Analects* (1979) 100 with Edward G. Slingerland, *Confucius Analects: With Selections from Traditional Commentaries* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2003) 96-97; Ames and Rosemont, *The Analects of Confucius: A Philosophical Translation* (New York: Ballantine, 1998) 132; Simon Leys, *The Analects of Confucius* (New York: Norton 1997) 43; and others translations of *quan* as “Weighing things up” or “expedience”. See also C.T. Wei, in Wing-tsit Chan, *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986) 255-272; and Bojun Yang, *Lunyuyizhu* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980) 96; Qian, Zhongshu. *Guanzhubian* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1979); *Gongyangzhuan/Spring and Autumn Annals with Gongyang Commentary* (Taipei: Shangwu, 1973), *Zhuozhuan* (Taipei: Zhonghua, 1973) and Dong Zhongshu, *Chunqiu fanlu* ed. Y. W. Wang, commented on by Song Kuang; Sun Yirang (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1978) 11: 2-3.

Upāya-kauśalya/kusala was abbreviated as *upāya* and gradually lost its complete meaning. It has been translated into English as: expediency, “expedient means,”⁷ the convenient way, skill-in-means, skilful means, or even “pedagogical skill”.⁸ It was rendered in early Chinese Buddhist texts as *quan* which is opposite in meaning to *shi*;⁹ or *fangbian*,¹⁰ *dashanquan*, or *shanquanfangbian*.¹¹ *Upāya-kauśalya/kusala*, generally signifies means that are wise, skilful and wholesome. At first glance both concepts are related to ethical value and to other values, and they are consequentialist in nature, or else belong to action-based rule-governed ethics without reference to states of character and agent-related motivational factors. According to this the moral virtues possessed by an agent would be *instrumental* and would have no *intrinsic* value. I will argue in favor of the following four points:

First, values are rooted in forms of life and cultural constructs, such as philosophical constructs of the Middle Way, the Twofold Truth or the moral-metaphysical principle *Li*; at the same time, values are the foundation for the moral principles upon which moral reasoning is based. *Quan* and *upāya* are rooted, respectively, in Confucian and Mahāyāna moral philosophies as the modes of reasoning for choosing what is *all-things-considered* appropriate in a difficult situation, with a view to acting rightly for the sake of a good result. Even if some rules are overridden, the chosen action plan will work effectively if it follows the ultimate principle, which is also the primary virtue and has *intrinsic* value. That *intrinsic* value explains and justifies the rightness of the action.

Secondly, the creative nature of *quan* was said to override some customary rules or precepts, which caused a debate among Neo-Confucians about whether the expedient/*quan* is still the same as the standard/*jing* (social or customary rules). In light of the considerations the pro and con,

See also K. L. Shun. *Mencius and Early Chinese Thought* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 1997) 55-56; 65; A. S. Cua. ed. *Encyclopedia of Chinese Philosophy* (New York: Routledge, 2003) 625.

⁷ Kumārajīva, trans., *The Lotus Sutra/Saddharma-pundarika-sutra/Miaofalianhuaqing*, Taishō: V9N262:1-63.

⁸ M. Siderits, *Personal Identity and Buddhist Philosophy: Empty Persons* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2003) 111, note b.

⁹ Zhiyi, trans., *Mahāśamatha-vipaśyanā/Mohezhiguan*:3, Taishō V46N1911:1. “*Quan wei quanmou, zhanyong hanfei, shi wei shilu, jiu jing zhi gui.*”

¹⁰ Burton Watson, trans., *The Lotus Sutra/ Saddharma-pundarika-sutra/Miaofalianhuaqing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993) 2.

¹¹ *Upāya-kauśalya*, trans. from Chinese by Garma C. C. Chang, *A Treasury of Mahāyāna Sutras: Selections from the Mahāratnakūta Sūtra* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983), 268, 427-468; trans. from Tibetan, *Upāya-kauśalya-nāma*, by Mark Tatz, *The Skill in Means/Upāyakauśalya Sutra* (New York: Pantheon, 1994). See also Taishō: V11N310:38, V12N345:135, and V12N346:156.

Zhu Xi took a middle way. He interpreted the inherent relation between the *quan* and the *jing*, unified them within the *dao*, and added *yi*/obligatoriness/oughtness and *shi*/proper time to regulate the states of the character of the agent applying *quan*, and so built his moral-metaphysical Twofold Principle/*Li* ethical system. This led Neo-Confucian moral philosophy by way of a middle path to a pluralist ethics of “displaying a clear character/*mingde*”¹² by holding fast to the principle/*li*, thus demonstrating that deontic/action-rule-based and virtue-based modes of moral choice are complementary. They are both necessary for an adequate complete understanding of Neo-Confucian ethics.

Thirdly, in the face of contemporary criticism of Mahāyāna ethics, Buddhist moralists of recent decades have generally agreed to regard morality as the end rather than only a means is compatible with the Twofold Truth and the Middle Way in their *dharma*. Following the above discussion of the Neo-Confucian concept *quan*, we may note that the *Bodhisattvabhūmi*/pūsa-path consists of such *upāya*-related perfections of morality, wisdom, and compassion, which are identical with the end of the Middle Way and the Buddha Nature. So, it is not only minor precepts and rules that can be overridden, but even killing could receive some qualified justification, according to some Confucian and Western arguments. Some philosophers may consider arguments that would attempt to justify wrongful killing as sometimes transcending “normative ethics” in the spirit of the Twofold Truth. My argument is that the *bodhisattvas* in question, although morally above ordinary folks, are still human beings and have to deal with various aspects of ordinary life. In some cases bodhisattvas are even celestial beings as described in the *Lotus Sutra*; even if they are fully enlightened or have obtained *nirvana*, as long as they take actions and involve themselves in human affairs we still can analyze their actions within normative ethics.¹³

¹² *The Great Learning/Daxue*:1. The eight steps discussed in the *Great Learning* detail the principles for cultivating a virtuous state of character as the end result, rather than seeing mechanical manipulations of personal life and the world as the end.

¹³ We should understand that the ultimate standpoint involves recognizing an ultimate reality beyond all conceptual thinking and description. Ontologically, all phenomena are untrue. If a magic power is applied by a *bodhisattva* to deal with human affairs and carry out justice we can still judge his efforts by normative ethical principles of right or wrong from conventional perspectives, Keown and Siderits discuss the ultimate truth to a greater extent. See Keown, *The Nature of Buddhist Ethics* (Macmillan, 1992) 159. Siderits, 73, note n and o; 204 “But the practice of compassion also requires certain skills that may not be available to one who has not realized the emptiness of all things.”

Fourthly, the stance of Confucius and of Aristotle on moral virtues or excellence¹⁴ is plausible as far as the application of *quan* and *upāya* goes but still needs qualification. The Buddhist Twofold Truth and the Neo-Confucian Twofold (moral-metaphysical) Principle/*Li* positively supported the respective Buddhist and Confucian ways of life and their associated values, while on the negative side denying their ontological primacy and the axiological primacy of those ways of life. In the name of *yi* or *xingyi* (the practice of *yi*), or of compassion/*karunā* any action will bring about a Double Effect or “double consequences,” and we will always face the problem of how to unify the right and the good in action. The creation of *quan* and *upāya* expresses the human will for the achievement, with various means, of the highest good (*nirvana* or *tianrenheyi* respectively; or -- the *summum bonum*). At the same time, we should not deny that the means, as *quan* and *upāya* themselves, have already become the perfection of the virtues of an agent realizing the highest good/*summum bonum* and hence have become the end itself, according to many present-day writers. To be completely virtuous, they say, is to be enlightened or at one with heaven and earth. The Middle Way as the Eightfold Path at its ordinary level brings human to realize the highest good; while at its transcendent level it is an “empty way” -- that is, we can do better and better but can never achieve the absolute best. The Middle Way thus encourages the process of *adinfinitum* and so benefits us as long as we live together in this world. Neo-Confucian *quan* and Mahāyāna *upāya* attempted to grasp the middle way rationally, with respect to the good as well as the right. In other words, they both have tried to unify the good and the right through the virtues.

THE GOOD AND THE RIGHT

In Chinese philosophy as early as Confucius' time *yi* (righteousness, oughtness/obligatoriness) and *li* (profit or interest) were separated into two different agent-related values in such sayings as “The nobles/*junzi* comprehend *yi* and the inferiors/*xiaoren* comprehend *li*” (4.16). Therefore, central to the history of Chinese philosophy has been a tradition of opposing righteousness and profit, which has lasted until now. In the terms of Anglo-American ethics, the debate is about the right and the good.

¹⁴“*aretê* has not the specially moral connotation that “virtue” has acquired in modern English. Excellence is less liable to mislead”. Ross, *Nicomachean Ethics* (1998). xxvi. Traditionally, “expediency” is not necessarily moral excellence in either Chinese or Greek ethics. I use moral discretion as moral excellence or virtue in contrast to mechanical skills, which a professional killer possesses. Expediency could be moral or immoral, the *quan* in the Analects (9.29) is moral excellence, the excellence of a person..

The good¹⁵ and the right are two very rough classes of normative concepts customarily divided between the evaluative and the deontic. The evaluative concepts have to do with the values that things have by being valued or being valuable.¹⁶ “Axiology” refers to the whole range of positive and negative values from disvalue/bad to being value neutral, and then to the highest value/highest good/*summum bonum*. Valuable items could be purely intrinsic goods, purely instrumental goods or a combination. Some moralists use “valuable” and “to value” to define the good¹⁷ as meaning, respectively, “worthy of being valued and worthy of being judged good” and “to be favorably disposed towards, and to judge good.” Dimensions or distinctions of values (such as prudential, aesthetic and ethical value, or specific values such as health, beauty, and welfare) have been discussed by many. They standardly identify one or more values as the only basic ethical value or values, the only thing or things, which we have a moral reason to promote for its or their own sake¹⁸ such as happiness or the Kantian good

¹⁵ The good is, very roughly, the property of a thing meriting commendation. [Ever since Aristotle and his medieval followers failed to include “good” in the scheme of “categories” except by making it apply in all of them, “good” has caused bewilderment due to its many uses. Aristotle insisted that being, like unity, could not be a genus (*Metaphysics*: 998b22-5; 144a32-64; 1003b26; 1045a36-b8; book 4, ch. 1-3; book 6 ch. 1 and *Nicomachean Ethics* (1998): 1096a19-29. Out of this arose the medieval doctrine of transcendentalism. Aquinas listed “good”, “being”, “one”, “true”, “thing” as transcendental terms applying to everything and held that everything real was somehow good, but that good was predicable in all the categories since a substance, quality, relation, etc. could all be good. (For Aquinas on “good” transcendental, see R.W. Mulligan, trans., *De Veritate*, 3 Vols. (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1952-54, question 21, article 5))] W. D. Ross, *The right and the good* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1930), ch. 3-7 is instructive to read.

¹⁶ The term “value” is from the Latin *valere*, meaning “to be of worth”.

¹⁷ G. H. von Wright, *The Varieties of Goodness* (London: Routledge and K. Paul, 1963) has a full discussion of the different uses of good. Also see Thomas Scanlon, *What We Owe to Each Other* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1998) 95 and Michael J. Zimmerman, *The Nature of Intrinsic Value* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001) 1-2. Zimmerman disagrees with Scanlon on other issues of value but agrees to use the term “good”. He states that both “valuable” and “to value” have basic and derived senses. The two senses of “valuable” are: (basic) good and (derived) worthy of being judged good; the two senses of “to value” are: (basic) to be favorably disposed towards and (derived) to judge to be good. He also gives a detailed list of relaxed basic and relaxed derived senses “to judge as good, bad or neutral” and “worthy of being judged good, bad or neutral.”

¹⁸ Nicholas Rescher, *Topics in Philosophical Logic* (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1969) 16; L.W. Sumner, *Welfare, Happiness, and Ethics* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1996) 1:3 Sumner presents an original theory of welfare. He connects welfare closely with happiness or life satisfaction, and proceeds to defend welfarism.

will (Ross 1930:6). In the Confucian tradition the list of goods would be almost the same, although certain writers do say that, while Confucians reject some of the same candidates for the good life as are rejected by Aristotelians they have a positive conception of flourishing different from that of any major Western virtue ethics: one that emphasizes participation in familial life and in ritual activity (Van Norden in Mou 2003: 106). For example, Confucius expresses a preference for activities characteristic of a way of life very different from the ideals espoused by any version of Platonism or Aristotelianism: a life of taking joy in simple pleasures with friends and loved ones (11. 26).¹⁹ In my view, pleasure, no matter how simple, and friendship, and love do come within Aristotle's conception of happiness.²⁰

In speaking of the right, an ethical theory is discussing action (including inaction, such as *wuwei* in Chinese philosophy). A right action is a permissible thing for you to do. It may be either obligatory or optional (neutral or supererogatory). An obligatory act is one that morality requires you to do; it is not permissible for you to refrain from doing it.²¹ The good, or values, are central to many ethical systems. Some philosophers, such as Plato and J. S. Mill, attribute a deep structure to values, positing one supreme value from which all other values are derivative. Others, like G. E. Moore and David Ross, assent an irreducible "pluralism" of independent values, with no such deep structure obtaining. Plato, on the other hand, sees his supreme value ("the good") as something totally removed from human life, whereas Mill, Moore and Ross view goodness ultimately as a characteristic of mental states or of action. They also impute value derivatively, and some others impute it intrinsically, to human behavioral traits, saying, "Human character and human dispositions have value or worth, which belong to them in the same sense as redness belongs to the

He argues that welfare is the only basic ethical value, the only thing which we have a moral reason to promote for its own sake. In this way, his welfarism is against the value pluralism that currently dominates moral philosophy. *Nicomachean Ethics*, book 1 provides a classic account of the human good.

¹⁹ See Bryan W. Van Norden, "Virtue Ethics and Confucianism" in Bo Mou ed (2003) 106-107; Slingerland, Edward (2003)122-123.

²⁰ *Nicomachean Ethics* (1998) 1097a34. When discussing the end of action as happiness Aristotle explains "self-sufficient". "By self-sufficient we do not mean that which is sufficient for a man by himself, ... but also for parents, children, wife and in general for his friends and fellow citizens, since man is born for citizenship."

²¹ The Kantian categorical imperative is a typical example of this. The formula for a categorical imperative is simply "Do X!" Do what reason discloses to be the intrinsically right thing to do, for example "Keep your promise!" See Immanuel Kant, *Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysics of Ethics*, trans. T. K. Abbott (London: Longman, 10th edition, 1965), 46.

cherry.”²² My view is that the relationship between the good and the right is this: from the good we can derive principles; these principles are not be absolute, but *prima facie*²³ or overridable, that is, that we can find ourselves in situations in which different conflicting principles apply. We make moral judgments by reasoning about which one is right and should win out in the competition of principles under the conditions existing on the occasion at hand; then we must decide to do the morally right act and must actually do the right act. What makes people take things to be ethically valuable due in considerable measure to the form of life in which people conduct their affairs, ethical theories often serving to provide reasoned justifications for such forms of life to specify the meaning or the ultimate good of a form of life. For example, an indirect consequentialist may explain, “... why moral rules are important but not absolute. Because different socialization practices may be effective in different societies, it can account for the fact that rules of what is right are relative and conventional. Best of all, it can show how utilitarianism is the deep structure of any defensible morality of duty, by reminding us that the good is after all prior to the right.”²⁴ In Confucian virtue ethics, which does not justify that disposition (the virtue) by reference to any other desirable thing thereby furthered, what a *Junzi*, a morally cultivated person, will do, and in Mahayana virtue ethics, what a bodhisattva is to do may become a criterion but is not an absolute. Confucian sage-like *junzi* and Mahāyāna *bodhisattvas/pusa* among people respectively have their moral reasons (virtue) to act in any given situation making choices between the good and the right. Let me consider the Neo-Confucian concept *quan* first.

²² John Laird, *A Study of Realism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1920), 28. The classic objectivist view on values was given by Plato, *Republic*, book 2, trans. G. M. A. Grube, (Cambridge: Hackett 1992); G. E. Moore, *Principia Ethica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1903), 83.; discusses good as a simple indefinable quality; the last chapter discusses what things are good. Generally, their view is that values are worthy of being desired whether or not anyone actually desires them; their worthiness of being desired is independent of us.

²³ Latin for “at first glance.” W. D. Ross uses *prima facie* to characterize the status of a principle which prescribes a duty that has a presumption in its favor but may be overridden by another such duty. In that case, the latter is one’s all-things-considered duty.

²⁴ Waney Sumner advocates an indirect ethical consequentialist theory. “The Good and the Right,” *New Essays on John Stuart Mill and Utilitarianism.*, ed. W. E. Cooper et al. (*Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, Supplementary vol. 5, 1979) 114.

QUAN AS A PRINCIPLE/LI AND AS A VIRTUE: THE MIDDLE WAY OF ZHU XI'S MORAL PHILOSOPHY

It was Confucius who first drew philosophers' attention to the concept of *quan*. *Quan* in the *Analects* has two functions: as disposition and virtue in "the exercise of discretion/*quan*" or in "employing discretion"²⁵ and as the principle deciding the direction of actions. As virtue it is exhibited in proper states of mind and in proper actions; as principle it weighs the event, the circumstances, the time and the people involved in a situation. Therefore, its essence is propriety of *li* (the customary rules) and *yi* (oughtness/obligatoriness and righteousness). Confucius correctly stressed the advanced role of *quan* in moral self-cultivation, and he emphasized the function of cognitive excellence and the intrinsic value of moral character. Morality as virtue is internal and intrinsic and must be expressed in the form of being good:

You can study with someone, and yet not necessarily pursue the Dao/the Way together; you can learn the same Dao/Way with someone, and not necessarily take your stand with him; you can take your stand with someone but it does not mean that you can exercise moral discretion/*quan* with him.

"One of wisdom is never in two minds" (9. 28/29). It is difficult for a moral agent to achieve the virtue of readily adapting to changing or dire circumstances by employing *quan* or *tongquandabian*²⁶ to bring about an ideal result. While most philosophers linked this saying with moral self-cultivation, discussed in the *Analects* 8. 8, 16. 3, and 20. 3, for the purpose of "taking one's place/*li*" or the gradual steps of moral cultivation taught in 2. 4, I emphasize its essence of making choice between right and wrong, lying in the mean, in unique circumstances discussed in 9. 3, and of the relation to friends as discussed in 1. 8 and 9. 25.

Here I must clarify the two different meanings of *quan*. It could be a matter of expediency in dealing with non-moral issues, for instance, a hunter lost in the woods at night with no bullets left, and unable to use his gun for self-defense, builds a fire to keep a pack of wolves from attacking and killing him. He may be an evil person, such as an escaped murderer, or a good person. Based on his practical experiences he made the expedient choice. We may say he was bold, but this was not the specific courage/*yong*

²⁵ See the note 6 above about the translations of *Analects* 9:29/30. Slingerland thinks discretion refers to a kind of cognitive flexibility that allows one to bend the rules in response to changing or unique circumstances.

²⁶ See Bojun Yang, *Lunyuyizhu* (Beijing: Zhonghua shu ju, 1980), 96, where *tonquandabian* is defined as: "employing moral discretion to adapt to changing situations."

Confucius advocated (9. 29, 14. 28). He has not used *moral* discretion to make his decision, unless he did all of these in order to protect another person or persons, who would have died without the hunter's protection, and unless the hunter was putting himself in danger for the sake of the other person/s -- he himself being able to leave the place before the wolves could approach him. To exercise moral discretion the agent must exercise her moral perception, reasoning, and decision-making. It is also necessary that the agent is involved in dealing with others and is motivated by a sense of obligation/oughtness/*yi* and good will only for others. In the *Analects* 11. 22, we observe that Confucius was asked by his disciples Zilu and Ranqiu the same question but he gave them different answers so as to make a distinction between "excessive caution" and "recklessness or impetuosity" in his moral teaching.²⁷ That illustrates a state of Confucius' character concerned with choice, lying in a mean. In the *Doctrine of the Mean* Confucius analyzed the two reasons why the *dao* is not pursued and understood: first, one can miss the point of the mean by going beyond it or not coming to it; and, secondly, "There is no one who does not eat and drink, but there are few who can really know the flavor,"²⁸ this means that *quan* or moral discretion is the unity of all virtues Confucius advocated, especially *zhi*/wisdom (cognitive) and *yi*/righteousness or oughtness/obligatoriness expressed as affective as well as cognitive responses,²⁹ and in a systematic structure of mean/the Middle Way and *wuwei*.³⁰ Only if one knows well all the virtues and possesses them, and the moral principles derived from and perfected with the virtues, can one apply *quan*/moral discretion for ethical issues as skillfully and accurately as a food connoisseur can appreciate and distinguish the full flavor of food. The accumulation of the knowledge and the cultivation of the virtues take a long time while the requisite affect, perception, reasoning, decision-making, and action-taking may take only less than a second. There are no absolutely fixed rules to follow. *Quan* is impossible without unified virtues internalized in one's character as the driving motivation for proper action. It is a pity that in studies of the *Analects*, *quan* has not been recognized as the unity of the excellences of the virtues and has not enjoyed the reputation that *shu*/empathy has enjoyed.

We can see that *quan* in the *Analects*, in fact, is closely linked to self-reflection/*si*, which takes *yi*/oughtness/obligatoriness as the object of moral discretion and shows the affective force and cognitive force of mental

²⁷ Slingerland (2003) 119-120. Compare Bao Xian and Huang Gan with later commentaries.

²⁸ Zhongyong: 4: W. T. Chan, (1963) 99; Legge, (1991) vol. 1 : 387.

²⁹ This can be found in the *Analects* 2:17, 5:7, 6:22-23, 14:14, 14:28, 15:8, 15:33, 4:10, 4:16, 5:16, 5:18, 17:23, 19:1.

³⁰ *Analects* 2:4, 14: 13 and most discussions of the *Analects* Book 10. Regarding *shu*, see Daniel Gardner, *Zhu Xi's Reading of the Analects* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003), Ch. 2, 15:24, 5:12, 6:30 and 4:15.

activities jointly providing motivation for action. For example, “on seeing a chance to profit they think of appropriate conduct/*yi*, on seeing danger they are ready to give their lives” (14.12); “in the sight of gain they think about appropriate conduct” (16.10); and “those *junzi*/morally cultivated scholars are quite acceptable who on seeing danger are ready to put their lives on the line, who on seeing an opportunity for gain concern themselves with what is required by duty/*yi*” (19. 1) These early discussions related to *quan* provide a background for the Neo-Confucian development of *quan*. We will see later that Zhu Xi makes *yi* as a condition of the application of *quan* when one makes choices among different values.

Mencius notes the importance of *quan* as moral discretion and agrees with Confucius about the difficulties of the application of *quan*. He illustrated the difference among the virtues within a cultivated moral agent, and the knowledge of moral rules possessed by an ordinary person who knows the moral rules, but cannot take proper action when needed: “A carpenter or a carriage-maker may give a man his compass or T-square, but he cannot make another skillful in the use of them.” (7B. 5) Mencius employed the *quan* concept to propose a middle way for moral decision-making between the “right” (observance of the customary rule/rite/*li*) and the wrong (4A. 17). If a man were to be in such a dire situation as that of confronting “a drowning sister-in-law” and were to adhere to the rite or to social rules, then he would have to watch someone die without lifting a finger. The decision to override the rule, by extending a hand to save the drowning sister-in-law, is a moral decision founded upon a basic humanist principle, *ren*/benevolence and *yi*/oughtness. Mencius called this way of moral decision-making “employing one’s moral discretion (*Yuanzhi yishou zhe, quanye*)”.³¹ First, Mencius clarified what kind of person a moral agent is. He regarded the man who would refuse to extend a helping hand in this situation as a beast. This reveals the intrinsic value of inner character in Confucianism. Second, we see moral rules, standards and principles assigned different degrees of validity here. *Quan* here seems to be a matter of committing a minor “offence” of *jing* (customary rite) in order to obey the higher (*ren* and *yi*) or highest moral principle (*dao*). The agent takes a certain action, applying *quan* not because the conventional standard guides him or her to do so, but because the intrinsic value of virtue makes the agent aspire to become a certain kind of person. This is often given, though it does not demand, a consequentialist interpretation. In any case, the exercise of *quan* here is the agent’s creative moral choice, which shows his or her spiritual side. Not everyone could manifest the same spirit in the same situation to defend *what is in accordance with dao*. Thirdly, the urgency of the situation here has become a condition for employing *quan*

³¹ Some translated *quan* in the Analects 9:29/30 and the Mencius 4A:17 as “the expedient,” which emphasizes the *quan* as means rather than a united virtue of affective and cognitive excellence or disposition/character. See C. T. Wei, in Wing-tsit Chan, (1986), 255-272.

and provides the best test of a person's state of character. It reveals the limitations of general, regular moral rules, and it demands the exercise of moral discretion, *quan*, in dealing with the changing or unexpected situations. Fourthly, in fact, *quan* here is a process of unifying the affective force produced by the senses and cognitive force produced by the cognitive capacities of a person to seek the unification of ren/benevolence, yi/oughtness/obligatoriness, and *zhii*/wisdom in a situation. It reveals the agent's character, the principle of action and the choice among values.

In contrast to Mencius' arguably virtue-based model, the *Gongyang Zhuan* found an explicit consequentialist direction in the *quan*, "What does *quan* mean? It means to deviate from the standard/*jing* with good results".³² Zhao Qi (ca. 201 CE) judged the *quan* by the "goodness" of the permissible action: "The *quan* is that which is at variance with the standard/*jing* but is still good".³³ The Han philosopher Dong Zhongshu (176-104 BCE) studied this interesting moral concept and said, "Although the *quan*/the expedient is at variance with the standard, it must be within the scope of what can be allowed ... The expedient is a tactful measure. It would be better if we could return to the great standard/*jing*."³⁴ Two points have been made: *Quan* is regarded as being based on an accumulation of knowledge and of moral and intellectual capacity on the part of the agent; and it is a "tactful measure," which "must be within the scope of what can be allowed." The idea that it would be "better if it were possible to return to the great standard" suggests that *quan* can transgress some rules such as customary rites but perhaps not the great principle/*jing*. The great principle/*jing* justifies *quan* actions, although *quan* actions have challenged the existing (customary) standards/*jing* or else minor moral precepts or rules. Here *jing* could be prevailing social standards and could be established principles of *ren* and *yi*. Such a rule-based approach has some problems: It disregards the agent's motivation; it sounds as though anyone who acts according to the rules is commendable regardless of what that action means to the actor, but to us a wrongly motivated action no longer seems appropriate; it is the conduct of an agent lacking good character, attending only to actions, consequence may well lead us, sooner or later, give approval to such agents, ignoring their spiritual aspirations. Calling only for right action without regard to any considerations of character building may also neglect the relation between the agent and the people in the community if the agent does not yet know how to be virtuous. This action rule-based approach to

³² Gongyang Gao, *Chunqiu Gongyangzhua*, in *Shisanjing Zhushu*, commentary by He Xiu (Han) and Xu Yan. (Tang), (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1980) "The Eleventh year of Duke Huan."

³³ Zhao Qi, *Menzi Zhu/Commentary on the Book of Mencius* in *Shisanjing Zhushu* (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1996).

³⁴ Dong Zhongshu, *Chunqiu fanlu*, ed. Y. W. Wang (Qinding Sikuquanshu Zhenben Bieji, 1975), commentary by Song Kuang et al. (Zhongquo Zixue Mingzhu Jicheng Bianyihui, 1978), 3:4.

quan shows some similarity to W. D. Ross's *prima facie* and *all-things-considered* duties and to the utilitarianism of J. S. Mill, which calls for weighing up positive and negative consequences of possible actions in order to decide, in light of the higher end Mill favors, whether to do them or not.³⁵

There was a debate among Neo-Confucian scholars about the doctrine put forward by Cheng Yi³⁶ that "the expedient, *quan* is the same as the standard, *jing*" and the teaching of Han philosophers that they are different "that which is at variance with the standard and complies with the Way is the expedient."³⁷ This debate advanced the development of Confucian moral philosophy regarding moral character, moral principle, and morality as a whole.

Cheng Yi's position is that "the Han scholars considered being at variance with *jing* (the standard) and in compliance with *Dao* (the Way) to be the expedient, *quan*. Hence, they talked about expedient variations and tactics, which are all false. The *quan* [the virtue of moral discretion and the corresponding principle] should be the same as the moral standard or principle/*jing*."³⁸ He argued "in confronting a certain event, one deals with it by assessing it in order to have it comply with *yi*/righteousness. This is called exercising moral discretion [rather than the expedient]. How could it be contrary to *Dao*/the Way?" (Cuiyan: 1:6a.). He linked inner goodness, righteousness and the ethico-metaphysical principle, the Way/*Dao*, in a manner compatible with the structure of his philosophy. He emphasized the intrinsic value of morality and the virtue of the agent when applying *quan*, which involves a readiness to comply with *yi* and is the same thing as practicing the *Dao*. Chen Yi must have believed that "the flying of the hawk, the leaping of fish, and the feeling that one must always be doing something are all lively and dynamic in the same way."³⁹

Zhu Xi's approach to this debate is through a middle way and hence he developed a type of pluralist ethics, which we should interpret in the spirit that deontic/action-based and aretic/virtue-based models are each

³⁵ John Stuart Mill, *Collected Works of J. S. Mill*, ed. J. M. Robson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1969) 10:224-226.

³⁶ Cheng, Hao, *Er Cheng Quanshu* SPPY edition. (Beijing: Zhonghua, 1981).1:6a.

³⁷ Zhu Xi, "Luyujizhu" in *Zhuzi Yulei* (Li Jingde 1270 and Chenghuaben 1473 edition, reprinted 1960) 37: 1642.

³⁸ Quoted in Zhu xi, "Lunyu Jizhu" of the Analects 9:29/30 in *Zhuzi Yuei* 37:1647.

³⁹ Wang Yangming, *Instructions for Practical Living and Other Neo-Confucian Writings/Chuanxilu*. Trans., Wing-tsit Chan, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1963) 331. See also the *Book of Songs*, no. 239 and the *Mencius* 2A:2.

necessary for an adequate and complete Neo-Confucian ethics, in which virtues and principles both may have intrinsic value.⁴⁰

At first glance, Zhu Xi's argument to eliminate the contradiction between the two views is rule/action-based, for the action-guiding principle is the essence of morality; virtues are derived from the principles and are instrumental in performing right actions. He defines the principles *jing* and *quan* with respect to the competition of rules in a changed situation: "The standard/*jing* is the constant principle and the expedient/*quan* is the varying principle when the constant principle will not work and there is no other choice." (*Zhuzi Yulei* 37:1642) When the constant principle cannot be practiced and the situation leaves no alternative, there is a need to form a new action-guiding principle (*quan*) to deal with the situation. First, according to his analysis, "to change" amounts to what the Han scholars called "to vary/*fan*, namely, to be at variance with the standard/*quan*" (*Zhuzi Yulei*, 37: 1647). Therefore *quan* is different from the standard/*jing*. Secondly, he says that, although the *jing* and the *quan* are different, the *quan* that varies is not necessarily separate from the standard. (*Zhuzi Yulei*: 37: 1642) The *all-things-considered* decision⁴¹ has taken into account the constant rule, which it overrides, in order to ensure right action. Thirdly, he says, "complying with the expedient/*quan* means that the standard is found in it." (*Zhuzi Yulei* 1642; 1639) He made *jing* and *quan* two sides of one coin: *quan* is not the standard/*jing* and the standard/*jing* is not *quan*; at the same time the standard is within *quan* and *quan* is within the standard. This is what the Middle Way meant in relating *quan* and *jing*. But we still need to look at Zhu Xi's way in dealing with the standard and the Way/*dao*.

Using the rule-based side of his model, Zhu Xi interpreted the relation between the standard/*jing* and the Way/*dao*. In his view, "being at variance with the *jing* and in compliance with the Dao/Way to be the expedient/*quan*," means that the *quan*, though at variance with the low-level standard, is yet in compliance with the ultimate standard, the Way/*Dao* (*Zhuzi Yulei* 37:1647). So, *quan* lies within the standard and the Way, balancing the (ultimate) right and the (temporary wrong) leading to (ultimate) good. This is similar to what we discussed in Mencius' approach. Cheng Yi, as we discussed above, believed that the standard is something identical to the Way. Zhu Xi thinks "the *Dao* is an integrated entity which penetrates the *jing* and the *quan*." (*Zhuzi Yulei* 1638) Therefore, the *Dao* is realized in the *jing* as well as in the *quan*. This is compatible with Zhu Xi's moral-metaphysical principle, *li*. Zhu Xi's ethics is based on his key concepts of *li*, *qi* and *taiji*. He said, "The great ultimate/*Taiji* is simply the principle/*li* of the highest good/virtue. Each and every person has in him the

⁴⁰ Consult Louden, Robert, "Some Vice of Virtue Ethics" *American Philosophical Quarterly* 1984:21; Trianosky, Gregory. "Virtue, Action and the Good Life: A Theory of Virtues," *Pacific Journal of Philosophy*, 1988.

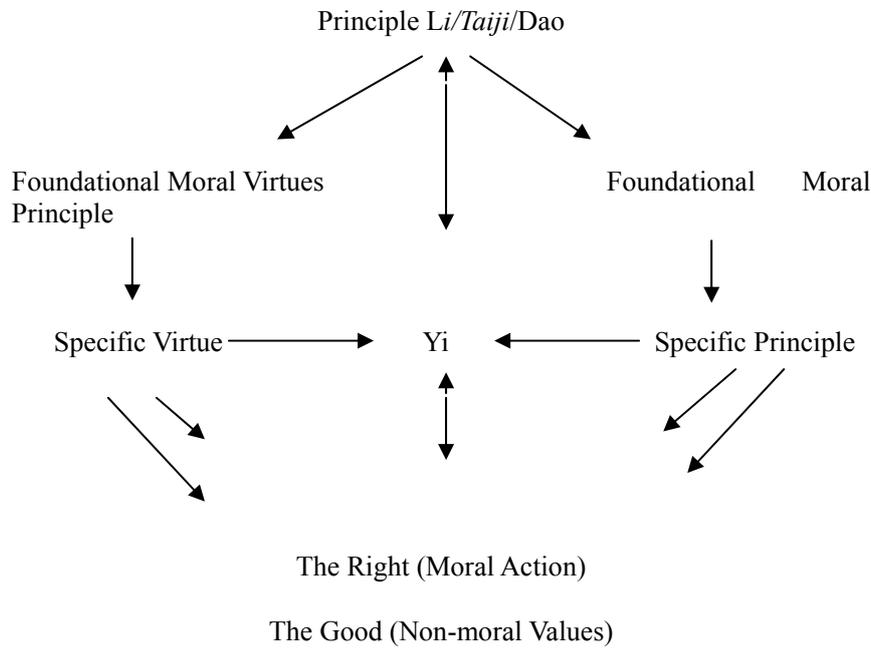
⁴¹ Recall Ross's theories on principles and duties again. See W.D. Ross, 1930: 3-7.

great ultimate and each and every thing in it the great ultimate” (*Zhuzi Yulei* 49: 11b). An expedient action *quan* may infringe the existent moral rules and standards or even principles to the point of serious offence in certain circumstances, it may be at variance with them but must be in compliance with the “highest good” of the ultimate *li*, the *taiji*. The ultimate moral principle/*li* and the metaphysical *li/taiji* in Zhu Xi’s philosophy are identical; they are the Heavenly Way or Heavenly Principle as well as being virtues and moral principles of humanity, righteousness, propriety, wisdom and faithfulness in the Neo-Confucian moralized metaphysics.⁴² For this reason I call *li* a twofold principle. One aspect of it is moral and the other metaphysical. From *li* derives the internalized virtues (affective and cognitive) and the externalized moral principles of actions. Metaphysical principles are internalized within a person as the foundational moral attributes or virtues, at the same time *li* provides the foundational moral principles. “The origin of the *Dao* is traced to Heaven and is unchangeable, while its concrete substance is complete in ourselves and may not be departed from.” (Zhu’s remark on *Zhongyong* 1).

As illustrated below, on the one hand, *Li/Taiji* with the operation of the *Dao* gives rise to foundational moral virtues, from which specific instances of each virtue, such as *yi*/righteousness, are derived, these can be attributes of a person who may do a right action (the right) with good consequences (the good) -- the agent must be virtuous and the result should be naturally good. On the other hand, *Li/Taiji* with the operation of the *Dao* gives rise to foundational moral principles, from which derive specific instances of each principle, such as that of moral discretion, *ren*/benevolence, *yi*/righteousness, *li*/propriety, and *zhi*/wisdom, which can direct an agent to act rightly with good consequence -- the action must be right and the result should be naturally good. In Zhu Xi’s pluralist twofold principle ethical system, *li* is possessed by both heaven and the human. Heaven’s way/*dao* is the natural and moral way/*dao* of humankind. That is Zhu Xi’s *daotong*. Therefore, the *dao*, in Zhu Xi’s view, “penetrates the standard and the expedient”; that is why Zhu Xi’s arguments are sometimes rule-based, sometimes virtue-based.⁴³ *Yi* (righteousness) as affective as well as cognitive capacities of a person, and at the same time a principle of action occupies a central position in the application of *quan*. *Yi* guides human actions as heavenly way/reason/*li* and follows and serves heaven as the human way/reason/*li*.

⁴² Zhou Dunyi, *Taijitu Shuo/An Explanation of the Diagram of the Great Ultimate* in Chan 1963: 463.

⁴³ This is somehow, similar to what William K Frankena discussed in “The Ethics of Love Conceived as an Ethics of Virtue” in *Journal of Religious Ethics* 1 (Fall 1973).



Zhu Xi's Pluralist Twofold Moral-Metaphysical Principle Ethical System

Reviewing Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi on the standard/*jing* and the expedient/*quan*, Wei Zhengtong thinks that they have the same understanding of the *dao*: “Cheng Yi believed that the Way is the universally valid principle; he considered all the doctrines of changes and variation to be false.” (Wei, 258) He also claims “confusion in the use of terms” to explain the difference between Cheng, Zhu and the Han scholars. (Wei, 259) My question is: Why did Cheng Yi “consider all the doctrines of changes and variation to be false”, if he really understood the doctrine of the Way/*Dao*, especially its operation? Why is it that “their propositions shared the same basis and as such we see Zhu Xi on the one hand criticize Cheng Yi, and yet on the other repeatedly defend him” ? (Wei, 256) In my view, Cheng Yi is discussing the *dao* in its most essential form. As I mentioned above, Cheng Yi had a virtue-based ethics in mind, which puts the virtues in the dominant position and assigns the virtues intrinsic value. Moral principles or duties are derived from virtue to guide right action. For him both the *dao* and the standard/*jing* are realized in the inner goodness of the cultivated agent. A virtue such as sincerity or righteousness/oughtness, is the root of moral principles in practice (the *quan*/moral discretion as a inner quality is derived from the *dao* and complying with the *dao*). How could the same essence of virtue make the standard/*jing* something separate from the *dao*? In contrast to Cheng Yi, Zhu Xi was trying to approach *quan*

as a moral principle prescribing action. How could Zhu Xi not criticize Cheng Yi sometimes?

When it comes to the application of *quan*, the virtue-based side of Zhu Xi's model is rather instructive. Zhu Xi warns people not to "use the expedient/*quan* for self-rationalization" (*jiequan yi zishi*) in the *Zhuzi Yulei* (1960: 37:1637). This lays down moral virtue as the foundation of the principles guiding an agent in the application of *quan* so as to avoid selfish desire and include consideration for others and for the community in *quan* moral discretion. To secure the moral character of the agent, and to ensure that the agent will do the right and to bring about the good, he strongly emphasized *being good*. He regarded only a sage as able apply the *quan* (1960 37:1634; 1638). He interpreted Confucius' intention and concluded that Confucius "does not allow ordinary people to use the expedient/*quan*" (1960 37: 1640). But he shows that Confucius gives serious consideration to the purity of virtues and the motivation of the agent in moral discretion (*quan*). "Manifesting a clear character, loving the people and abiding in the highest good" (*Daxue* 1) is the end of the Confucian form of life and is how people ought to be. The rules and principles of moral self-cultivation are only the means while virtue is dominant here and has intrinsic value as the end. *Quan* in this case is the virtue of moral discretion. This approach avoids some problems of rule-based ethics where a virtue, such as autonomy, has only instrumental value; these theories lack a motivational component, a point which Mill criticized and on which later philosophers agreed with him; such theories reduced all moral judgments to judgments about actions and neglected the spiritual quality of self-respect and the aspiration to be a certain kind of person.⁴⁴

From foundational virtues, Zhu Xi selected two specific virtues as principles for applying *quan*: *yi*/righteousness and *zhong*/equilibrium or */shizhong*/timely equilibrium. The application of *quan*, "must by necessity comply with righteousness." (1960 37:1638) As the method of discretion, "being able to adopt the expedient" refers to "when one is in an unexpected situation and knows the appropriate measure." (*Zhuzi Yulei* 37:1633) Righteousness, as an inner virtue and action guiding principle, can help one who employs the *quan* grasp the appropriate measure and act in a timely fashion in the Middle Way. Zhu Xi thought: "One must use righteousness to assess situations, and to exercise moral discretion is to weigh something with this very scale. Equilibrium occurs when the thing attains a balance." (*Zhuzi Yulei* 37:1633) Zhu Xi emphasized, "The exercise of moral discretion is a matter of timely equilibrium, without equilibrium one will have no way to use the *quan*" (37:1637), however, "[e]quilibrium/*zhong* is

⁴⁴ Mill 1974: Similar criticism of rule-based ethics can be found in Philippa Foot's, *Virtues and Vices and Other Essays in Moral Philosophy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1978), 112. Anscombe, E. "Modern Moral Philosophy" in *Philosophy* 1958:33. Alasdair C. MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in moral Theory* (London: Duckworth, 1981), etc.

without fixed form, yet it exists in all different temporal situations.” (*Zhongyong Zhangju* 2) Zhu Xi considered that *quan* is the “*zhong* of one particular instant” (37:1637). It is “provisional and not constant.” (37:1640) Zhu Xi further clarified equilibrium as “living” and “dead”. He put Zimo’s manner of grasping the middle point as equilibrium in the “dead” category,⁴⁵ while taking a right action in a timely fashion with good intentions and making things reach a balance in a dire situation is a “living” equilibrium. To think reductively, *quan*, with the qualities of righteousness and equilibrium itself became a specific principle for exercising moral discretion. Of course in the same way moral discretion/*quan* is a virtue of persons. Zhu Xi built a pluralist system for Neo-Confucian moral philosophy in a middle way.

Criticisms of virtue-based ethics are many: for example, one of them is, how could we know how good and pure the character of an agent is, say a sage like *junzi* or even Yan Hui, one who still possessed some dispositions of his own but is not as pure as Confucius who was without any human disposition and was with Heaven and Earth?⁴⁶ Is Mahayana *upāya* similar to *quan* and applied in Mahāyāna ethics in the same way as *quan* is applied in Neo-Confucian ethics? Does it follow the same principle when it comes to dire circumstances where killing is involved? What is the function of virtue? Is it compatible with the Twofold Truth and the Middle Way? Before I touch on these questions, I want to put the issues in the context of contemporary criticism of Mahayana Buddhist ethics and the responses from Buddhist philosophers in recent decades.

MAHAYANA ETHICS: CRITICISM AND RESPONSE

The criticism of Mahayana ethics advanced by contemporary Confucians covers four points. First, Mahāyāna Buddhists aim to learn a lesson from the challenge of Neo-Confucianism and engage in a necessary and urgent inquiry into the moral dimension of their own tradition by shifting their traditional emphasis on transcendental truth to a new emphasis on worldly truth in connection with everyday socio-moral practice. Secondly, they are encouraged to reach a perfect understanding of the principle of the Middle Way, as well as of the real meaning of the Twofold Truth in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Thirdly, they are told to treat morality as the ultimate goal rather than a means, discipline, or prerequisite for reaching the ultimate goal, and to place equal emphasis on morality/*śīlā*, on wisdom/*prajñā* and on meditation/*dhyāna*. Fourthly, they should build a new ethical system, putting new moral elements into the ancient ethics of

⁴⁵ Zhu Xi and Poxing Zhang, *Jinsilu Jijie* (Shanghai: Shangwu, 1935): 1:16 a-b; “Zhuziwenji” in *Chuzidaquan* (Beijing: Zhonghua 2002) 58: 15b; *Zhuzi Yulei*, 1960:1447-1448.

⁴⁶ Zhu Xi and Lü Zuqian, *Reflection on Things at Hand* (New York: Columbia University, 1967) 13:14.

karunā/universal compassion in order to tackle most, if not all, human and secular problems which they encounter in daily life.⁴⁷

An attempt is made here to clarify the responses from Buddhist moralists to the above criticisms, though the responses themselves were by no means always addressed to particular attacks. This has been a common tendency of Buddhist scholars from both the East and the West. It is convincingly evident that during the past several decades almost all Buddhist scholars have consciously and vigorously inquired into the moral dimension of their philosophy without abandoning their traditional emphasis on transcendental truth, even when their main interest is not necessarily in ethics or moral philosophy.⁴⁸ Some of them interpreted morality/*śilā* in Mahāyāna Buddhism as an ultimate goal as well as a preliminary condition for the practice of meditation and acquisition of

⁴⁷ Charles Wei-hsun Fu, "Morality or Beyond: the Neo-Confucian confrontation with Mahāyāna Buddhism," *Philosophy East and West* 23: 3 (1973) 375-396; See also Fu, in Wing-tsit Chan, *Chu Hsi and Neo-Confucianism* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1986)402 for further exploration of the four aspects.

⁴⁸ I want very briefly list some of them: R. M. Gross, *Feminism and Religion* (Boston: Beacon, 1996), *Buddhism After Patriarchy* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1993); Stephen F. Teiser, *The Ghost Festival* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988), *The Scripture on the Ten Kings* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994); D. J. Kalupahana, *Buddhist Philosophy* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 1976), *The Principles of Buddhist Psychology* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987), *A History of Buddhist Philosophy* (Honolulu: University Press of Hawaii, 1992); M. Siderits, *Empty Persons* (Hampshire: Ashgate, 2003); J. L. Garfield, *Empty Words* (Oxford University Press, 2002); Diana Y Paul, *Women in Buddhism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); P. E. Karetzky, *The Engraved Design on the Late Sixth Century Sarcophagus of Li Ho* (Zurich: Artibus Asiae, 1986), *Early Buddhist Narrative Art* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2000), *Chinese Buddhist Art* (Oxford University Press, 2002); Reginald A. Ray, *Secret of the Vajra World* (Boston: Shambhala, 2001); W. Rahula, *What the Buddha Taught* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1974); M. L. Cummings, *The Lives of the Buddha in the Art and Literature of Asia* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, Center for South and Southeast Asian Studies, 1982); J. P. Keenan, *How Master Mou Removes our Doubts* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994); B. Faure, *The Red Thread: Buddhist Approaches to Sexuality* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998); M. Shaw, *Passionate Enlightenment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); A. A Tsai, 1994; Master Hsuan Hua, 1994; M. Walshe, *Teachings of the Buddha* (Boston: Wisdom Publications, 1995); J. S. Strong, *The Buddha* (Oneworld, 2001); Robert. A. F. Thurman, *The Tibetan Book of the Dead: The Great Book of Natural Liberation Through Understanding in the Between* (New York: Bantam Books, 1994), 2000; etc.

wisdom.⁴⁹ Notably, in Damien Keown's book, *the Nature of Buddhist Ethics* (1992), an innovative foray into this field is widely cited, discussed, and of course, criticized.⁵⁰ His book provides an overall characterization of the structure of Buddhist ethics. Departing from the traditional emphasis only upon ethics in the Buddha's teaching at the expense of attention to later Buddhism, his book not only discusses Mahāyāna ethics, but also puts the pursuit of ethical ideals in first place, and comprehensively compares Buddhist ethics with Western ethical theories, such as those of Aristotle, Kant and J.S. Mill. He places equal emphasis on morality/*śīlā*, wisdom/*prajñā* and meditation/*dhyāna*. He interprets and expounds early discourses examining Mahāyāna self-assessments of the superiority of Mahāyāna ethics to that of the Theravāda, and he has provided detailed references to precepts, virtues, and moral models in Buddhism to clarify their various functions in Mahāyāna ethics.⁵¹ Peter Harvey (2000, 2002) deals with every aspect of contemporary ethical issues, including the treatment of the natural world, business, war and peace, suicide and euthanasia, and abortion, as well as homosexuality. All of them provide details of moral practice and interpret the Buddhist theories behind the practice. Some philosophers regard Mahāyāna *upāya* as a bridge between

⁴⁹ Comparing Shenxiu and Huineng's understanding of enlightenment, Kalupahana's admiration for Huineng's verse was "against the background of Shenxiu's verse" and he approved of "abandoning the search for a metaphysical entity (that is one's own nature, identified with an ultimate reality in the highest state of meditation) and recognizing an ultimate goal of morality (namely buddhahood, or what was referred to in the *Vahracchedika* as the *dharmakāya*). (Kalupahana 1992: 230-234) This is consistent with his discussion on the eight *jhānas*/contemplation/meditation and the highest form of knowledge/wisdom recognized by the Buddha – knowledge of the waning of influxes/*āsavakkhaya*, Kalupahana argues that the moral content of the knowledge of the cessation of influxes, is most important, because it is the culmination of the moral rectitude with which the process of meditation began. If a person does not reach this final stage she can immediately revert to the state in which she first set out on the practice of meditation, that is, the first stage of *jhānas*/contemplation. (David J. Kalupahana, *A History of Buddhist Philosophy*, Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press 1992, pp. 30-59). This was not so explicitly emphasized, though mentioned, in his previous writings (David J. Kalupahana, *The Principles of Buddhist psychology*, New York: State University of New York Press 1987, pp. 63-65, 72-73; *Buddhist Philosophy: A Historical Analysis*, (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1976) 56, 63-64; See also H. Saddhatissa, *Buddhist Ethics* (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 1970); and *Buddhist Ethics* (Somerville: Wisdom, 1997) 127-149.

⁵⁰ Cousins, L. S. "Good or Skilful? Kusala in Canon and Commentary", *Journal of Buddhist Ethics*. 1996 No. 3.

⁵¹ Keown, 1992: 129-164 As Keown states in his book this is a descriptive account of Mahāyāna ethics where he distinguishes two kinds of *upāya*, exploring them with a special emphasis on moral agents.

liberal democracy and Buddhism (Garfield 2002:206-219). Using different methods, many philosophers have exerted themselves on behalf of a perfect understanding of the principle of the Middle Way and the real meaning of the Twofold Truth in Mahāyāna Buddhism.⁵² None of them has excluded ethical aspects and social issues. It has been said that Jay Garfield's study of Nāgārjuna's *Mulamadyamikakarrika/The Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way* not only provides a magisterial translation of the text (1995) but also puts forward an analysis of the Buddhist account of the limits of thought and language, of causality, and of the structure of subjectivity, and further points out the connections and tensions between Buddhist ethics and the liberal democratic discourse of moral and political rights (2002). A reductionist critique analyzes the moral agent *Bodhisattva* in Mahāyāna ethics as amounting to "an empty person".⁵³

An examination of these approaches will provide "a perfect understanding of the principle of the Middle Way as well as of the real meaning of the Twofold Truth" in Mahāyāna Buddhism, hence grasping an understanding of virtues leads to the good and the right when self as a moral agent employs *upāya*, especially where wrongful killing is involved, in Mahāyāna moral philosophy.⁵⁴

THE MIDDLE WAY AND THE TWOFOLD TRUTH: UPAYA AND KUSAL

As noted above, to perfectly understand Mahāyāna ethics is to understand its principle of the Middle Way and the real meaning of the Twofold Truth. The Twofold Truth reveals the truth of life and reality while the principle of the Middle Way provides the insight and method to deal with them. Mahayana ethics brought about a "shift in the centre of gravity of Buddhist ethics" with a new emphasis on moral virtue "as a dynamic other-regarding quality, rather than primarily concerned with personal development and self-control" (Keown 1992: 142; 131). The dynamic other-regarding quality is the virtue of compassion and the practice of

⁵² Typically, M. Siderits's method is analytic, J. L. Garfield's focus is on the philosophy of language and hermeneutics, Kalupahana's approach is mainly psychological, D. Paul and R. M. Gross's approach is feminist. There are also ethical, political, historical, biographical and textual approaches. M. Cummings, P. E. Karetzky, and R. E. Fisher's artistic approach with interpretative notes are also helpful for understanding Buddhist ethical, metaphysical and epistemological principles.

⁵³ See Mark Siderits, 2003: 197-209 and Jay L. Garfield, 2002: 92.

⁵⁴ See A. J. Ayer, *Philosophical Essays* (Macmillan, 1954) 245-246. Some philosophers distinguish ethics and moral philosophy as two different areas. Here moral philosophy is used to refer to theoretical reflection on morality while ethics is used to refer to the whole domain of morality. In fact, they have features in common.

Kusala. *Upāya-kausalya* (Sanskrit) or *upāya-kusala* (Pali) is means (*upāya*), which are wholesome, skillful and wise (*kausalya* or *kusala*). The improper emphasis on means (*upāya*) for a long time overlooked the quality and the end of the means -- overlooked the qualification “wholesome, skillful and wise” -- *kausalya* or *kusala* (*Aṅguttara Nikaya* 1.263; Cousins 1996: 154-155). *Upāya-kausalya* can refer to the *bodhisattava* perfections of morality, wisdom, and concentration and unification, and the Bodhisattva Path includes compassion, wisdom and *upāya*.⁵⁵ Therefore, *upāya* as an important feature of Mahayana ethics must retain the essence of the Twofold Truth and the Middle Way and manifest the moral virtues of *kusala*, especially, compassion.

The principle of the Middle Way/*majjhima-patipadā*⁵⁶ was applied in the early Buddhist tradition by the Buddha. In his first sermon,⁵⁷ the Buddha taught that there were two extremes to be avoided: overindulgence in sensuality and self-torture. Buddhism is thus the Middle Way between the two and between some other pairs of opposites, such as eternalism and annihilationism. In the Eightfold Path/*ariya atthangika magg*: (right views, right resolve, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right meditation) which has three divisions of wisdom, morality and meditation, avoiding all those extremes⁵⁸ is the middle way. The Middle Way is the overall principle of Buddhism while the Eightfold Path is the means and end of Buddhist enlightenment and provides specific principles and specific virtues towards enlightenment/nirvāna. “By participating in the Eightfold Path one participates in those values, excellences or perfections, which are constitutive of enlightenment, namely morality/*śīla* and insightful knowledge/*paññā*. The following of the Eightfold Path is therefore best understood as the gradual cultivation of moral and intellectual virtue” (Keown 1992:107). Some scholars thought that morality and the Eightfold Path are like “the scaffold” which would be left behind when one achieved *nirvana*, but philosophers of recent decades insist that morality is the end of nirvana and must be the state of mind of an enlightened person, therefore, *kusala* actions should be the spontaneous responses of a *bodhisattva*-in-training or a fully enlightened *bodhisattava*.

⁵⁵ About the perfections and the stages of the Bodhisattva Path see Harvey 2003: 128-130; Keown 1992: 134.

⁵⁶ *The Majjhima Nikāya/The Collection of the Middle Length Sayings*, 3:8., 13:5; as a way to end suffering 9:18, 141:23; detailed analysis, 117:3., 141:23.

⁵⁷ Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta in *Samyutta Nikāya/ Connected Discourses of the Buddha*. Bhikkhu Bodhi trans. (Somerville: Wisdom, 2000) 55:2.

⁵⁸ *The Majjhima Nikāya/The Collection of The Middle Length Sayings*, 32., 9:11, 19:26, 33:24, 44:51, 44:9, 11:13 etc.

The Buddha also analyzed and summed up all the physical and mental phenomena of a person's existence as five aggregates/*skandas*: body/form, feeling, perception, mental formations and consciousness. These appear to a person as his or her "true and real" self. According to the Buddha, the five aggregates cannot be identified as the self, that is, the enduring and substantial ground of personal identity. The so-called self is something "bogus." The notion of the self has only a conventional validity -- the truth of existence -- and it does not signify any ultimate immutable entity subsisting at the core of a person, the truth of reality. It is because of the anxiety generated by the limitations of human sense-experience, knowledge and existence that human beings often try to go beyond them and postulate conceptions of eternal selves and immutable substances. The Twofold Truth deals with (1) our conventional understanding of ourselves as existing persons using the functions of our faculties as the standard to judge what is real; and (2) the ultimate reality of the non-essence and the non-existence of anything, including ourselves, all being unreal. The former is the conventional truth while the latter is the ultimate truth. In the early Buddhist tradition, very often the Buddha talks in terms of conventional or relative truth *summuti/vohārara-sacca/ lokasamvrtisatya* according to which people and things exist just as they appear, but when the Buddha addresses an audience capable of appreciating his thought, he speaks in terms of ultimate truth/*paramattasacca/paramārthasatya*, which identifies the ultimately real fact (*Majjhima Nikāya* 5; 115:12). The doctrine of no-self is about the ultimate truth of the self, or about the ultimate absence of a metaphysical self such as the *ātman*.⁵⁹ When the Buddha taught ultimate truth by using conventional truth, he seemed to be using *upāya* as means, a means derived from one of his virtues or dispositions and from his good will, and he decided, it seems to use conventional truth to teach. The Buddha forcefully expounded his view on the self in his discourses⁶⁰ to reveal the impermanent nature of the existence of a person and the world, to highlight suffering and no-self/*anatta/anātman* and to reject the brahmanical self/*ātman*, the metaphysical self. He states that the impermanent is suffering, and all that is impermanent, suffering and subject to change cannot be regarded as mine, as I or as self. So, the concept of the self as *ātman*, as an agent that functions consciously, is thereby eliminated. The Buddha argues that because we cannot bend the five aggregates/*skandas* to our will, they cannot be taken as mine, I, or self and,

⁵⁹ The Buddha rejected the Brahmanical concept *ātman*, and developed his doctrine of non-self/*anātman*. According to *Bṛhadaranyake Upanisad* (1.4.1-16), a classical example, the metaphysics of the self and of the world are combined in the one concept of *ātman*, the social philosophy with the four-fold caste system as its base, and the moral ideal based on the caste system, which is designated by *brahman*.

⁶⁰ *Samyutta Nikāya*: 2; *Majjhima Nikāya*: 102, 2.8, 11, 22; *Digha Nikāya*. M. Walshe trans. (Boston: Wisdom, 1995): 22: 14-15, 22.26; 35.20.

if we insist on trying to do so, it will lead to suffering/*dukkha*. The Buddha is not denying each and every concept of “I” in the world that is associated with the aggregates, but only the metaphysical self, the project of the mind.

In the Mahāyāna Perfection of Wisdom/*Varjracchedika* discourses and others texts such as *Lankāvatāra*,⁶¹ *Avatamsaka*,⁶² and *Saddharma-pundarika*, the Middle Way and the Twofold Truth have been developed and classically construed with negations in Nāgārjuna’s Mādhyamika Doctrine of Emptiness.⁶³ Mahāyāna Buddhism extended the early Buddhist teaching of no-self to all things in the world; thus, ultimately everything, including *nirvāna*,⁶⁴ is empty or without essence, and therefore non-existent. As we discussed above, our concept of “self” is only the construction of our minds as sense experiences or the *skandhas*. Our “self” is unreal, though we live and function as existent beings from the standpoint of commonsense and convention. At one and the same time, we are real though we possess no eternal essence, and are ultimately non-existent from the standpoint of ultimate reality. This kind of vision and knowledge leads us to peace, liberation and enlightenment or *nirvāna*, according to the Buddhist tradition. It is the Middle Way. Generally, the Middle Way skillfully avoids extremes and is non-absolutist. In moral decision-making, the principle of the Middle Way allows moral agents to achieve a sharp insight, seeing through the facts of the current event to discover the need to follow the moral precepts and rules or to infringe on them to some extent in order to get wholesome results for others and for the agent. This alters rule-worshiping in such a way that it is able to deal with extreme situations. This is participating in the Eightfold Path. The Middle Way principle demands the conjunction of morality, meditation and wisdom. Therefore, to apply the principle of the Middle Way is to regard morality as both a part and the end of the Way and not only as the means, especially when applying *upāya*.

The understanding of the Middle Way and the Twofold Truth also helps us to understand where the virtue “compassion” comes from and why an action of *upāya* is necessary. Existence is merely a process of mental and physical phenomena, and ultimately there is no essence, substance or real ego-entity within or beyond the process. The twelve factors of *dependent arising*⁶⁵ reflect the principle that all existent things/*dharma*s, including sense experiences, are “dependent”⁶⁶ and therefore, without essence. Such

⁶¹ *Mahasunyata*; *Taishō*:16:670.

⁶² *Miaofalianhuaqing/Lotus Sutra*, *Taishō*: T9N262.

⁶³ Nāgārjuna, *Mūlamadhyamakakārikā/the Fundamental Wisdom of the Middle Way*. J. L. Garfield trans. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.

⁶⁴ Conze Ed., trans. *The Perfection of Wisdom in Eight Thousand Lines and its Verses Summary* (Bollinas: Four Season Foundation, 1973) 99.

⁶⁵ *Paicca-samuppāda* (Pali)/*pratitya-samupāda* (Sanskrit).

⁶⁶ The “first cause” is denied here and there is no clue to indicating the beginning of existence as self-existent. It is similar to the dependence asked by

is the nature of existence. Nāgārjuna's Mādhyamika theory apparently equated emptiness with this principle of *dependent arising* (MMK24: 18-19) and provided the ground of the Bodhisattva's moral motivation of compassion⁶⁷ in Mahāyāna Buddhism. Xuanzang's Weishi/Consciousness-only/Yogācāra theory planted the non-existence of the self and all *dharma*, including consciousness,⁶⁸ in the soil of China. Fazang's theory on *li*/principle and *shi*/reality of the Huayan school is not only compatible with the Tiantai theory on "yininanshanqian/the three thousand worlds immanent in an instance of thought," but also reveals the relation between oneself and others. It provides another reason for compassion and motivation to inspire one to moral actions. Therefore, compassion becomes the key motivation of the ideal Mahāyāna moral agent, a bodhisattva. With great compassion, bodhisattvas take vows to eliminate the sufferings of all sentient beings, even foregoing their own enlightenment or *nirvāna*. All of these things involve the Twofold Truth and are related to morality.

Some may argue that it is more plausible that the impersonal badness of suffering/*duhkha* could better serve as the root of the Bodhisattva's moral motivation of compassion.⁶⁹ It means that without a metaphysical account of the ultimate truth of suffering the commonsense of the impersonal badness of suffering could serve as a good motivation for compassion so that bodhisattvas might eliminate suffering of all sentient beings (Siderits 2003: 110-111, note b). However, if people are told that suffering does not indicate real pain, which can be relieved by a doctor, but

the shadow reflected in the *Zhuangzi* (chapter 2). Causality is an important concept to ensure the chain of the transformation of sense experience; at the same time it has become a great problem of Buddhism according to some philosophers.

⁶⁷ See Siderits, 2003: 208-209, which claims to point out three difficulties, I partly agree with him and will discuss this later.

⁶⁸ Xuanzang's *Chengweishilun* was influenced by Dharmapala (439-507) and based on the ten philosophers' interpretations of Vasubandhu's Yogācāra Teaching on Consciousness Only/vijñaptimātratā (*The Thirty Verses*). It reduces theories on the self into three kinds and criticizes them as completely false and suggests that the self is without essence. It also uses the four points of argumentation to reduce all *dharma*s to emptiness. Consciousness in his *Chengweishilun* is always changing and transforming and is an instrument to prove the truth of the emptiness of the self and dharmas. *Taishō* 31:1585. Through Kuiji's (632-682) interpretation of Xuanzang's *Chengweishilun* (*Taishō* 43:1830), Vasubandhu's doctrine was naturalized in China through Xuanzang.

⁶⁹ Siderits indicates that this can rest entirely on common-sense observations about what we do and do not do when we investigate "ourselves" and our practices. (M. Siderits, 2003: 209: note. n.) He uses Santideva's argument in *Bodhicaryāvatāra*: 8. (Crobly and A. S. Skilton, *The Bodhicaryāvatāra*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996).

is caused by our ignorance of our ultimate non-existence and the non-existence of all things, there will be a sharp distinction between avoidable pain and suffering. If we hold commonsense to be the foundation of moral motivation in Mahayana Buddhism, it will be one-sided and will ignoring a detrimental element into Mahayana ethics and moral practices. Compassion as a great virtue in Mahayana ethics is not only compatible practically with conventional truth but also, more importantly, with ultimate truth, which brings ultimate liberation and ends suffering. In point of fact, it should be stressed that conventional truth is sometimes extremely important. The whole doctrine of *karma*, as internal merit and rebirth, has its validity only in the realm of conventional truth. That is why by liberating ourselves from the viewpoint of conventional truth we cease to be subject to karmic law. Compassion is for all, in my opinion, not solely for others, from the viewpoint of the Twofold Truth. *Kusalya-Upāya* as skilful and wholesome means manifests the virtue of Compassion.

UPAYA AS MEANS AND AS END: THE MIDDLE WAY IN MAHAYANA MORAL PHILOSOPHY

The most important innovation in Mahāyāna moral philosophy is the complex notion of Skilful Means (*upāya-kausalya*) and the equally complex moral agent *bodhisattva/pusa*. *Upāya*, as mentioned above, is the skilful means, or expediency, or expedient means, or even “pedagogical skill” according to many. *Upāya*, generally, signifies means that are skilful and wholesome. Being “skilful and wholesome”, *upāya*, similar to Confucian *quan*, is not only means but also end (as morality), which shows that morality/*sila* in Mahayana ethics is not only a part of the path of enlightenment but also the end of enlightenment.

Keown describes two kinds of *upāya*. One of them refers to *upāya* within normative or conventional ethics and is applied by *bodhisattvas-in-training*, who have cultivated the “moral qualities as encompassed in the first five perfections.”⁷⁰ Their morality/*sila* (which here could be *upāya-kusala*) and insightful knowledge/*pañña* (which here could be wisdom/*prajñā*) work together to take a moral action skillfully as *upāya*, breaching minor precepts or rules, these breaches being regarded as no offences. The other kind of *upāya* is applied by *bodhisattvas* or Buddhas who have perfected the qualities of the seventh stage of the *bodhisattva* path or beyond. By the seventh stage the *Bodhisattvas* are perfected in the two divisions of the first six stages of ethics and insight and especially *upāya*. These *bodhisattvas* do not concern themselves with “normative

⁷⁰ The ten perfections/pāramitās are: 1. Generosity 2. Morality 3. Patience 4. Courage 5. Meditation 6. Insight/wisdom (*prajna*) 7. Skilful Means (*upaya-kusalya*) 8. Now he/she is certain to attain Buddhahood and his or her vow reaches perfection; 9. Strength. 10. Knowledge (*jnana*). See Harvey 2000:129-131; 373-374; Keown, 1992: 130.

ethical conduct” and act with an undefiled intention or pure compassion (*karunā/bei* and/or *anukampa/lianmin*⁷¹ for others. They can commit serious offences and transgress the rules without punishment. This *upāya* is beyond normative ethics or trans-moral.⁷² However, the difficulties here are, first, that in practice there is no sharp line dividing minor offenses from serious ones. Secondly, except for the Buddha and some great *bodhisattvas*, such as Guanyin/*Avalokiteśvara*, it is hard to judge who is perfected to which stage of the *bodhisattva* path. Thirdly, and most absurdly, given that many *bodhisattvas* in Mahayana discourses, though they have been declared to be celestial beings and have refused “having thus gone” (being gone), come back to human life as moral examples (normative concepts have already been used by the original texts themselves) and got involved in normative moral practice -- helping all sentient beings -- how can they then not be considered as being moral agents? And why should we not analyze what they have done by means of normative ethical concepts? Therefore, in my view a *bodhisattva* can be judged within normative ethics if and only if he or she in Mahayana Buddhism is involved in moral issues. It is compatible with the Twofold Truth.

In the Mahāyāna text, Santideva’s (685-763) *Bhōdhicaryavatāra*,⁷³ instructions for *bodhisattvas* are discussed: “The son of the Conqueror who has adopted the Awakening Mind with great resolve in this way should, ever tireless, strive hard not to transgress the training” (Crosby and Skilton 1996: IV: 1:25). “Realizing this, one should always be striving for others’ well-being. Even what is prohibited is permitted for a compassionate person who sees it will be of benefit.” (V: 84: 41). We can see only those *bodhisattvas* with compassion/ *karunā* and great insight/*prajñā* can practice *upāya-kuśala*..

Thus, having realized the highest truth, he should always be zealous in procuring the welfare and happiness of beings. And if someone should object, “How can he avoid committing an offence (*āpatti*) while engaged in what is forbidden?” [The reply is that] the lord has taught that what is forbidden may be performed by one who perceives with the eye of knowledge a special benefit for beings therein. And the teachings of the Lord bring about salvation. But the

⁷¹ Boundless sympathy and pity for another or others and desire to help.

⁷² Keown, 1992: 157-160. Siderits also agrees to divide *upāya* into two kinds: one is related to conventional morality, the other is trans-morality and is practised by *bodhisattvas* who have insight into the grounding of the ultimate morality (Siderits, 2003: 110-111, note b)

⁷³ Compare this translation with M. L. Matics, *Entering the Path of Enlightenment/Rupusaxinglun/The Bodhicaryavatāra of the Buddhist Poet Santideva* (from Sanskrit), London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971; and Keown’s translation (1992: 151) and Skilton 1996.

foregoing [exemption] does not apply to everyone: only to [cases of] the exercise of compassion in its highest degree by one who is of a compassionate nature, who is without a selfish motive, solely concerned with the interests of others and totally dedicated to this [ideal]. In this way there is no offence for one who is skilled in means (*upāya-kuśalya*) and who works for the interests of others with insight (*prajñā*) and compassion (*karuṇā*)⁷⁴.

Following this, we may formulate a definition of *bodhisattvas*. *Bodhisattvas* are perfected in both their moral qualities and insight. Their intentions are pure enlightenment of other beings by eliminating their sufferings and bringing welfare to them, even at the expense of forgoing their own enlightenment towards *nirvāna*, thus manifesting their accumulated virtues and wisdom as compassion and skillfulness. Their actions/*kuśala* have been separated into two types: those furthering the spiritual perfection of themselves, leading to the attainment of enlightenment; and those aiming at karmic merit-building/*puñña* by serving others. Depending on each author's understanding of the above factors, each book on Mahāyāna ethics has its own definition of *bodhisattvas*: "beings for enlightenment", "celestial beings",⁷⁵ and "completely enlightened beings".

A *bodhisattva/pusa*'s moral duty is to eliminate the suffering of any sentient being and to spread the dharma with compassionate actions, including *upāya*, even by forgoing their own enlightenment/*nirvāna*. This by no means claims Mahāyāna ethics to be "superior"⁷⁶ or outstanding among the ethics of other intellectual Eastern and Western philosophies. "There are enough references to precepts, virtues, and moral models to suggest that Mahāyāna Buddhism involves a moral perspective not merely as a world view, but directly as a system. In either case ongoing research may uncover the phenomenon that Mahāyāna Buddhist morality contains no precepts and values which cannot be found in alternate or even stronger form in other major ethical traditions" (Hindery 1978: 248).

In Mahāyāna ethics, all discourses/*suttas/sūtras* discussing *bodhisattva* moral precepts, codes and rules are called *pusajie* in Chinese. There are essentially three divisions: *Fanwang* or the *Brahmajāla-sūtra* (Fanwang⁷⁷ and Yingluo⁷⁸), *Yujiajieben* or *Bodhisattva-prātimoksa*

⁷⁴ Prajnakaramati's comment in *Aṅguttara Nikaya: The Book of Gradual Sayings* E. M. Hare trans. (London: SML, 1935) 1: 204.

⁷⁵ Willard G. Oxtoby, ed. *World Religions: Eastern Traditions*. (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1996).

⁷⁶ Keown explored the question of the superiority of Mahāyāna to Theravada Buddhism (C. Damien Keown 1992:137-154).

⁷⁷ Fanwangjing/Brahmajāla translated by Kumārajīva (344-413) *Taiśhō* 24:1484; *Digha Nikāya*: 1; *The Xuzang* 24:10b: 1004.

(Yujia,⁷⁹ Dichi,⁸⁰ Shanjie⁸¹) and *youposejie*,⁸² which are specific precepts for the laity. There are six kinds of Chinese texts⁸³ and there are also other scattered sūtras, including *Pusaneijiejing* with some forty-seven rules for *bodhisattvas*.⁸⁴ In China, the *yogācāra* Yujiajeben (*Bodhisattva-prātimoksa*) enjoyed considerable prestige up to the time of the Tang dynasty when it was eclipsed by the popularity of the *Fanwangjing* (*Brahmajāla-sūtra*), which acknowledged more explicitly the virtue of filial piety. It is interesting that the discourses of the *yogācāra Bodhisattva-prātimoksa* were translated three times⁸⁵ during three or four centuries before and during the Tang dynasty (618-907), and all of them included the category of permitted offences. This reflects the difficulties of moral judgment and decision-making, as well as the necessity of the principle of the Middle Way.

The chapter *pusadi/Bodhisattvabhūmi* on the ethics of the *bodhisattva* stage presents itself as the alternative code of conduct for a *bodhisattva* as a moral agent.

On one hand, like all Mahāyāna texts on morality, it stresses the six perfections/*liudu* (sometimes the ten perfections), and the four major precepts/*sishe*: controlling greed, stinginess, anger and insolence to others. These precepts elucidate *sanjujingjie*, the three modes of Mahāyāna morality: the ethics of the vows of temperance, continence, restraint and self-control (*samuvāra*); the ethics of accumulating virtues, a subjective personal moral perfection linked to intellectual cultivation in the quest for enlightenment; and the ethics of contributing to the welfare of sentient beings -- an objective recipient -- oriented precept which focuses on the needs of others. It starts with *sichongjie*, the four "Offences of Defeat," then the forty-three secondary codes, though some traditional commentaries enumerate them as forty-five or forty-six (Tatz, 1986:24).

On the other hand, the most striking feature in the whole chapter is the group of seven permissions, which explicitly authorizes the breaking of the first seven rules established in the popularly accepted

⁷⁸ Pusayingluobenyejing, *Taishō* 24:1020.

⁷⁹ Yujiashidilun 41, *Taishō* 30:1579:516-521 was for the first time translated and named *Pusadichijing* by Tan Wu Zhen of the Beiliang dynasty in 414. Then it was retranslated and named *Pusashan jiejing* by Qiunabamo from Liu-song dynasty in 367-431. In the seventh century Xuanzang translated it again and named it *Yujiashidilun*. Most scholars use this translation now. See also Yujia shidilunshi 40, *Taishō* 30:1580:511-515.

⁸⁰ Pusadichijing, *Taishō* 30: 1581: 511-521.

⁸¹ Shoushishan jiejing, *Taishō* 24:1486. Translated by Tan Wu Zhen.

⁸² Youposejiejing, *Taishō* 24:1488.

⁸³ They are *Fanwang-pusa-jieben*, *Pusa-yingluo-benyejing*, *Yujiashidilun-pusajieben* *Pusadichijing-Jieben*, and *Pusashan jiejing-jieben*.

⁸⁴ Foshuopusaneijiejing, *Taishō* 24:1487:1028.

⁸⁵ See the note of Yujiashidilun.

Brahmajāla-sūtra/Fanwang. These rules are abstention from: taking life, taking what has not been given, sexual misconduct, lying, slanderous speech, harsh speech, and frivolous talk. The first three of them are physical actions while the remaining are verbal actions.⁸⁶ None of them is unrelated to mental elements and mental states. Breaking these seven rules is “reprehensible by nature,” and they are repeated in almost all Buddhist discourses on morality. In contrast to the seven modes of reprehensible conduct, the seven permitted offences/*wuweifan*⁸⁷ can be summarized by the following:

1. Permission to engage in compassionate killing. Taking the life of people about to commit an act entailing immediate retribution/*anantāya-karma* in order to prevent them suffering the evil in consequence of that act.
2. Permission to engage in compassionate stealing. Causing a cruel ruler to fall from his position of authority, or repossessing property taken from the *sangha* or a *stūpa*, or causing monks who abuse their position of authority to lose their rank.
3. Permission to engage in compassionate sexual misconduct. Having sexual intercourse with an unmarried girl in order to prevent her from forming thoughts of hostility if her advances are rejected.
4. Permission to tell compassionate lies. Telling a lie in order to save the lives of beings or to save them from bondage and mutilation.
5. Permission to engage in compassionate slander. Separating beings from evil friends and bad company through slander.
6. Permission to use compassionate harsh words. Using harsh speech to discourage beings from evil.
7. Permission for compassionate idle chatter. Indulging in singing, dancing and idle chatter to convert beings who are attracted by these things.

I would like to focus on the permission to engage in compassionate killing to analyze the moral agent’s virtue, intention, decision-making, and state of mind in an extreme situation. It is stated in the chapter on *pusajie* that “[e]ven in the case of what is reprehensible by nature, the bodhisattva acts with such skill in means [*upāya*] that no fault ensues; rather, there is a spread of much merit.” Thus, the Bodhisattva may see a robber engaged in committing a “great many deeds calling for immediate karmic retribution”,

⁸⁶ *Digha Nikāya*: 1.

⁸⁷ Wuweifan rendered with references to *Bodhisattvabhūmi* (Asanga, *Bodhisattvabhūmi: being the XVth section of Asangapada's Yogacarabhūmi Yogācārabhūmi*. Sanskrit ed. Nalinaksha Dutt (Patna: K.P. Jayaswal Research Institute, 1978) 95-129, all items beginning with *Anāpatti /wuweifan* being collected together; with Taishō 41:1579:516-21 (10.2) which Xuanzang used “huo” or “ruo” as beginning; also with Colin Martin Tatz, *Aborigines & Uranium and Other Essays* (Heinemann Educational Australia, 1982),

being about to murder “many hundreds of magnificent living beings” for the sake of a few material goods. What appears in the *bodhisattva*’s mind is that

- a. If I take the life of the sentient being, I myself may be reborn as one of the creatures of hell;
- b. Better that I will be reborn a creature of hell than that this robber should go straight to hell for what he does;
- c. The Bodhisattva ascertains that his thought is virtuous or karmic indeterminate and then feeling constrained, with a thought only of compassion for the consequences, he takes the life of that robber.

We may gather (a), (b) and (c) as the following points:

- a. Killing is reprehensible by nature.
- b. Double consequences: This killing eliminates others’ suffering, the robber’s karmic retribution, and brings suffering only to “myself”.
- c. My intention is compassionate and pure (It justifies the rightness of my action. I understand it is what I ought to do.)
- d. Consequently, it is better that “I” suffer in hell than that the robber suffers in hell or others suffer from what the robber has done (the good).
- e. I take another’s life only in dire circumstances for others’ benefit where there is no alternative choice.

In the *Basic Path to Awakening*, Tsong-Kha-Pa (1357-1419) made a comment on this and emphasized two points:

- a. At the time of killing the agent must ascertain the state of his mind to be virtuous or karmically indeterminate, and entirely unmixed with defilement and the like.
- b. This action must be constrained by the situation. “There is a paucity of alternatives, since he can find no other means.”⁸⁸

The *Dashanquanjing/Upāya-kauśalya Sūtra* shows taking life to be un-reprehensible “when it develops from a virtuous thought.” The Buddha in a past life was a *bodhisattva* sea captain named the Great Compassion, who was transporting 500 merchants. One night he was informed that one of the passengers was a robber intent on killing all the merchants for the purpose of stealing their goods. He pondered deep and long on how to prevent this, thinking: (a) If the robber does what he wants, he would suffer in hell for eons; (b) if he informs the merchants, they will kill the robber and they would suffer in hell for eons; (c) it is to the benefit of others if he

⁸⁸ Mark Tatz, *Asanga's Chapter on Ethics with the Commentary of Tsong-Kha-Pa, The Basic Path to Awakening, The complete Bodhisattva* (London: Edwin Mellen Press, 1986), 214-215.

kills the robber and only he suffers in hell “for a hundred thousand eons.”⁸⁹ This provides a detailed description of how skilful means *upāya*, insight/wisdom and compassion/morality work together to lead to this double consequence moral action, which is certainly different from the Catholic Double Effect, which will be discussed further on. The moral discretion of this *bodhisattva* is within normative ethics. What the agent ultimately intends is to eliminate suffering and benefit and enlighten others (and himself), what the agent does not intend as his ultimate goal is just killing the robber and incurring suffering in hell. What he does is an action, chosen on the basis of deliberation between the conflicting values of the lawful and unlawful, the right and the evil, and the good and the bad. It is the Middle Way. My understanding is that the Middle Way helps people to come to a wise and compassionate final decision based on what the real situation needs in order to obtain a result in morality before the thoughts of decision are put into actions. However, the premise of this decision-making should be based on compassion, and thus on Mahayana Buddhist ethics. It is not only right but good. From a Buddhist point of view, this concern for others has no residue of selfishness. When we apply the idea of the Middle Way, we know that our judgement of an event is not based on the event itself, but on the real situation or circumstances. Some strict teachings are applied in Chan Buddhist teachings, whereby, good is not real good, and bad is not real bad. For everything is “ultimately” empty. Good and bad are relative, not absolute. This is a view from an ultimate point of view. Thus, a moral judgment on an event, normatively, is based on considerations from all different angles, such as what the intention of the agent is and what the real situation is and needs in order to make in the end a morally satisfying decision best fitting the event, even though this decision may not be perfect in the absolute. In Buddhism, moral decisions or judgments made on the basis of wisdom must also contain compassion.

“For pure bodhisattvas, their mother (*matr*) is the perfection of wisdom (*prajñā prajñāpāramitā*), and the father is skilful in means (*upāya-kauśalya*): the leaders of the world.” Accordingly, wisdom without skilful means is bondage, and wisdom acquired through skilful means is deliverance; skilful means with no wisdom are bondage, and skilful means

⁸⁹ Translated from Chinese *Huishangpusa -wendashanquanjing (Taishō 12:345:156 Jnanottara- bodhisattva- paripreccha) Upāya-kauśalya* trans. from Chinese by Garma C. C. Chang, *A Treasury of Mahayāna Sūtras: Selections from the Maharatnakuta Sūtra* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1983) 427-68; and translated from Tibetan *Upāya -kauśalya-nama Mahayāna Sūtra/ The Skill in Means (Upāyakauśalya Sūtra)* (trans. by Mark Tatz, New York: Pantheon Books, 1994) 73-76; See also Paul Williams, *Mahayana Buddhism* (London: Routledge, 1989) 145 and Harvey, 2000 135-38.

acquired through wisdom are deliverance.⁹⁰ For pure *bodhisattvas*, wisdom and skilful means, or compassion, must be possessed and utilized simultaneously in order to achieve the ultimate perfection of spiritual cultivation. Benefiting both others and an agent they are the achievement of perfect spiritual cultivation. The suffering of the moral agent in the story demonstrates a great insight on the part of the Buddha on the way to enlightenment. It is only at this conventional level that a double-consequence action could become a means to benefit others and the agent. For the agent, this is a necessary moral process of the perfection of wisdom, and for others the avoidance of suffering and immediate karmic retribution.

JUSTIFICATION AND FURTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Argument of Intention

The dominant role of intention and the function of mind have been found in various Buddhist writings which justify the application of *upāy* as the means as well as the end of the perfections of Bodhisattva. In the “Fragment of a Commentary to the Twenty Verses From Dunhuang” we can see all actions the Bodhisattvas take are justified by their intention: “With it as your lofty intention” (verse 2b), and we can see that bodhisattva ethics should be received by the candidate with pure intentions by the candidate whose intentions are lofty -- free from dishonesty -- and who is desirous of awakening.⁹¹ “This attempts to safeguard the right and the good of an action by a perfected person/*bodhisattva*. How then to prove that “compassionate killing, lying, stealing, etc.” are not reprehensible? The “Permission to Murder” section (reference to *Basic Bodhisattva Path*: note 395) tells us that “the *Skill in Means Scripture* shows taking life to be irreprehensible when done with detachment and so forth. When it develops from a virtuous thought (because the thought is conjoined with detachment and so forth), it is virtuous. All those done by body (murder, theft, and sexual intercourse) are presented in relationship to thought.”⁹² And, it continues, the Buddha has declared:

Mind precedes events, chief in mind; born from mind
There is a positive thought, and speech or action follow;

⁹⁰ *Weimojiejing/Vimalakirtinirdesasutra* VII.6.1. VI. 16. According to *Madhyamikavatara /zhonglun* 1.2. compassion is the seed of Buddhahood since it provides the motivation to gain enlightenment for the benefit of others.

⁹¹ The author is unknown. The Twenty Verses from Dunhuang on bodhisattva vows were taught by the master Candragomin as an easy introduction for other sentient beings to come forth. See Tatz, 1986:315.

⁹² Appendix D in Tatz, 1986: 323. In this way, speaking harsh words, telling a lie, and estranging friends for the benefits of sentient beings are all justified.

There is a negative thought, and speech or action follow.
 And
 All the world is guided by thought, completely led by thought;
 Every event follows after thought alone.⁹³

So application follows intention, and killing with a pure intention is not to be condemned from both conventional and absolute points of view. It seems to me that the virtuous intention should definitely have double consequences: one is good, bring benefits or advancement of interests to sentient beings, the other is bad, killing, speaking harsh words, telling a lie, and estranging friends, etc. Performing these actions to perfect oneself is the end while performing them with good intentions becomes the means.

We had better distinguish what the preceding discussion calls “double consequence moral action” from what Catholic moral teaching calls “double effect”. “Nothing hinders one act from having two effects, only one of which is intended, while the other is beside the intention. ... the act of self-defense may have two effects: one, the saving of one’s life, the other, the slaying of the aggressor.” In addition, there are three more conditions. In the first place, if one’s intention is saving one’s own life, it is not unlawful to kill the aggressor, and it is natural from a commonsense moral perspective. At the same time, the right of self-defense is not unconditional, and is only permitted in a constrained set of circumstances with the agent not using more violence than necessary.⁹⁴ In discussions down through the centuries to the present day, the doctrine has developed more conditions for the principle of Double Effect. One of them focuses on the act; “The act itself must be morally good, or at least indifferent.” Two of them stress the good effect: “The good effect must flow from the action (in the order of causality, though not necessarily in order of time). In other words, the good effect must be produced directly by the action, not by its bad effect. Otherwise, the agent would be using a bad means to a good end, which is never allowed.” Additionally, “[t]he good effect must be sufficiently desirable to compensate for the allowing of the bad effect.” Comparing this with the ethical codes of *upāya*, we see that only one of these conditions considers the state of mind of the agent without abandoning the importance of the good effect: “The agent may not positively will the bad effect but may permit it. If he could attain the good effect without the bad effect, he should do so. The bad effect is sometimes said to be indirectly voluntary.”⁹⁵ Therefore, “double effect” is to this

⁹³ Appendix D in Tatz, 1986: 323-324.

⁹⁴ Aquinas, Thomas. *Summa Theology* II-II, Q. 64, art. 7, “Of Killing”. in W. P. Baumarth and Richard J. R. S. J., ed. *On Law, Morality, and Politics* (Cambridge: Hackett, 1988) 226. See also II-II, Q. 43, art. 3; I-II, Q. 72, art. 1 for explanations of why what is beside intention is accidental.

⁹⁵ The four conditions listed in Gale Group & Catholic University of America ed. *The New Catholic Encyclopedia*. (Thomson Gale 2002) 1021; and

extent consequentialist in nature. If we use act-utilitarianism as a standard to compare the notion of *upāya* and the principle of Double Effect, we find that *upāya* is closer to it, while double effect is not. Roughly speaking, “act utilitarianism is the view that the rightness or wrongness of an act depends only on the total goodness or badness of its consequences, i.e., on the effect of the action on the welfare of all human beings (or perhaps all sentient beings)” (Smart and Williams 1967: 1). Act-utilitarianism advocates the intention to maximizing the good -- an intention upon which a *upāya* -- practicing bodhisattva does act. But the Catholic Double Effect principle forbids acting and intending thus by certain forbidden means, a constraint absent alike from the act-utilitarian teaching and the bodhisattva ethics endorsed at any rate for extreme cases. Both *upāya* and Double Effect stress the limited set of conditions under which it is permissible to take another’s life, which seems dissimilar to Fletcher’s situation ethics. Fletcher claims that for any moral agent the correct orientation for decision-making should be adopted on the basis of the single principle of love. “Christian situation ethics has one norm or principle or law (call it what you will) that is binding and exceptionless, and always good and right regardless of the circumstances. That is ‘love’ -- the *agape* of the summary commandment to love God and thy neighbor.” (1966: 30) Buddhist compassion is the controlling norm justifying *upāya* and can match Christian love on the score of inner goodness, while Double Effect does not make such strong demands on the moral agent’s state of mind.

I will provide two examples for further inquiry. From one of the Confucian classics the *Guo Yu*, *the Conversations of the States*, we read a chapter “Shao Gong Let His Son Die to Save the King Xuan of Zhou (r. 827-782).” It is said that in 824 BCE there was a rebellion. King Xuan was hidden in Shao Gong’s House. The rebels surrounded the house and demanded the king’s life. Shao Gong exercised his moral discretion and applied expediency. He let his son go out as King Xuan, because the rebels did not know what King Xuan really looked like. This action saved the life of the King. Shao Gong considered that this is the Way/*Dao* of a minister. He said to the King, “I have given you many suggestions about the policies of the government. You have never listened to me. That is the cause of today’s rebellion. Now I let my son to be killed instead of you. A minister in serving his ruler in danger ought to take the risk without complaint; if he

Joseph Mangan’s list in “A Historical Analysis of the Principle of Double Effect” *Theological Studies* 10: 43 (1949); as well as the translation of the four conditions in Boyle, Joseph “Toward Understanding the Principle of Double Effect”.in *Ethics* 90, (University of Chicago Press, 1980) 527-38; reprinted in Woodward, P. A. ed. *The Doctrine of Double Effect: Philosophers Debate a Controversial Moral Principle*. (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2001) 8.

complains with suggestions he should not be angry with his master. I should serve you in this way.”⁹⁶

- a. Shao Gong did not intend to kill his son.
 - b. His intention is to save the king.
 - c. He took an action that justified his correct intention which is identical to the principle of Double Effect.
 - d. This action fulfills his duty as a minister.
- At the same time,
- e. This action is also obedient to the dictates of consequentialism from Shao Gong’s perspective.
 - f. According to “virtue ethics” the minister Shao Gong can claim that he shows his moral virtue in his decision-making.

Another example is taken from “Methods of Handling Affairs” in the *Reflection on Things at Hand*. In his conversation Cheng Hao happened upon the subject of “one who was about to speak but hesitated and stopped.” He said, “If one should speak, even if it is to demand someone’s head, he must speak as Jing Ko demanded Fan Wuqi’s head.” “He must speak in such a way that his speech sounds firm and decisive” as the *Analects* 19:9 advocated, according to him. Zhu Xi remarked on Cheng Hao’s teachings on this issue and set a standard for one to act, which emphasized the importance of li/principle “What one should speak about should be in accord with principle/li. The case of Fan Wuqi is not in accord with principle.” That is, to kill or to commit suicide is not in accord with the principle of Neo-Confucianism. Zhu Xi wanted to stress sincerity/*cheng* as a cardinal virtue playing a crucial role when a moral agent makes a decision to act. He said, “Master Cheng referred to it simply to show that one should speak even if it is most difficult to do so” (*Zhongyong Huowen*). This conversation is based on a story recorded in the *Shiji/ the Historian Sima Qian’s Record* (86: 21b). Fan Wuqi was a general of Qin who deserted to the Yan State and became a retainer of the Yan Prince. The King of Qin set a price on his head. Jing Ko (d. 277 BCE) was also a retainer of the Prince of the Yan State and a professional swordsman. He was ordered by the prince to assassinate the King of Qin. Thereupon he spoke to Fan, saying that if he could have Fan’s head to present to the King of Qin, the King would surely receive him and he would then have a chance to stab the king at close range. Fan hated the king so much that he was willing to sacrifice himself to have the king killed. He in effect committed suicide. In this case,

- a. Cheng Hao’s intention emphasizes the moral agent’s purity of mind or inside goodness. By citing the *Analects* 19:9 he claims that good intentions will make the agent firm and decisive in acting. An action, such as speaking or killing in the case of Fan or Jing Ko, is decided by the agent’s virtue or disposition. From them is derived the rule or standard to act firmly and decisively.

⁹⁶ Huang, Yongtang. *Guo Yu Quan Yi: Conversations of the States* (Guiyang: Guizhou Renmin, 1995) 5: 15-16.

b. Zhu Xi agrees with Cheng Hao in emphasizing the internal purity of the agent. At the same time he considers that killing in Fan's case is not in accordance with the general principle of an action which is morally and metaphysically in accordance with Neo-Confucianism.

c. Jing Ko's demand for Fan's head is not justified by the Principle of Double Effect. He was aiming at Fan's suicide or murder Fan and took it as means to an end, which would result in killing the King of Qin. Jing Ko may justify himself by saying that he is practicing *Yi* or justice. He can also claim that following the prince's order is his duty and displays the virtue of loyalty.

d. Fan could also claim that he is practicing *yi* or justice. He did not intend to kill himself (though, as his death seen as means to the result he desired, Catholic Double Effect teaching would regard it as wrongfully intended). He just intended to kill the King of Qin as the means to his ultimate goal of bringing justice and peace to the people during a time of warfare. Or he may even simply say that his intention is to practice *yi*, and nothing else.

Human Aspiration to Perfection and the Rectification of Names

The above examples help us to examine the concept of *quan* (moral discretion) as a practical moral principle and as a virtue of a person rather than as a notional concept for playing with similar notions in the world of ethical traditions.

In discussing the human aspiration to perfection leading towards *nirvāna* as a goal in Buddhist ethics, some scholars compare it with Aristotle's teleological ethics and advance an interpretation that advocates practices directed towards at self-perfection as *summum bonum*. They thus address human nature in the interests of fostering certain human potential which could be regarded as virtues. "For Aristotle, only the wise are virtuous and only the virtuous are wise."⁹⁷ *Upāya* as wholesome in means actually represents compassionate (affective) and wise (cognitive) decision-making and action-taking. As mentioned above a pure *bodhisattva* takes perfection of wisdom, including moral and intellectual perfections, as father while taking *upāya-kusala* as mother. It parallels the relation between virtue and wisdom in Aristotle's ethics. Life is by nature good according to Aristotle and to good men existence is good and pleasant (*Nicomachean Ethics* 1170a30-b19 214), so that even wrongfully taking another's life with good intentions is not a virtuous action. The names of actions such as adultery, theft, and murder "already imply badness" (1006b36-11107a25 39). Virtue lies in a kind of mean, aiming at what is intermediate (1106b9-1106b35 38). The Middle Way of *upāya* is not different from Aristotle's mean. But the theory of the moral agent's employment of skillful

⁹⁷ Anthony John Patrick Kenny, *Aristotle's Theory of the Will* (London: Duckworth, 1979) 80.

means and the metaphysics behind such ethics are quite different from what can be found in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Even if eliminating suffering is the duty of the moral agent, applying *upāya* is also different from what we find in Kant's deontological ethics, metaphysically and ethically.

My translation of the first item on the list of the seven permissible offences as "compassionate killing", in contrast to the precept "no killing" stipulated in the *Bramajāla Sūtra* has underlined its ethical meaning. Benevolence and love as pure affect may bring harm. To justify the *bodhisattva*'s compassionate killing action I would like to use the Confucian concept of the rectification of names/*zhengming*. First of all, in the *Analects*, we read, "Let the ruler be a ruler, the minister be a minister, the father be a father, and the son be a son." (12:11) This idea was also supported by others in such words as "Do not fly for the birds and run for the horses" and as "Act without action. Doing without any doing." (*Daodejing* 63) That is, who you are may impose on you the duty of not acting outwardly. *Bodhisattvas* have their own duties and functions. Compassionate killing is one of them.

Secondly, in the *Mencius*, "The King Xuan of Qi asked, 'Was it a fact that Tang (founder of the Shang Dynasty r. 1751-1739 BCE) banished King Jie, a wicked King (r. 1802-1752 BCE), and the King Wen of Zhou banished King Zhou of Shang?' 'Yes. According to records.' Mencius replied. 'Is it all right for a minister to murder his king?' Mencius said, 'One who injures humanity is a bandit. One who injures righteousness is a destructive person. Such a person is a mere fellow; I have heard of killing a mere fellow Zhou, but I have not heard of murdering him as the ruler.'" Therefore, the *bodhisattva* would kill the mere fellow as murderer or bandit, not as a man with responsibilities.

Thirdly, I would like to use the two principles Zhu Xi added to the exercise of *quan*: righteousness and timely equilibrium/*shizhong*. With the virtue of righteousness the *bodhisattva* decided to override the rule "no killing" in certain circumstances in order to practice righteousness and compassion and eliminate a large amount of suffering on the part of all the people involved. He did so at the right time. His moral discretion made him choose the appropriate action between the good and the bad, and between extreme harm and suffering and extreme benefit for everyone involved. Therefore, his *upāya* is a means as well as a perfection of the middle way.

From the standpoint of the ethical assessment of actions, consequences, characters and motives, we can see both *upāya* and *quan* cited in the attempt to provide an ideal action-guiding principle in order to produce right action and to bring out the best consequences in any given situation. At the same time they both require a perfect quality/virtue on the part of the moral agent. However, each has its own difficulties, ethical as well as metaphysical, and therefore, recourse to the ideal principle was limited to Confucian sages and Mahāyāna *bodhisattvas* rather than being available for use by average moral agents. So, the importance of the character of the agent is emphasized as the guarantee of his good will,

righteousness or compassion, with the elimination of suffering being the only motive of the *quan* or *upāya*. Given the uncertain level of the purity of character and intent of even the best-intentioned rule-breakers, both Neo-Confucianism and Mahāyāna ethics, influenced by religious and social practices and by an awareness of human selfishness, brought in the powers of supernatural beings, *bodhisattvas* and sages, and put the quality of their virtue for *quan* and *upāya* at a level beyond merely human ability, thus causing some moralists to regard the *upāya* as something beyond normative ethics. In my view, Neo-Confucianism and Mahāyāna ethics have rationally explored the necessity of *quan* and *upāya* and have rationally argued for them from virtue-based and rule-based models. However, contrary to what they have said, it is not necessary to regard such very great offences as outside of the sphere of normative ethics as long as human virtues and moral principles can handle them. In fact, killing is not only a moral issue; it involves laws. As exemplars of morality, sages and *bodhisattvas* encouraged moral cultivation positively and provided inspiration for average moral agents in the two philosophical traditions. Negatively, they become “empty images” beyond the reach of an average moral agent. The Twofold Truth and the “no-self” doctrine can easily make “ignorant people” lose the direction of their lives.

The Middle Way as a moral principle or method must be workable, its rules or codes must not lay a heavy burden on agents. The Middle Way as the Eightfold Path is workable in practice and has its lofty status. It might be desirable for altruism or fairness to figure more in any concept of morality, but the result of such principles could be moral despair, deep or undue moral guilt feelings and ineffective action. The Middle Way is aimed at reducing these negative potentialities. The discussion of the Middle Way, its manifestations of *upāya* and *quan* and their consequences on the agent’s side show the overly idealistic nature of the Middle Way. Such discussion encourages the agent to do better and better in a positive way, but never the best. The Middle Way, in moral practice, prevents extreme action and decision-making. It makes people want to create a harmonious environment within their given forms of life. It is practical in many ways. Negatively, it is “empty” for there is no substance there, which is to say, any action or decision could reach some stopping point on the way -- but never the true destination.

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GLOSSARY

Dichi 地持

Fangbian 方便

Fanwang-pusa-jieben 梵網經菩薩戒本

Foshuopusaneijiejing 佛說菩薩內戒經

Gujin zhi zhengquan 古今之正權

Guanzhuibian 管錐篇

Huishangpusa-wendashanquanjing 慧上菩薩問大善權經

jiequan yi zishi 籍權以自飾

Liudu 六度

Kuiji 窺基

Lianmin 憐憫

Pusadichijing-Jieben 菩薩地持經戒本

Pusaneijiejing 菩薩內戒經

Pusayingluobenyejing 菩薩瓔珞本業經

Quan 權

Quan we iquan mou, zhan yong han fei, shi wei shi lu, jiu jing zhi gui.

權謂權謀，暫用還廢，實謂實錄，究竟指歸。

Sanjujingjie 三聚淨戒

Shanquanfangbian 善觀方便

Shizhong 時中

Shoushishanjiejing 受十善戒經

Sichongjie 十重戒

Tongquandabian 通權達變

Wuweifan 無違犯

Yiniansanqian 一念三千

Youposejie 優婆塞戒

Yuanzhi yishou zhe, quanye. 援之以手者，權也

Zhao Qi 趙歧

Chapter XI

Chong Yagyong's Four Books Learning

Tsai Chen-Feng

THE FORMATION OF THE ZHU XI'S FOUR BOOKS LEARNING

The *Great Learning* (大學) and the *Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸) were originally two of the 49 chapters of the *Book of Rites* (禮記). However, ever since the Han dynasty, scholars have attached a high level of importance to these two chapters and separate works written for the sole purpose of discussing them have been in circulation. Among the most important of these were the *Explaining the Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸說) in two chapters listed in the *Yiwen zhi* of the *Han Shu* (漢書□藝文志) and the *Explication and Commentary on the Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸講疏) in one juan written by Emperor Wu of the Liang dynasty and listed in the *Jingji zhi* of the *Sui Shu* (隋書□經籍志). Liu Xin (劉歆, style name Zijun 子駿, ?- 23 BC) classified the *Great Learning*, in one chapter, as a general work on Confucianism in his *Bielu* (別錄). (Kong Yingda (孔穎達): 983) In the Tang dynasty, Han Yu (韓愈, style name Tuizhi 退之, 768-824) gave the *Great Learning* an extremely high evaluation, at one point citing the phrase and “seek to be sincere in thoughts and rectify the mind-heart” (誠意正心) from that work as being the basic principle of governing. (Han Yu: 7-11) During the Song dynasty, the status of the *Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of the Mean* was elevated even higher. To begin with, Sima Guang (司馬光, style name Junshi 君實, 1019-1086) separated these two chapters out of the *Book of Rites* and wrote his *Expounding on the Meaning of the Great Learning* (大學廣義) and *Expounding on the Meaning of the Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸廣義). After the Cheng brothers -- Cheng Hao (程顥, style name Bochun 伯淳, known later as Mingdao 明道, 1032-1085) and Cheng Yi (程頤, style name Zhengshu 正叔, known later as Yichuan 伊川, 1033-1107) -- gave prominence to them, these two works came to be put on the same level as the *Analects and the Mencius*.¹ During the Southern Song dynasty, Zhu Xi (朱熹, style name Yuanhui 元晦, 1130-1200) followed the lead of the Cheng brothers and began treating these two chapters as independent works that could stand on their own. He then wrote his *Commentary on the Doctrine of the Mean* (中庸章句) and *Commentary*

¹ This view originated in Chen Zhensun (陳振孫)'s *Shulu jieti* (書錄解題) and is quoted in Qian Jibo, *Sishu jieti ji qi dufa* (四書解題及其讀法), Taipei: Shangwu Yinshuguan (1973), p. 1.

on the *Great Learning* (大學章句), which together with his *Commentary on the Analects* (論語集註) and *Commentary on the Mencius* (孟子集註) were combined into one work, the *Collected Commentaries on the Four Books* (四書章句集註). The subsequent increase in Zhu Xi's influence led to the Four Books becoming the most fundamental Confucian texts and one of the basic teaching materials of Confucianism in East Asia.

Zhu Xi's lumping together of the *Analects*, the *Great Learning*, the *Doctrine of the Mean* and the *Mencius* was not simply based on the content of these four books, but rather because he saw them as separate but integral parts of a whole. It is because of this integrated view that we can that in terms of the history of intellectual thought, his grouping of these four works was significant for creating the notion of "Four Books Learning" (四書學). Zhu Xi's Four Books learning can be explained through an appeal to three separate lines of thought. To begin with, Zhu Xi reinterpreted the development of Confucianism through the establishment of an orthodox tradition starting with Confucius (*Analects*) and extending through Zengzi (曾子, *Great Learning*), Zisi (子思, *Doctrine of the Mean*) and Mencius (*Mencius*). Secondly, Zhu Xi used his interpretation of the *Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of the Mean* to establish his own worldview based on nature (性) and principle (理), with which he then went on to establish his own brand of Confucianism. Lastly, he attempted to make up for shortcomings in Confucianism by using the metaphysics found in the *Doctrine of the Mean* to respond to the intellectual challenges of Buddhism.

Ever since Ouyang Xiu (歐陽修, style name Yungshu 永叔, 1007-1072) scholars had been highly skeptical that Zisi was the author of the *Doctrine of the Mean* (Ouyang Xiu: 3-4) or that Zengzi had penned the *Great Learning*. Zhu Xi, however, argued strongly that the *Doctrine of the Mean* was indeed written by Zisi in order to strengthen the orthodox tradition that he championed. According to him, the original text in the *Book of Rites* could be divided into one section written by Zisi and ten sections of commentary. Likewise, Zhu Xi believed that the theoretical system of the Four Books contained distinctions between a "mind-heart of *dao*" and a "human mind-heart" on the one hand and "heavenly principle" and "human desire" on the other. This "mind-heart of *dao*" was on the level of principle, that is to say, it represented man's a priori innate goodness, a "nature of heaven and earth" that contained all the different principles. The "human mind-heart" was the principle incarnated in *qi* (氣), in other words, a "nature of combined principle and *qi*" (氣質之性). According to Zhu Xi, this combined nature of principle and *qi*, as a matter of course, concealed the heavenly principle, but as this concealment did not entail an essential change, it was still possible to restore one's nature through training. In other words, it was possible to restore one's original and pure nature through the methods of "maintaining quiescence" (主敬) and "exhausting principles" (窮理). To respond to the theories of emptiness put forward by Daoists and Buddhists, Zhu Xi affirmed the phrase "what

the Heavens confer is called 'nature'" (天命之為性) (*Doctrine of the Mean*, Chapter 1) in the *Doctrine of the Mean* as resolving the relationship between Confucius' moralistic teachings and nature and the heavenly *dao* (道). At the same time, the phrase "sincerity is the *dao* of the Heavens; making oneself sincere is the *dao* of man" (誠者，天之道；誠之者，人之道) (*Doctrine of the Mean*, Chapter 20) was combined with the idea that "sincerity is the beginning and end of all things; without sincerity there is nothing" (誠者，物之始終；不誠，無物) (*Doctrine of the Mean*, Chapter 25) to resolve the question of the relation between the doctrine of the mean and nature.

REACTIONS AGAINST ZHU XI'S FOUR BOOKS LEARNING IN EAST ASIA

The special meaning that Zhu Xi imparted in the Four Books helped him to formulate a complete philosophical system. At the same time though, it also had the effect of changing the status of the other Confucian classics. In other words, beginning in the Yuan dynasty, the privileged position of the Four Books in the imperial examination system resulted in the Five Classics, previously considered the basic books of Confucianism, being relegated to a subordinate position. This is not to say that this transition went unopposed by scholars. In China, opposition to the Cheng-Zhu school of philosophy began with the Song dynasty scholar Ye Shi (葉適, 1150-1223), continued into the Ming dynasty with scholars like Wang Tingxiang (王廷相, 1474-1544) and Wu Tinghan (吳廷翰, 1489-1559), and was taken up in the Qing dynasty by Yen Yuan (顏元, 1634-1740) and Dai Zhen (戴震, 1723-1777). Generally speaking, their opposition took two forms. The first was to question the place of the Four Books in the Confucian tradition and the orthodoxy that was based on it from the viewpoint of authorship. The second was to question the legitimacy of Zhu Xi's view of nature and principles from the viewpoint of interpretation. Thus Ye Shi argued that Confucius never put forward anything like a "doctrine of the mean" and that such a position could not have been passed down from antiquity. (Ye Shi: 840) On the other hand, Yen Yuan suggested that while "the Confucian way envisioned by Zhu Xi embodies the complexities and subtleties of Buddhism" it was not orthodox Confucianism. (Yen Yuan: 282)

Outside of China a similar trend was also seen. During the 17th century Zhu Xi's philosophy began to be known in Japan from a number of Chinese textbooks written from students preparing for the Ming civil examination system. Thus Japan became a part of the East Asian Confucian circle. In the Tokugawa period, Itō Jinsai (伊藤仁齋, 1627-1705) undertook a textual critique of the Four Books using a standard that he referred to as "the bloodline of Confucius and Mencius" (孔孟之血脈). This critique

set the stage for “ancient learning” (古學, kogaku), a type of scholarship aimed at discovering the ancient meanings of the classics that can be seen as the first deconstruction of the Four Books during the Tokugawa period and the beginning of a Japanese Confucianism stripped of of Zhu Xi’s Four Books learning. Itō Jinsai engaged in a reinterpretation of the text of the Four Books whereby he critiqued Zhu Xi’s Four Books Learning, denied the privileged status of the *Great Learning*, and proposed an emphasis on the “Three Books”, namely the *Analects*, the *Mencius*, and the *Doctrine of the Mean*. (Itō Jinsai: 3) After that, Ogyō Sorai (荻生徂徠, 1666-1728) took Itō’s opposition to Zhu Xi a step farther with his *Daigaku kai* (大學解). In this book, which is replete with criticisms of Zhu Xi, (Ogyō Sorai, *Daigaku kai*: 9) Ogyō treats the *Great Learning* as a commentary instead of a classic, (*Ibid.*) and argues that the *Doctrine of the Mean* was intended as a response to Daoism. As such, he argues, it represents a line of thought that is at times inconsistent with the thought of Confucius (Ogyō Sorai, *Chūyō kai* (中庸解): 1-2) and that has consistently resulted in misunderstandings on the part of later Confucians. (*Ibid.*: 2)

If we take Itō and Ogyō together, we can see that even though they didn’t attempt to write commentaries to the classics, they did, in fact, represent a movement aimed at shifting the locus of the standard texts of Confucianism away from the Four Books and towards the Six Classics. For Itō, understanding the “bloodline” of the *Analects* and the *Mencius* would enable one to comprehend the Six Classics, (Itō Jinsai, *Gōmō zigi*: 78) which were identified as the four classics of the *Book of Songs* (詩經), the *Book of Documents* (尚書), the *Book of Changes* (易經), the *Annals of the Spring and Autumn Period* (春秋經), together with the classics detailing rites and music (禮樂), the latter two being seen as supplemental to the political and educational teachings of the former four. Ogyō, on the other hand, saw the teachings of the saints as being preserved in the Six Classics and emphasized the study of the *Book of Songs*, the *Book of Documents*, and the classics detailing rites and music. (Ogyō Sorai, *Benmei*: 41)² Whether it was the “learning of morality and daily living”, and “benevolent way of the king” emphasized by Itō or the “way of the early kings” characterized by “rites, music, penalties and regulations” (Ogyō Sorai, “Bendo” : 201) championed by Ogyō, their fundamental orientation was opposed to Zhu Xi’s theories of *li/qi* and mind/nature in favor of an interpretation of Confucianism that centered around rule by a king through rites and music.

In Korea, Song Learning had been getting the attention of scholars ever since An Hywang (安珣, 1243-1306) began promoting Zhu Xi Learning during the Konyō period. In 1367, under the reign of King Seingjong, Yi Saek (李穡, style name Mogūn 牧隱, 1328-1396) had the

² For this paper, an Edo-era edition of this book at the National Taiwan University Library was used.

Seonggyun-gwan (成均館) rebuilt and sparked an interest in Song Learning with the establishment of system of academies for the teaching of the Five Classics and Four Books (these academies were later to become known collectively as the Nine Course Academy (九齋)). The Choson dynasty followed the example established in the Konyō period of including the Nine Course Academy under the Seonggyun-gwan. The Confucian classics were chosen for use in the civil examination system, with Zhu Xi's commentaries on the Four Books given the place of honor. After that, every educated person in Choson became acquainted with the Four Books through Zhu Xi. During the middle and late periods of the Choson dynasty, though, the scholar Chong Yagyong (丁若鏞, style name Tasan (茶山), 1762-1836) embarked on a study of the Four Books that was different not only from that of his contemporaries and their emphasis on nature and principle, but also in that it differed from the interpretations of Zhu Xi and Wang Yangming (王陽明, 1472-1528) in China.

On the surface, Chong's denial that the *Great Learning* was written by Zengzi (Chong Yagyong, *Taehak kongyu*: 1) and his belief that there was ancient material³ that supported Zisi's claim to the authorship of the *Doctrine of the Mean* appears to be very similar to Itō's Three Book Learning based on the *Analects*, the *Mencius*, and the original text of the *Doctrine of the Mean*. However, Chong's distinct interpretation of the *Great Learning* would seem to allow us to speak of a Four Books Learning unique to Chong. Zhu Xi's interpretation of the "investigation of things" (格物) and "extending knowledge" (致知) in the *Great Learning* was the backbone of his Four Books Learning. Chong, on the other hand, used his own interpretation of the *Great Learning* to attack Zhu Xi Learning. Such a move is more fundamental and radical than Itō's dismissal of the *Great Learning* and, as such, is certainly worthy of our attention.

ANCIENT LEARNING IN CHONG YAGYONG'S FOUR BOOKS LEARNING

A review of Chong's Four Books Learning shows a few basic presuppositions in his interpretations of the Four Books. To begin with, there is a clear predisposition towards "ancient learning" in Chong's interpretation of the Confucian classics, for instance when he traces the origins of the *Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of the Mean* (for example the former being seen as originating in the "The Counsels of Gao Yao" (皋陶謨) chapter of the *Book of Documents*). (Chong Yagyong, *Taehak kongyu*: 42) Chong also finds the tone of discussion of pleasure, anger, sorrow and joy in the *Doctrine of the Mean* to be similar to that of the ancients,

³ For example, the Tang dynasty scholar Lu Deming (陸德明) asserts in his *Jingdian shiwen* (經典釋文) that: "The *Doctrine of the Mean* was written by Kongzi's grandson to glorify the character of his ancestor".

especially a passage in the *Jinyu* (晉語). (Chong Yagyong, *Cwungyong kanguy*: 6) Because Chong finds the tone of discussion on nature and principles among later scholars to be different from that of the ancients, he proposes: “the (meaning of the) original text of the *Doctrine of the Mean* should be sought using the tone of people of that time”. From this we can see that Chong has completely bypassed Zhu Xi’s Four Book Learning to base his understanding on antiquity.

Chong’s “ancient learning” takes two basic directions. The first, which stems from his dissatisfaction with scholars of the Choson dynasty’s acceptance of the authority of Zhu Xi, is to revive studies of the Classics. In his ‘Sipsam kyengchayk’ (十三經策), he says:

During the time when the great Ming dynasty ruled the world and civilization reached new heights, Zhuzi was revered and trusted, heterodox theories were forbidden, and the Four Books and Three Classics were in the schools. Hu Guang (胡廣) and Xie Jin (解縉) compiled the Daquan (大全) books and caused all scholars under the Heavens to abandon reason and forego thought and be unified in one direction. As a result, all of the different schools of thought from the times of the Han dynasties on down were unable to avoid (the fate) of being stored away in high towers and becoming waste paper. Insofar as it rectified the tradition of the hundred schools of thought and corrected the errors of an age, such a work certainly had its contribution, but on the negative side there was no absence of errors on the side of overcompensation. And so those of little learning in degraded times, the base and worthless, did not from the start know that there are arguments (to determine) differences and similarities and that there is a basis for the old and the new. Instead, they put their faith in platitudes, as petty learning became the fashion as that which they took to be made by the Heavens clogged their minds and senses. It was then that those who looked to the ancients find a base were accused of interested in novelties and those who used the classics to evaluate the commentaries were ridiculed as chasing after curiosities. So it came to be that the *Book of Rites* (儀禮) became trash, the *Rites of the Chou* (周禮) became an esoteric work, the *Gongyang* (公羊) and *Guliang* (穀梁) commentaries were regarded as heterodox, the *Erya* (爾雅) and *Book of Filial Piety* (孝經) came to be looked at like Daoist talismans, the names of Ma Rong (馬融) and Zheng Xuan (鄭玄) were seldom heard, and Kong (孔)’s *Shu* (疏) and Jia (賈)’s *Shi* (釋) were not to be seen. Ignorance and arrogance resulted, and

(people) were no longer able to undertake the mantle of their predecessors. The extent to which this culture of ours has been blotted out has never been as serious as it is today. My! Everything under the Heavens begins with one principle, diverges into 10,000 different particularities, and then converges into one principle in the end. For this reason, the teaching of the Sages moves from the comprehensive to the essential. Today, understandings of the classics are varied and numerous and without any structure whatsoever. Were one not be able to carefully pick and choose, the end result would be that the way of the classics would be all but extinguished. (Chong Yagyong, "Ohak lon" (五學論): 25)

In this section, Chong uses the phrase "abandon reason and forgo thought, and be unified in one direction" to describe the state of scholarship in Choson at the time. From the severity and harshness of his criticism we can see his dissatisfaction with the scholars of his time. This dissatisfaction led Chong to advocate *sirhak*, (實學, practical learning), as when he wrote "seek only what is right, act only on what is right, uphold only what is right", (Chong Yagyong, 'Tap li yehong se': 29) in an attempt to revitalize Confucianism at its most basic level.

The second direction Chong's "ancient learning" takes might have originated in an interpretation of Confucianism common to both China and Japan that centered on the use of rites and music in governance. For our purposes, it would be worth our while to consider the influence of Itō and Ogyō's *kogaku* (ancient learning). From Chong's 'Ilpon lon il' (日本論一) (Chong Yagyong: 4) we can see that Chong believes the credit for the transformation of Japan from a "uncivilized country" that is "infatuated with Buddhism, taken with the strength of arms, and (exists) only to prey on countries along the seas" to a one in which "civilization has triumphed" and that "observes rites and propriety and considers the implications and ramifications (of deeds)" belongs entirely to the "ancient learning" school associated with Itō, Ogyō and Dazai Shundai (太宰春台, 1680-1747). From this his incredibly high view of the school of ancient learning should be quite clear. Furthermore, when he writes that "civilization has triumphed", from the point of view of ancient learning it should be clear that, on an intellectual level, he is referring to being able to understand the way of Confucius' Six Classics and, on a practical level, implementing the rites, music, laws, and government of the ideal ruler.

BASIC STRUCTURE OF CHONG YAGYONG'S FOUR BOOKS LEARNING

Given the description above of the tendencies towards ancient learning, there are two aspects of the Four Books Learning as developed by Chong that warrant further discussion. The first is the notion that there should be a connection of some sort between Four Books Learning and study of the Six Classics. The second is that Four Books Learning should put aside the world view of *li/qi* based on the dichotomy between heavenly principle/human desire (Chong Yagyong, 'Ohak lon': 19) in order to connect discourse on the heart-mind and nature with that of the rites, music, penalties and regulations of the ideal ruler. In his 'Ohak lon il' (五學論一), Chong states:

But when studying in ancient times, it was known that nature was based on Heaven, that principle originated from Heaven, that morality was the way to achieve the Way, that filial piety, obedience, loyalty and trust were the basis of serving Heaven, rites, music, penalties and regulations were the tools for ruling people, and that "seeking to be sincere in thoughts and rectifying the mind-heart" were the axis connecting man and Heaven. This was called benevolence, acting with benevolence was called reciprocity, dealing with others with benevolence was called respect, and holding oneself with benevolence was called the Middle Way (中和之庸). That was all there was to it, and there was not much discussion of it. And even if there was discussion, it was all redundant, repetition, and nothing new.

Rites formalize action that is in accordance with filial piety, obedience, loyalty and trust; those who are not aware of this say that names, objects, systems and techniques (名物度數) are unimportant trappings of the Way, and that there is someone in charge of seeing to the uses of the ritual objects. Music pleases (those) acting in accordance with filial piety, obedience, loyalty and trust; those who are not aware of this say that chanting, singing, and dancing are not relevant to the world of today, that music is just made up of vocals and the sounds of bells and drums. Penalties and regulations guide action that is in accordance with filial piety, obedience, loyalty and trust; those who are not aware of this say that learning involving the matching of names and reality and utilitarianism (功利之學) is cast aside by the sages. Gestures and dress maintain action that

is in accordance with filial piety, obedience, loyalty and trust by providing for different countenances for sacrifices, receiving guests, attending the imperial court, martial displays, private audiences, and funerals that can not be interchanged; those who are not aware of this collapse them into a single rite: kneeling. (Chong Yagyong: 19)

The above passage has two main points. The first is that Chong believes that the ancients discussed the relation between Heaven and man in terms of three aspects, namely “filial piety, obedience, loyalty and trust were the basis of serving Heaven”, “rites, music, penalties and regulations were the tools for ruling people”, and “seeking to be sincere in thoughts and rectifying the mind-heart” were the “axis connecting man and Heaven”. Since Chong also holds that “rites formalize action that is in accordance with filial piety, obedience, loyalty and trust”, “music pleases (those) acting in accordance with filial piety, obedience, loyalty and trust”, and that “penalties and regulations guide action that is in accordance with filial piety, obedience, loyalty and trust”, we can deduce that rites, music, and penalties and regulations exist for the sake of filial piety, obedience loyalty and trust.

From the above, we can see that Chong thinks that what is important for Confucianism is filial piety, obedience, loyalty and trust, and that the use of “seeking to be sincere in thoughts and rectifying the mind-heart” and rites, music, penalties and regulations was to glorify the way of filial piety, obedience, loyalty and trust. In other words, the purpose of both “seeking to be sincere in thoughts and rectifying the mind-heart” and rites, music, penalties and regulations, the former working on the level of individual cultivation and the latter on the level of governing the polity, is to ensure that the path of filial piety, obedience, loyalty and trust does not fall by the wayside. This notion is clearly similar to Itō's idea that the *Analects* and the *Mencius* “teach benevolence, propriety, rites and wisdom for the purpose of filial piety, obedience, loyalty and trust” (Itō Jinsai, *Daihaku teihon*: 3-4) and Ogyō's explanation of the “doctrine of the mean” as “character that is not very exalted and easily put into action, something of the likes of filial piety, obedience, loyalty and trust” (Ogyō Sorai, *Chūyō kai*: 1) and points to the influence of ancient learning in Japan on Chong.

At the same time, though, Chong is not simply borrowing from Japanese ancient learning. He marks an improvement on the school of ancient learning in that he incorporates filial piety, obedience, loyalty and trust, “seeking to be sincere in thoughts and rectifying the mind-heart” and rites, music, penalties and regulations into his framework of Four Books Learning. That is to say, the focus of the *Analects* and the *Mencius* is on filial piety, obedience, loyalty and trust due to their explication of human nature and morality; the *Doctrine of the Mean* and the *Great Learning* focus on “seeking to be sincere in thoughts and rectifying the mind-heart” in order to explain the relationship between “solitary watchfulness” (慎獨) and “seeking to be sincere in thoughts”, and nature and character from an

individual and political perspective. Likewise, rites, music, penalties and regulations are a focus of the *Great Learning* in order to explain that the rule of the ideal king starts with filial piety, obedience, and beneficence.

In the framework of Four Books Learning outlined above, the *Great Learning* is particularly important because “seeking to be sincere in thoughts and rectifying the mind-heart”, its central concept, can serve as an “axis connecting man and Heaven”. As Chong states:

Sincerity is the thing that pervades from the beginning to the end, it is that which makes thoughts sincere, it is that which rectified the mind-heart, it is that which cultivates the body, it is that which orders the house and country, it is that which makes everything under the Heavens tranquil. Thus the Doctrine of the Mean states: ‘Sincerity is the beginning and the end of all things.’ (Chong Yangyong, *Taehak kanguy*: 15)

From this we can see that he is attempting to use “seeking to be sincere in thought” as a means for handling the connection between nature (Heaven), character (man) and cultivation through government as well as making a connection with the *Doctrine of the Mean*. As such, “seeking to be sincere in thoughts and rectifying the mind-heart” can be seen as the main axis of Chong’s Four Books Learning. For this reason, Chong’s interpretation of the *Great Learning* not only brings out the unique character of his Four Books Learning but also can help explain what was revolutionary about his particular version of Four Books Learning.

CHONG YAGYONG’S INTERPRETATION OF THE GREAT LEARNING

Chong’s interpretation of the *Great Learning* is found in his two works *Taehak kanguy* (大學講義) and the *Taehak konguy*. The *Taehak kanguy* was written in 1789 when Chong was 27 years old. (Chong Yagyong, *Taehak konguy*: 1) The *Taehak konguy* was written in 1815 when Chong was 53 years old and can be seen as representing his mature thought. (Chong Yagyong, *Taehak konguy*: 8)

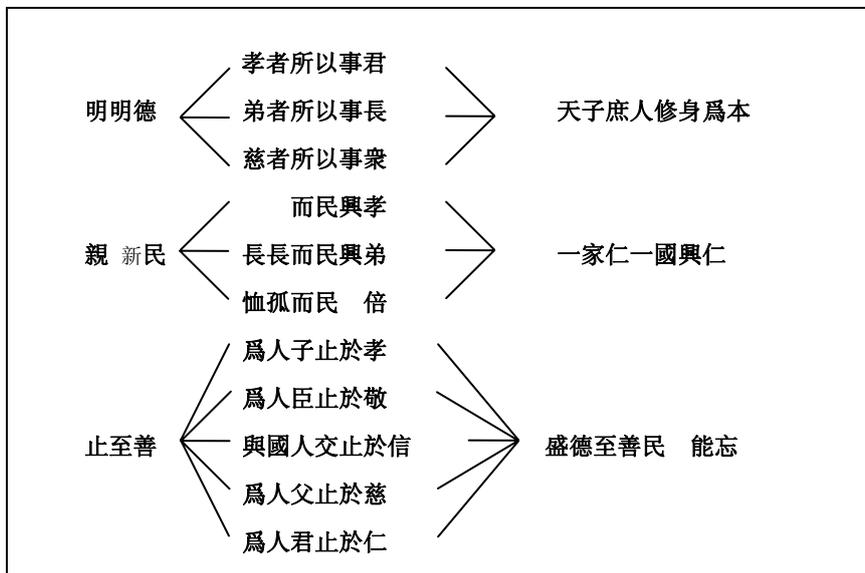
The interpretation of the *Great Learning*’s basic position in the *Taehak konguy* is extremely different from that of Zhu Xi. Even the text used is different: instead of quoting from Zhu Xi’s *Commentary on the Great Learning*, Chong quotes from the “ancient” text of the *Great Learning*. To begin with, Chong does not accept that this text was written by Zeng Zi, claiming instead that it is not possible to determine its author. (Chong Yagyong, *Taehak konguy*: 1) For this reason, the text can not be divided, as Zhu Xi did, into one section of original classic and ten sections of commentary. Instead, it is seen as being made up of 27 sections of original text. In addition, Chong accepts neither Zhu Xi’s position that the

Great Learning gives an outline of what constitutes scholarship that was used in ancient times to teach people (Li Jingde (黎靖德): 397, 401), nor his notion that in contrast to the “lesser learning”, the “greater learning” constituted “the way of exhausting principles, rectifying the mind-heart, cultivating the self to and ruling others” (Zhu Xi: 1) (窮理正心修己治人之道). (Chong Yagyong, *Taehak konguy*: 3) Chong also objects to Zhu Xi’s view of *li/qi*, preferring instead to believe that the emphasis of the *Great Learning* is not on “illuminating the mind-heart” (Chong Yagyong, *Taehak konguy*: 10) and has nothing to do with discourse on the mind-heart and nature. (Chong Yagyong, *Taehak konguy*: 12-3)

Chong’s interpretation of the *Great Learning* does not just differ from Zhu Xi’s; it is opposed to Zhu Xi’s interpretation. Overall, Chong uses his interpretation of the *Great Learning* to provide discussion of the rites, music, penalties and regulations that is otherwise lacking in the Four Books, thus raising the status of the *Great Learning* to that of the six Confucian classics. For example, he reads the first character of 大學 (*daxue*) as 太 (*tai*), and understands this schooling as being given to princes. On the strength of that, Chong takes the “way” of the *Great Learning* as being the “way of princes”. (Chong Yagyong, *Taehak konguy*: 3) What, then, actually makes up the “way” of the *Great Learning*? Chong is of the opinion that what was taught at to the princes at this school was the way of filial piety and friendship. (Chong Yagyong, *Taehak konguy*: 3) From this, we can see that he understands the art of ordering a country and making everything under the Heavens tranquil lies in “venerating elders”, “honoring superiors” and “caring for the weak”. (Chong Yagyong, *Taehak konguy*: 6) Princes are thus taught the way of filial piety and friendship to give them the foundation needed to implement rites, music, penalties and regulations.

On Chong’s interpretation, the thrust of the three main principles of the *Great Learning* identified by Zhu Xi, namely “illuminating illustrious virtue” (明明德), “renewing the people” (新民) and “coming to rest in supreme goodness” (止於至善), moves away from the explanation offered by Zhu Xi of “restoring the transcendental and unblemished original nature bestowed by the Heavens”, “people changing their old practices to (get them to) illuminate illustrious virtue” and “coming to rest in the supreme goodness of Heavenly principle untainted by personal desire and not moving therefrom”, (Chong Yagyong, *Daxue zhangju*: 1) in a new direction, that of “becoming completely conversant with the filial piety, obedience, and beneficence of one’s nature”, (Chong Yagyong, *Taehak konguy*: 6,10) “the people drawing close to each other through filial piety, obedience, and beneficence” (Chong Yagyong, *Taehak konguy*: 10) and “coming to rest in the supreme morality of filial piety, respect, trust, and beneficence and not moving therefrom” (Chong Yagyong, *Taehak konguy*: 12). Chong goes on to modify Zhu Xi’s “eight steps of cultivation” (八條目) into his own “six means of examining things and extending knowledge” (格

From the above we can see that Chong believes that the three main principles of the *Great Learning* provide an overall framework and the “six means of examining things and extending knowledge” act as a methodology and steps that centers around the beginning, end, root, and branch of “examining things”, “extending knowledge”. For this reason, if the Great Learning provides any steps for cultivation, they are based on its three main principles and are used to explain the effects of those principles. Chong’s position is that “filial piety, obedience, and beneficence” are the three steps based on those three principles. (Chong Yagyong, *Taehak konguy*: 12) Were he to have drawn up a chart to illustrate the relation between these three and the three principles, it would have probably looked something like this:



CONCLUSION

Chong Yagyong’s *Taehak konguy* is definitely an important work in the establishment of his Four Books Learning. For that reason, the peculiarities that he exhibits in his interpretation of the Great Learning are also an important part of his Four Books Learning. From the above discussion, we can draw the following observations about Chong’s unique form of Four Books Learning:

(1) he *Great Learning* forms the foundation for Zhu Xi’s Four Book Learning, so in order to develop a new version of this learning, Chong completely revamps Zhu Xi’s interpretation of the *Great Learning* to reorient it towards governance and education. The most revolutionary

reinterpretation offered is one that centers on the two terms “examining things” and “extending knowledge“. In Zhu Xi’s *Commentary on the Great Learning*, the explanation of “examining things” and “extending knowledge”, seen as being the most critical aspects of the *Great Learning*, are oriented towards a process of “restoring one’s nature” through realizing one’s origins and returning to the original nature. In the *Taihak konguy*, on the other hand, these two terms are not seen as having anything to do with the removal of obstacles in the mind-heart or a return to one’s original nature. Instead, these two terms are seen as indicating a starting and a stopping point for the progression from “cultivating the body” to “making everything under the Heavens tranquil”. From this transition in interpretation, Chong moves the emphasis of the *Great Learning* away from Zhu Xi’s nature and towards “virtue”, “action” (*Ibid*) and a teaching that begins with oneself and extends to others. At the same time, “examining things” and “extending knowledge” are linked up with rites, music, laws, penalties and regulations. Chong’s understanding of the three basic principles of “illuminating illustrious virtue”, “renewing the people”, and “coming to rest in supreme goodness“ follows the same pattern: “illuminating illustrious virtue” is taken as referring to the ruler’s own understanding of filial piety, fraternal submission, and mercy; “renewing the people” becomes making the people emulate the ruler and using the principles of filial piety, obedience and beneficence in their interactions with one another.

(2) The second major transition away from Zhu Xi’s *Commentary on the Great Learning* is to take the principle of “sincerity in thought” to be the central message of the *Great Learning*. (Chong Yagyong, *Taehak konguy*: 12, 20, 20-21, 24, 26) This allows him to combine the *Great Learning* together with the *Doctrine of the Mean* into a single system through an appeal to the phrase “sincerity is the end and beginning of all things” that appears in the latter. But while the *Great Learning* and the *Doctrine of the Mean* both having “sincerity” as their central idea, Chong sees the *Doctrine of the Mean* as leaning towards a description of the “inner principle” of “nature”, while the *Great Learning* leans towards the “daily practice” of “virtue”. “Nature” and “virtue”, though, are inseparable, just as without “reciprocity“, the “means of practicing benevolence“, there is no “benevolence”. (Chong Yagyong, ‘Tap li yehong se (Kapswu sipwel il): 35-6)

(3) Chong uses a framework to interpret the Four Books that is built around a *dao* of “the basis of serving Heaven is through filial piety, obedience, loyalty, and trust“, a teaching of “the tools of ordering man are rites, music, penalties and regulations”, and “seeking to be sincere in thoughts and rectifying the mind-heart are what connects man and the Heavens” (a conformance of nature and virtue with *dao*). With this framework, the Four Books are organized into a whole and are able to display their own individual characteristics through that whole.

(4) Chong traces the origins of the *Great Learning* back to the *Book of Documents*, saying “The ‘Counsels of Kao Yao’ is the origin of the *Great Learning* and the essence of the teaching passed down by 1,000 sages.” (Chong Yagyong, *Taehak konguy*, p.42) His intent here is to open up a new space for the Four Books by connecting them with the traditional classics. This in turn could help correct the overemphasis that scholars of his time gave to Song Learning.

While the influence of the Japanese “ancient learning” school on Chong’s Confucianism is obvious, his understanding and reconstruction of Four Books Learning was more radical than that of the “ancient learning school”. Itō based his scholarship on two elements: “bloodline” and “implication” (意味). (Itō Jinsai, *Gōmō zigi*: 59) Of these two, “bloodline” takes priority and indeed is the basis for Itō’s value judgments. Part of the reason why Itō uses “bloodline” like he does could be that he believes that the sayings of the sages (聖) and worthies (賢) were spoken with different intents. These different sayings resulted in misunderstandings among Confucians of later ages, though, causing them to turn their backs on the true way of the sages based on morality and daily life. Itō uses “bloodline” to as a means of making sure that amid the plethora of sayings that have been passed down through time, the true meaning of the sages and worthies does not get lost. From this viewpoint, Chong’s interpretation of the *Great Learning* is more progressive than Itō’s. He casts the notion of a “bloodline” to the side, preferring instead to use his commentary to cast of the authoritative view and reveal the ideas of “rites, music, penalties and regulations” and “the moral dao” to be found in the Four Books. As a result, Chong’s Four Books Learning clearly incorporates the “ancient learning” school’s notion that the Six Classics contain the *dao* of the early rulers without relying on a “bloodline” to make the connection. In that respect, we can say that among East Asian Confucians, Chong was important for being able to truly deconstruct Zhu Xi’s Four Books Learning and reconstruct his own version.

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GLOSSARY

‘Ilpon lon il’ 日本論一

‘Ohak lon il’ 五學論一

‘Sipsam kyengchayk’ 十三經策

‘Tap li yehong se (Kapswu sipwel il)’ 答李汝弘書(甲戌十月日)

‘Tap li yehong se’ 答李汝弘書

“Chūyō hashiki□Joyu” 中庸發揮□叙由

“Jinshicewen sanshou zhi san” 進士策問三首之三

“Yuandao pian” 原道篇

“Zhuzi yulei ping” 朱子語類評

An Hywang 安珣

Bendo 辨道

Benmei 辨名

Bielu 別錄

Bochun 伯淳

Cheng Hao 程顥

Cheng Yi 程頤

Chong Yagyong 丁若鏞

Cwungyong kangu y 中庸講義

Dai Zhen 戴震

Daigaku kai 大學解

Dao 道

Daquan 大全

Daxue 大學

Dazai Shundai 太宰春台

Erya 爾雅

Gao Yao 皋陶

Gōmō zigi 語孟字義

Gongyang 公羊

Guliang 穀梁

Han Shu 漢書

Han Yu 韓愈

Hu Guang 胡廣

Itō Jinsai 伊藤仁齋

Jia 賈

Jingji zhi 經籍志

Jinyu 晉語

Junshi 軍實

Kogaku 古學

Kong Yingda 孔穎達

Kong 孔

Liu Xin 劉歆

Ma Rong 馬融

Mingdao 明道

Mogûn 牧隱

Ogyō Sorai 荻生徂徠

Ouyang Xiu 歐陽修

Qi 氣

Seonggyun-gwan 成均館

Shi 釋

Shu 疏
Sima Guang 司馬光
Sui Shu 隋書
Taehak kanguy 大學講義
Taehak konguy 大學講議
Tai 太
Tasan 茶山
Tuizhi 退之
Wang Tingxiang 王廷相
Wang Yangming 王陽明
Wu Tinghan 吳廷翰
Xie Jin 解縉
Ye Shi 葉適
Yen Yuan 顏元
Yi Saek 李燾
Yichuan 伊川
Yiwenzhi 藝文志
Yuanhui 元晦
Yungshu 永叔
Zengzi 曾子
Zheng Xuan 鄭玄
Zhengshu 正叔
Zhu Xi 朱熹
Zijun 子駿
Zisi 子思
Zongshu jiangxue dazhi 總述講學大旨

Chapter XII

Itô Jinsai on Confucius' *Analects*: A Type of Confucian Hermeneutics in East Asia

Chun-chieh Huang

INTRODUCTION

Confucius (551-479B.C.) occupies the status of incomparable Exemplar in East Asia. In the traditional cultures of China, Japan, and Korea, he is revered as the One with sagely personality, exquisite literary sensibility, robust praxis and humane political principles. Venerated as the Sage par excellence, Confucius has exerted far-reaching influence throughout East Asia. Commentaries on the *Analects*, the received compilation of his didactic dialogues, are as countless as the summer stars. These commentaries have proliferated down to the present, even though Confucius lived over two millennia ago. Even today, Confucius' sentiments continue to suffuse the heart and soul of every Confucian scholar in Asia.

The present essay examines Itô Jinsai's 伊藤仁齋 (1627-1705) interpretations of the *Analects* 論語 of Confucius. Itô was Japan's foremost scholar -- of Classical Confucianism, particular -- of the 17th century. He venerated the *Analects* as "the loftiest, the greatest Primal Book in the whole universe 最上至極宇宙第一書."¹ He wrote two commentaries, *Gomô Jigi* 語孟字義 and *Rongo Kogi* 論語古義, devoting much of his life to the latter work. His eldest son reported, "He began writing this commentary when his teeth were still growing, ... and continued revising and adding to it for about fifty years, rewriting the manuscript five times."² Thus, Jinsai himself felt confident about the *Rongo Kogi*, claiming that it "elucidates what has lain hidden for ages in the *Analects* and the *Mencius*. I venture to publicize my personal opinions in this commentary on what has not been explicitly said before."³ This indeed was Itô's most representative work.

The book also represents a type of Confucian hermeneutics in East Asia, a forceful apologia for Confucius against "heresies" of Daoism,

¹ Itô Jinsai 伊藤仁齋, *Rongo Kogi* 論語古義, in Seki Giichirô 關儀一郎 ed., *Nihon Meika Shisho-Chûshaku Zenshu* 日本名家四書註釋全書 (Tokyo: Ho Shuppan, 1973), Vol. 3, p. 4. Itô Jinsai 伊藤仁齋, *Dôshi Mon* 童子問, in Iyenaga Saburo 家永三郎 et al., eds., *Kinsei Shisoka Bunshu* 近世思想家文集 (Tokyo: Iwanami Shoden, 1966, 1981), Vol. 1, p. 204.

² *Rongo Kogi*, p. 2.

³ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 4.

Buddhism, and Song Neo-Confucians. Jinsai re-interprets Confucius by offering meticulous textual exegesis with fresh intratextual annotations of the *Analects* and faithful definitions of such key notions as *Tao* 道 and *Jen* 仁 as Confucius himself meant them, on the one hand, and by intertextual collations of the *Analects* with other Classical writings to show their mutual coherence, on the other.

METHODOLOGY OF ITO'S HERMENEUTICS OF THE ANALECTS

Itô Jinsai tried to understand Confucius afresh by commenting on the *Analects* via two routes, (2.1) re-reading the *Analects* with new textual and philological annotations, to replace the Sung Neo-Confucian hermeneutics, and (2.2) meticulously comparing the *Analects* with other Chinese Classics to discern their overall mutual coherence. His fresh grasp of Confucius opened the way to a new Confucian hermeneutics.

Intratextual Annotations on the Analects

Itô's commentaries proceed in three steps. He glossed word meanings after every sentence in the *Analects*, expresses his impressions after every chapter, and sums up matters with, "I judge, saying, 論曰." The two examples below illustrate how he proceeded.

A. In *Analects* 1/12 Youzi said, "Of the things brought about by the rites, harmony is the most valuable. Of the ways of the Former Kings, this is the most beautiful, and is followed alike in matters great and small. 有子曰：禮之用，和為貴。先王之道斯為美，小大由之。"⁴ The word "用" had been interpreted variously for generations. For instance, Zhu Xi (朱熹, Huian 晦庵, 1130-1200) interpreted it according to the Sung Neo-Confucian theory of "substance (*ti*, 體) and function (*yong*, 用)." "Since decorum (*Li*, 禮), though solemn in substance, also originates with Harmony in the Principles of Nature, so both their functions must value unhurried calm."⁵ Based on an alleged distinction between the substance and function in the rites, this interpretation reflects Zhu Xi's own system of thought more than it explains the word and the rites.

Itô adopted a special tactic to depose Zhu Xi's normative interpretation. This was to examine the meanings of the words as Confucius himself used them in the *Analects*. He said, "用 is 'as/with 以,' as the *Book*

⁴ D. C. Lau tr., *The Analects* (Hong Kong: The Chinese University of Hong Kong Press, 1992), p. 7.

⁵ Zhu Xi, 朱熹 *Lunyu jizhu* 論語集註 in his *Sishu changju jizhu* 四書章句集註 (Beijing: Chung-hua shu-chü, 1983), Volume 1, p. 51.

of *Rites* 禮記 said, ‘禮之以和為貴 *Li* takes harmony as valuable.’ Harmony means no affront, for since excessive *Li* 禮 separates people, in performing *Li* one takes harmony as valuable.’⁶ Itô Jinsai thought people should understand the *Analects* by recovering the word meaning in its original context, and should avoid imposing extra-*Analects* meanings or contexts, as Zhu Xi clearly had done. This was how Itô criticized and rejected Master Zhu Xi, saying,⁷

An old commentator said, ‘*Li* 禮, though solemn in substance 體, must be unhurried and calm in function (*yung*, 用).’ Now the Song Confucian scholars originated the theory of substance vs. function, but the studies conducted by the sagely ancients had no such distinction. What were they [like]? The way among the sages just shuttled among ethics and its principles; they kept striving to practice their concrete details, never reflecting back to the calm recesses of the mind-heart in practice, seeking where it is yet to issue in action. Thus, as to what is called Benevolence, Righteousness, Decorum, and Wisdom, the sages practiced at the level of their already having been issued in action, without minding their substance. But, Buddha stayed out of ethics and its principles to concentrate on our single mind-heart and yet could not stop worldly gives and takes among men. In talking about true vs. false doctrines, he could not help but adopt the theory of substance vs. function, as a Tang monk said in *the Commentaries on the Huayan Sutra* 華嚴經疏, ‘Substance and function are the single origin that thoroughly manifest minutest details [of things].’ Sayings like this became so prevalent among Song Confucian scholars that they began to formulate a theory of Principle, Matter-energy [Qi, 氣], Substance and Function. Benevolence, Righteousness, Decorum and Wisdom have their respective substances and functions. ‘Before manifesting’ 未發 is substance; ‘already manifesting’ 已發 is function. The sages’ great instructions thus were torn to pieces and turned into words of function without substance. As long as we stick to the framework of substance-function, we will make light of function in favor of substance and people cannot but pursue substance by discarding function. The result has been to promote the

⁶ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 10.

⁷ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 11.

doctrine of desireless quiet emptiness at the expense of Filiality, Brotherliness, Loyalty and Fidelity.

The “old commentator” refers to Zhu Xi. Itô Jinsai claimed that the distinctions the Neo-Confucians had drawn between inner and outer and substance and function had originated in a Buddhist-like desire for orthodoxy, and that the propagation of such dichotomies inclined people to pursue the will-o’-the-wisp of “inner substance” such that they tore to pieces Confucius’ robust praxis of principled ethics. Both of these extraordinary claims await historical confirmation, to be sure, but they show how Itô Jinsai engaged in this sort of “back to Confucius” project to defend Confucius against later heresies.

B. The phrase “一以貫之” appears twice in Confucius’ *Analects*. In *Analects* 4/15, Confucius talks to his disciple Zengzi 曾子 about the “single thread binding” his *Dao*, then Zengzi tells others this means doing one’s best (zhong 忠) and using oneself as a measure to gauge the likes and dislikes of others (shu 恕). On another occasion, recorded in *Analects* 15/3, Confucius claims to “have a single thread binding it all together,” while denying that he is a man of broad learning. Liu Baonan 劉寶楠(1797-1855) said, “No one knew what this meant since the times of Han.”⁸ Zhu Xi interpreted the phrase in terms of his own philosophical concepts, saying,⁹

Principle runs throughout, responding everywhere appropriately at every twist and turn, thus 貫 means to “penetrate all” (*T’ung*, 通)... The sage’s heart-mind is One turn, to function differently on each occasion.... It is analogous to “the Heaven and Earth stay Sincere to the utmost without ceasing, and all myriad things respectively obtain their proper places.” ... “Sincere to the utmost without ceasing” is *Dao*’s substance (*Ti*, 體), the One Origin (*Yiben*, 一本) of myriad things. “All myriad things respectively obtaining their proper places” shows *Dao*’s function 用, the One Origin diversifying in myriad ways.

Clearly Zhu Xi understood Confucius’ “single thread binding it all together” in light of his conception that, “Principle is one while its manifestations are many.”

In contrast, Itô Jinsai says,¹⁰

⁸ These are the words of Qing scholar Liu Baonan 劉寶楠 (1791-1855) in *Lunyu zhengyi* 論語正義 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1990), Volume 1, p. 152.

⁹ Zhu Xi, *Luyu jizhu*, p. 72.

¹⁰ *Rongo Kogi*, pp. 53-54.

貫 means to “unite 統.” It means that *Dao* in its extreme vastness is unity without mixture and is self-attained for good among all under heaven, uniting everything everywhere; it is impossible for us to obtain by means of much learning. ... *Dao* is merely a single unity. Although the Five Constancies go in hundreds of ways, and are extremely various; in their diverse ways, through hundreds of deliberations, they all return to this One, this Ultimate One of all under heaven that can unite myriads of “good” under heaven. Thus, the Master mentions no mind-heart (*Xin*, 心), no principle (*Li*, 理), but mentions only “a single thread binding it all together.”

Itô Jinsai takes 貫 as a concrete unity 統 of all, unlike Zhu Xi's abstract 通 that penetrates whatever is. Koyasu Nobukuni 子安宣邦 (1933-) recently described Itô Jinsai's hermeneutic method as understanding the words by concretely deciphering their meanings as they appear in each textual instance, as opposed to interpreting the words via abstract Neo-Confucian theories.¹¹ Itô adopted what Koyasu dubbed the “concrete incidence approach.”

Itô Jinsai further elucidates such concrete hermeneutics in taking loyalty (*Zhung*, 忠) and reciprocity (*Shu*, 恕) as praxis of *Dao*, not as scholastic glosses on *Dao*. He says,¹²

I judge, saying: The Sages' *Dao* merely resides in the midst of the human ethical constants, the greatest of which is to save people. Thus, by loyalty and reciprocity, Zengzi developed the one penetrating the Master's *Dao*. This was indeed how the Sages' *Dao* was transmitted to later students so clearly and completely. The Master thus answer Fan Chi's 樊遲 query on *Ren* by saying, “Be loyal to people.” Zigong 子貢 asked, “What would be

¹¹ Koyasu Nobukuni, based on a recent study of Itô's *Go Mo Jigi*, said that this volume seeks the words' meanings by looking into incidents of Confucius' and Mencius' concrete wording. This approach is diametrical opposed to the theoretical approach of ascertaining definite meanings of words in terms of Zhu Xi's school of Neo-Confucianism, as in *Xingli ziyi* 性理字義. The incident-approach takes the meaning of a word in the concrete context of its usage in specific incidents. See Koyasu Nobukuni, “Itô Jinsai yu ren di shidai ti *Lunyu* jie: zhi Tianming shuo,” paper for the Second Conference on the Hermeneutic Tradition of East Asian Confucianism, November 19, 2000, National Taiwan University.

¹² *Rongo Kogi*, pp. 230-231.

one word to practice through life?” The Master said merely, “Probably reciprocity.” Mencius also said, “Try to reciprocate with others; for seeking *Jen*, nothing is closer than this.” So, we can see that loyalty and reciprocity are the ultimate essentials of *Ren* that form the start and the finish of the sagely studies. Loyalty and reciprocity do not refer to “the one that penetrates”; they are themselves that *Dao* by which to penetrate things into one. Former Confucians thought the Master’s heart-mind was totally one Principle, flexibly responding to all. Only Zengzi had grasped Confucius’ real meaning, and it was something that not all students can understand. So, he used loyalty and reciprocity to instruct us about the meaning of the one that penetrates. How could all this be the case?

The “former Confucian” mentioned by Itô Jinsai again refers to Zhu Xi. When Itô Jinsai said that¹³ the *Dao* that “penetrates all into one” resides only in the midst of loyalty and reciprocity, in concrete moral behavior, he was targeting Zhu Xi’s view that *Dao* is above loyalty and reciprocity, namely, at one with the metaphysical Principle (*Li*, 理) that gives birth to *Qi* 氣 and the myriad things.¹⁴

In a similar vein, Itô Jinsai commented on Confucius’ saying recorded in 15/2,¹⁵

I judge, saying: The ancients considered practicing virtues to be doing scholarship. Outside virtue-practice there was no so-called “scholarship.” Thus, once scholarship was accomplished, virtues were established of themselves. In deepening self-cultivation to manage families and all under heaven, there was nothing difficult. Later, people took practicing virtues as virtue-practice and doing scholarship as scholarship, not realizing that we must take virtue-practice as scholarship itself. Thus, if one decides to practice self-cultivation, one will use strength to grasp and hold on, if one wants to manage the world, one will

¹³ This may be Itô’s “locutionary intention” as defined by John R. Searle in *Speech Acts: An Essay in the Philosophy of Language* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1965), and “A Taxonomy of Illocutionary Acts,” in K. Gunderson ed., *Language, Mind, and Knowledge* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975), pp. 334-369.

¹⁴ Cheng Shude 程樹德 (1877-1944) said, “This Chapter has only two possible meanings, the one that penetrates all resides either outside or inside loyalty and reciprocity.” How right he is! See his *Lunyu jishi* 論語集釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua Shuju, 1990), Vol. 1, p. 267.

¹⁵ *Rongo Kogi*, Vol. 8, p.230.

maintain it with legal regulations, and those with little knowledge will try hard to borrow and pretend. Virtues now lie barren.

Whatever is regarded as abstract in scholarship can actually be found only in concrete practice. This thesis derives from Itô's distinctive interpretation of *Dao* in Confucius.

Intertextual Coherence with Other Classics

Itô's second interpretive method is collating other classical writings with Confucius' *Analects* to identify and display their mutual affinities. Itô Jinsai expressed his general sentiment when he annotated *Analects* 2/2, The Master said, "The *Odes* are three hundred in number. They can be summed up in one phrase, Swerve not from the right path. 子曰：《詩》三百，一言以蔽之，曰「思無邪」。”¹⁶ Itô Jinsai said,¹⁷

I judge, saying: Benevolence, Righteousness, Principle, and Wisdom are called virtues, they are the root of the human Way. Loyalty, Fidelity, Reverence, and Reciprocity are called behavior-cultivation. Thus, talk about virtues must be the center, while discourses on cultivation of behavior must be what is essential, which is also what our Teacher (Confucius) meant when he said "swerve not from the right path" to cover "the *Odes* are three hundred in number." Some former scholars (i. e. Zhu Xi) regarded benevolence as the essence of the *Analects*, innate good as the essence of the *Mencius*, holding to the Middle, of the *Book of History*, and timeliness, of the *Book of Changes*, thus assigning each Classic one essence, without seeing an overall unity. These scholars were unaware of various classics as various roads converging to one, the one going back to hundreds of thoughts, many words pierced into one. Thus, "swerve not from the right path" is really what begins and completes sagely scholarship.

Itô took the various sagely words in the Classics as penetrable into one. Thus, Itô interpreted the *Analects* also by going through the other classics.

¹⁶ D. C. Lau tr., *The Analects*, p. 11.

¹⁷ Itô Jinsai, *Mô Shi Kogi* 孟子古義, in Seki Giichiro ed., *Nihon Meika Shisho Chushaku Zensho* (Tokyo: Hô Shuppan, 1973), 9:1.

First, Itô Jinsai took the *Mencius* to be at one with the *Analects*, as its derivative,¹⁸ and so the words in the former can lead back to a correct understanding of the latter. Itô Jinsai said,¹⁹

The Seven Sections comment on the *Analects*, which we understand by grasping the *Mencius*. Not starting at the *Mencius* but seeking what Confucius meant by merely looking at words in the *Analects*, we could become arbitrary and make mistakes, as with Song scholars saying “benevolence means the orthodox principle of all under heaven.” Learners should not be unaware of this danger.

Thus, Itô Jinsai always cited the *Mencius* when commenting on the *Analects*. For example, Itô cited Mencius’ “The organ of the heart can think. But, it will find the answer only if it does think. 心之官則思，思則得之” (*Mencius*, VIA: 15) in interpreting “think three times before taking action 三思而後行,” (*Analects* 5:20).²⁰ He also cited Mencius’ arguments based on the “unbearable mind” and “unbearable governments,” to interpret some of Confucius’ comments on benevolence.²¹

On human nature, however, Confucius’ view differs somewhat from that of Mencius, so Itô Jinsai paid effort to harmonize them, saying,²²

Confucius said, “Nature [among humans] is mutually close,” Mencius specifically said, “[Human] nature is good,” so their words seem to differ. Why? Being a student of Confucius, how could Mencius have meant something different? His “Human nature is good” was to elucidate the meaning of “Human nature is mutually close.” Sages Yao and Shun differ so much from people on the street, yet they are said to be close, for however different people are in their personalities, strong or soft, dark or brilliant, they do not differ in the Four Buds inside. Water may differ in being sweet or bitter, clear or turbid, yet it always flows downward. Likewise, what our Teacher took to “be close” Mencius said to “be innately good.” Thus, what Confucius said to be close, Mencius specifically said to be as innately good, as water flows downward, and thus as far as our true-nature 情 goes, it is capable of becoming good, in short, “good.” All these words are said in terms of innate quality, not in terms of

¹⁸ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 31.

¹⁹ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 71.

²⁰ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 70-71.

²¹ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 70.

²² *Rongo Kogi*, p. 256-257.

reasoning. In regard to reasoning, we cannot even talk about ourselves as being far or close.

Itô Jinsai stresses here that Confucius and Mencius were discussing the same points. This was to target the Song Neo-Confucians, especially Zhu Xi, with his so-called “solid scholarship” that we will discuss in detail in Section 3.

Besides being at one with *Mencius*, Itô Jinsai took Confucius to be at one with the *Spring and Autumn Annals*. Itô Jinsai said,²³

The people, events, and political ebb and flow of those days that our Teacher (Confucius) discoursed about do not seem very relevant to students of “today.” Why then did Confucian students avidly receive those volumes? Our Teacher had said, “Rather put down clearly matters relevant to specific times than wield empty words.” Since scholarship aims at effective action, it is best to tackle concrete events and things to observe their rights and wrong, gains and losses, rather than discourse about general principles. These chapters and the *Spring and Autumn Annals* then mutually form “inside and outside.” This is why these students held them dear.

Itô's view can be contrasted with the approaches taken by two other scholars. Pi Xirui 皮錫瑞 (Lumeng 鹿門, 1850-1908) aptly indicated that, “The *Annals*' claim that overthrowing rebels is Great Justice tacitly suggests Mencius' words on change and establishment of government; *Gongyang* and Zhu Xi's comments make us grasp Mencius' intentions,”²⁴ to show how the *Annals* and *Mencius* form “the inside and the outside” to one another. A contemporary Japanese sinologist, Takeuchi Yoshio 武内義雄 (1886-1966) adopted a similar view.²⁵ They both understand the *Annals* in terms of the *Mencius*, while Itô takes the *Annals* and the *Analects* to form the inside and the outside to each other, for both books argue from concrete matters without wielding empty generalizations.

Likewise, Itô Jinsai sees how the *Classics of Poetry* and *History* to agree with the *Analects* in that they all discourse on principles without leaving events, and thus view abstract matters in concrete terms. Itô Jinsai comments on Confucius' saying (7/18): “Where the Master used the correct pronunciations was the *Odes*, the *Book of History* and the performance of

²³ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 29.

²⁴ Pi Xirui, *Jingxue Tonglun* 經學通論 (Taipei: Holo tushu chubanshe, 1973), 4:1-2.

²⁵ Takeuchi Yoshio, “*Mo Shi do Shun Ju*,” in *Takeuchi Yoshio Zenshu* 武内義雄全集 (Tokyo: Kadogawa Shoden, 1978), 2:473-485.

rites. In all these cases, he used the correct pronunciation. 子所雅言, 《詩》, 《書》執禮, 皆雅言也,”²⁶ adding, “The *Classic of Poetry* explains feelings and sentiments, the *Classic of History* explains matters of politics. Both Classics realistically elucidate interpersonal ethics in terms of daily life;”²⁷ Itô then develops this comment, saying,²⁸

I judge, saying: Seeking the Way in the high, seeking matters in the far, this is a general fault of scholars. In contrast, *Classics of Poetry* and *History* teach with matters close to human situations relevant for daily use, making matters not far from us humans into the Way, with words not far from the human world. And so, as we can persist in adhering to Decency 禮, we become paragons of human demeanor to keep up the worldly ways. This is why our Teacher constantly discourses on these three Classics. As for Buddhism and Daoism, they leave the world and break off with secularity to engage only with the high and far without regard to this world. They therefore do not really attain the principles 理 of the *Classics of Poetry* and *History*. Besides, although later Confucians recite the *Classic of Poetry* and read the *Classic of History*, they seek understanding in too deep, too difficult areas without knowing that they should seek it in easy ordinary situations close by. As a result, their words and deeds are often manifestly encumbered with twists and difficulties, lacking in vast, right, and unhurried composure. Isn't it true that the reputed difficulty of reading is not in reading but in reading well and right?

Itô Jinsai stressed that the *Analects*, the *Classics of Poetry* and of *History* all begin at daily human and ethical activity, and so they can cast light on each other.

Itô Jinsai hesitates, however, on the inter-elucidation among the *Analects*, the *Doctrine of the Mean*, and the *Classic of Change* due to the “extremely high and profound 極高明” contents of the latter two. Itô Jinsai commented on *Analects* 5/16, “The Master said of Zichan that he possessed the way of the gentleman on four counts. 子謂子產, ‘有君子之四道焉,’”²⁹ as follows:³⁰

²⁶ D.C. Lau tr., *The Analects*, p. 61.

²⁷ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 103.

²⁸ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 104.

²⁹ D. C. Lau tr., *The Analects*, p. 41.

³⁰ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 68.

I judge, saying: Claiming the gentlemanly way differs considerably from claiming the sagely way. The sagely way is concerned about the extremity, the gentlemanly way is concerned with ordinary, right and common rules that apply throughout myriads of generations, such as what various chapters in the *Doctrine of the Mean* discourse about. Sadly, the commentator understood the Biyin 費隱 Chapter according to high abstruse principles, thereby losing much of the original intent.

This “commentator” who Itô Jinsai criticized as being too abstruse was Zhu Xi.³¹ What is difficult about the *Mean* lies not in its mysterious technicalities. As Itô Jinsai said, “The *Mean* is the most difficult thing to practice in the world, not in undertaking the difficult actions of the world, but in keeping up our easy daily routines without change from start to finish. This is why they say the Mean is impossible.”³² Thus, Itô Jinsai thought that the *Mean* and the *Analects* can be taken to inter-elucidate in this light.

Itô Jinsai thus unifies various Classics with the *Analects* under the view that they all discourse on daily human ethical ways. This hermeneutical method meets a difficulty when it comes to the *Classic of Change*. Itô has the following words on Confucius' words (7/17), “Grant me a few more years so that I may continue to study the *Changes* at the age of fifty and I shall, perhaps, be free from major errors. 加我數年，五十以學易，可以無大過矣。”³³

I judge, saying: In the ancient days of his sagely rule, Bao Xi 包羲 looked up and down, far and near, and created eight trigrams that were modeled after powers of divinities and vicissitudes of Yin-Yang 陰陽, the principles of myriad things giving birth and resting. After last days of Yin 殷 Dynasty, the Zhou 周 Dynasty arose to compile appended remarks to tell fortunes, and called the book the *Zhou Yi* 周易. When our Teacher came along he only

³¹ Zhu Xi commented on, “The way which the gentleman pursues, reaches wide and far, and yet is secret 君子之道費而隱” in Chapter 12 of the *Doctrine of the Mean* 中庸, that he personally compiled, saying, “The gentleman's *Dao* is inexhaustible, uncontainable, from as close as in the nuptial room to the realm of the sages. Its exterior has no outside, its interior has no inside; it can be called “*bi* 費.” Yet the principle 理 that makes it what it is lies hidden and invisible. What we can know and are capable of is one within Tao, and its outer reaches no sages know or are capable of knowing.” See *Zhongyong Zhangju* 中庸章句, in Zhu Xi, *Sishu Zhangju Zizhu*, p. 22.

³² *Rongo Kogi*, p. 69.

³³ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 103; D. C. Lau tr., *The Analects*, p. 61.

discoursed on the Way of former rulers and virtues of *Ren*-benevolence 仁 and *Yi*-righteousness 義. His talks with disciples were simple and refined. He instructed them untiringly with nothing other than discourses on such virtues in the *Classics of Poetry and History*, while we are left with only this saying on the *Classic of Change*, which previously had been a book of divination, so our Teacher went against the custom of concentrating on the principles of change. Mencius also often quoted from *Classics of Poetry and History* and argued about the *Spring and Autumn Annals*, but of the *Classic of Change* he left not a single saying with us, for his studies were concerned with adoration of benevolence and righteousness, and attending to filiality and brotherliness. He taught us to cultivate our nature, while the *Classic of Change* talks about nothing but profit. However, since the book also meticulously details methods of life-management and exhorts people to greatly benefit others, our Teacher also adopted it. Those desiring to learn from Confucius and Mencius also do well to adore the *Classics of Poetry and History* and *Annals*, and approach the *Classic of Change* in the perspective of our Teacher's saying, "may have no major mistakes," never using it as the book of divination.

Itô Jinsai took Confucius to be the first person in history to understand the *Classic of Change*, not as a book of divination, but as a book of meanings, and in that light to harmonize it with the *Analects* to inter-elucidate.

In sum, Itô Jinsai initiated a new *Analects* scholarship. He not only traced back to the original meanings of Confucius' sayings in the *Analects*, but took all the Classics as co-forming "insides and outsides" by the fact that they all elucidate great principles in daily life. Itô Jinsai pursued both routes so as to refute Zhu Xi.

ITO JINSAI'S PERSPECTIVE ON HIS ANALECTS-SCHOLARSHIP AND ITS RECONSTRUCTION

Now that we have seen Itô's hermeneutic methods, our next question should consider in what context Itô Jinsai admired the *Analects* as "the loftiest, the greatest Primal Book in the whole universe." We can say that (3:1) Itô Jinsai understood the *Analects'* world to be providing the context of "Dao in the secular," and (3:2) offered new interpretations of Confucius' key notions, *Dao* and *Ren*, in that light.

3:1. The Context of "Dao in the Secular" : Itô Jinsai understood the *Analects'* world to be providing the context of "Dao in the secular," which means that the common and inevitable moral principles are to be found only

in specific concrete daily life. The so-called *Dao* exists only in the midst of the inter-human deeds and words occurring in daily life. As the *Mean* shows, the metaphysical world appears only in the common ordinary world and both worlds co-form a unity in their shared constitution. Itô Jinsai thus objected to the Song Neo-Confucianists who had constructed, well above the actual life-world, another separate metaphysical world of *Li*-Principle 理 that supposedly gives birth to and governs myriad things in the universe. Itô Jinsai denied the existence of a transcendent world above and beyond the actual one, and sought human nature only through concrete daily life.³⁴

Itô Jinsai admired Confucius' saying in 6/29, "The Master said, "Supreme indeed is the Mean as a moral virtue. It has long been rare among the common people. 子曰，中庸之為德也，其至矣乎！民鮮久矣。"³⁵ Itô Jinsai had a long section of comments concerning this saying.³⁶

I judge, saying: The virtue of the Mean is the most difficult virtue under heaven. People discourse about the *Dao*. They want to reach the highest and most difficult Ultimate in order to get to the *Dao*. We rely on thrust to reach the highest and on striving to do the difficult. But, the virtue of the Mean is common, easy, and unhurried; it is unreachable by thrust or striving. This is why people are incapable of the Mean. During the Three glorious Generations of Tang and Yü, people were simple, common, pure, without twisty artificiality, and none were not naturally in harmony with the *Tao*. Fathers were fathers, sons were sons, brothers were brothers, and spouses were spouses, naturally without contrivance or strange manipulation, and dealt with one another according as what they saw and heard. This is what is called the virtue of the Mean. In contrast, later people seek the *Tao* in the far and seek matters in the difficult. The more they try the farther away they get. Trying to repair the situation, they tear things apart farther. Therefore it is said, "It has long been rare among the common people." This is why our

³⁴ See my *Dongya Ruxue shi di xin shye* 東亞儒學史的新視野 (Taipei: Himalaya Foundation, 2001), pp. 125-170. Contemporary Japanese scholars unanimously agree on Itô's anti-metaphysical character. E.g., Ishida Ichiro 石田一良 said, "Jinsai-scholarship is an 'absolute humanity-scholarship' against Heaven-centered Song scholarship, insisting on understanding humanity in terms of humanity." See Ishida Ichiro, *Itô Jinsai* (Tokyo: Yoshikawa Kôbunkan, 1960, 1973). Koyasu Nobukuni 子安宣邦 convincingly said Itô Jinsai's world of thought is the "ethical inter-human world," in his *Itô Jinsai: Jin-rontek sekai no shisô*, esp. pp. 27-60.

³⁵ D. C. Lau tr., *The Analects*, p. 53.

³⁶ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 91.

Teacher specifically established the *Tao* of the Mean as people's ultimate horizon, and this is why the *Analects* is "the loftiest, the greatest Primal Book in the whole universe."

Itô Jinsai thought that the *Analects* is "the loftiest, the greatest Primal Book in the whole universe" precisely because it conveys are the principles of ordinary daily living. Such a *Dao* bears its inevitable universality and universal effectiveness. As Yang Rubin 楊儒賓 recently said, "Itô Jinsai regarded the content of the *Analects* to be none too mysterious or profound, but just the universal, common, and practicable matters to be learned. This was the so-called 'No *Dao* outside people, no people outside *Dao*.' The precise definition of *Dao* is 'people's *Dao*.'"³⁷ Itô Jinsai thus took *Dao* to lie in the common and the human; the *Analects* discourses on such a *Dao*; therefore, the *Analects* is "the loftiest, the greatest Primal Book in the whole universe."

3:2a. Itô's New Interpretations of Confucius (1): Understanding *Dao* by Its Classical Meaning: Itô Jinsai conducted such mundane hermeneutics of the *Analects* by tracing the key notions back to their classical archaic meanings, in contrast to Zhu Xi's metaphysical approach to the Classics. One typical example is his interpretation of "*Dao*" and "nature," as when Itô encountered Confucius' saying in the *Analects* 5/13, "Zigong said, "One can hear about the Master's achievements, but one cannot hear his views on human nature and the Way of Heaven. 子貢曰, '夫子之文章, 可得而聞也; 夫子之言性與天道, 不可得而聞也.'"³⁸ Itô Jinsai gave the following comments:³⁹

I judge, saying: Sages teach diversely according to the diversity of people. What are mentioned here of [human] nature and Heavenly principle are what people say of them, without anything abstruse or mysterious beyond understanding. What did Zigong mean by "one cannot hear"? People only know human diversity in strengths and intelligence without knowing their common love of original virtue and adherence to a common potential for advancing in goodness, yet because their liking is not strong enough to reach goodness, our good-potential is often doubted. Now Zigong's virtue was not yet sagely, he

³⁷ Yang Rubin 楊儒賓, "Renlun yu tianli: Itô Jinsai yu Zhuzi di qiudao licheng 人倫與天理 -- 伊藤仁齋與朱子的求道歷程" in my edited volume, *Rujia Sixiang zai xiandai Dongya: Riben pian* 儒家思想在現代東亞: 日本篇 (Taipei: Academia Sinica, 1999), pp. 87-134, esp. p. 123.

³⁸ D. C. Lau tr., *The Analects*, p. 41.

³⁹ *Rongo Kogi*, pp.66-67.

also took the Teacher's word to mean “不可得而聞,” without depending on sages there is goodness already; anyone whose heart-mind is concentrated on goodness will see it covering the entire heaven and earth. Thus, we know that everyone can advance to goodness. Besides, heaven inevitably helps good people. This is how our Teacher became a sage. Sadly, in latter days people studied the high, far, and mysterious, and said such is the way to seek heavenly principles, which are unintelligible except to the enlightened. Zigong had studied quite minutely yet still said something like this. How could it be? What the sage mentioned as [human] and Heavenly principle are just what later generations call *Qi* 氣, not principle 理 and should not be taken as road to follow in seeking the truth.

Clearly, what Itô Jinsai understood as “*Dao*“ in the *Analects* was anthropo-genetic, constructed by common people to be moral regulations for people to tread. We can see illustrations of the difference between Itô's mundane approach from Zhu Xi's metaphysical one in the following interpretations of “*Dao*” in Confucius' saying in 4/8, “He has not lived in vain who dies in the evening, having been told about the Way in the morning. 朝聞道, 夕死可矣.”⁴⁰ Below are their respective accounts of “*Dao*” in this saying:

Master Zhu Xi said, “*Dao* is the prescriptive principle of things to be as they are. Once we could hear about it, we would be living smoothly, dying contentedly, with no trace of regret. Thus, he stressed the nearness of the time.”⁴¹

Itô Jinsai said, “*Dao* is that by which people become human. Being human without hearing about it is to live emptily, if not being with chickens and dogs then rotting with grass and trees. Isn't it sad? If once we heard about it, we would have that by which we are human and complete our life, and so a gentleman's death is called “Completion 終,” meaning that he would not perish.”⁴²

For Zhu Xi, *Tao* is the prescriptive principle of things to be as they are, thus constituting both metaphysical principle and ethical norm. In contrast, for Itô, *Dao* is that by which people become human, with the metaphysics dropped.

⁴⁰ D. C. Lau tr., *The Analects*, p.31.

⁴¹ Zhu Xi, *Lunyu jizhu*, 2:71.

⁴² *Rongo Kogi*, pp. 50-51.

Similarly, regarding Confucius' saying in 9/31, Itô asserted, "*Dao* is that in which all under heaven are identical,"⁴³ in order to refute the Han Confucian theory of "Going against normality and conforming with *Tao*, is called expedience 反經合道為權." Against this, Itô Jinsai said,⁴⁴

The Teacher once said, "Is *Ren* far? I desire *Ren*, and *Ren* arrives here." And, he also said, "If a person claims to practice *Dao* yet is far away from people, he does not practice *Dao*." Both indicate that *Dao* is very close by. For outside *Dao* there is no person, outside person there is no *Dao*. The sage diversely teaches according to their diversity, and does not set up a set teaching and drive people into it. Here there is nothing far from people, either. Those *Dao*-ignoramus think the high is admirable as if going up to heaven, see *Dao* as so far away, and make it hard for people to attain *Dao*. What a pity!

In a similar vein, Itô Jinsai also commented on Confucius' saying at 1/4, "Every day I examine myself on three counts. 吾日三省吾身,"⁴⁵ saying that "the *Dao* of heaven and earth exists in humans. Human *Dao* is nothing else than filiality, fraternity, loyalty, and fidelity, so such human virtues suffice to fulfill human *Dao*."⁴⁶ Such common human practices of common human virtues are the *Dao*.

Itô Jinsai further pointed out that this human *Dao* exists right in the mundane secular life. Itô Jinsai commented on Confucius' saying in 9/3, "I follow the majority 吾從眾," saying,⁴⁷

Former Confucians said, "On things that do not harm righteousness, we can follow secular convention." They are mistaken, for if things would never harm righteousness, the secular is the *Dao*, and outside the secular there is no *Dao*. Thus, it is said, "The gentlemanly *Dao* begins at the spousal relation." Likewise, Yao and Shun both ceding crowns and kings Tang 湯 and Wu 武 expelling and attacking followed the people's hearts. Where people's hearts tend, there the secular accomplishes. Thus, it is enough to see if what you do conforms to righteousness or not, why do we have to put aside the secular to pursue *Dao*? This sort of practice is really the likes of heresy, not sagely *Dao*.

⁴³ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 144.

⁴⁴ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 145.

⁴⁵ D. C. Lau tr., *The Analects*, p. 3.

⁴⁶ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 5.

⁴⁷ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 130.

This sort of *Dao* within the secular must be common, easy, and close to people,⁴⁸ and such concrete virtues as “in word you are conscientious and trustworthy and in deed single-minded and reverent. 言忠信, 行篤敬” themselves are the *Dao*, not the transcendent principles 理 in the extremity of the high and the deep.⁴⁹

Itô's common secular *Dao* bears no distinctions between ancient or present, and remains unchanging through time and place.⁵⁰ To Itô, this was Confucius' *Dao*: “the constant Warp 常經 of heaven and earth, the common justice 誼 through the old and the new; anyone with intelligence can know it and practice it, however uncouth, as common spouses they can all know it and know how to practice it. Such is the so-called sagely *Dao*.”⁵¹

In summary, Itô Jinsai interpreted Confucius' *Dao* in terms of the secularity of the *Dao*, thereby unifying all the Classics, including the *Analects*, the *Mencius*⁵² and the *Doctrine of the Mean*.⁵³ Such was Itô's new unique hermeneutic system.

⁴⁸ Itô Jinsai said, “Those who are clever and intelligent would soar up high and far to strive after difficulties, not knowing that *Dao* originally stays in the midst of daily common activities, ordinary and close by us.” See *Rongo Kogi*, p. 135.

⁴⁹ Itô said, “Loyalty and fidelity 忠信 are the root of our studies, whose ground is seriousness 篤敬, and all this completes the whole matter. Later Confucians thought these to be daily constant duties, not theories of the highest and the farthest ultimate, and so established separate doctrines. They did not realize that *Dao* is the real Principle and studies are the real duties. How could there be anything high and far outside of loyalty, fidelity and seriousness? So the words of those who know *Dao* are solid and close to life, and the more they are adhered to and practiced, the more they appear to be inexhaustible. Those who talk of *Dao* without loyalty, fidelity and seriousness do not know what *Dao* is” *Rongo Kogi*, p. 232.

⁵⁰ Itô said, “As in *Dao*, so among people, nowhere among them is there any distinction of ancient from present. Today's people are just the ancient people of the legendary Three Dynasties. As long as people practice straightly according to *Dao*, their nature has no difference to begin with. Those ignorant of this have to regard today's people as not good, so in managing the world they have to entirely transform people of today into the people of Three Dynasties. This is entirely out of line with truth.” *Ibid.*, p. 238.

⁵¹ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 288.

⁵² Itô commented on Mencius' remark on “assassinating the tyrant Chou 紂” by saying that King Wu's expelling and assassinating was not regicide since “the entire world expelled and assassinated him.” Then, Itô said, “*Dao* is what all people under heaven share; where all hearts agree, there is *Dao*.” See Itô's *Mô Shi Kogi*, 1:35-36.

⁵³ Itô interpreted the First Chapter of the *Doctrine of the Mean* by saying, “*Dao*, flowing everywhere under heaven, is where all people commonly

3:2b. Itô's New Interpretations of Confucius (2): Understanding *Jen* by Its Classical Meaning: Another key notion Itô Jinsai used in offering his epoch-making interpretation was *Ren*-benevolence 仁 -- a term that appears in the *Analects* 105 times in 58 chapters, each occurrence bearing a specific linguistic context between Confucius and his disciples. On the whole, the concept of *Ren* as it appears in the *Analects* includes all admirable human virtues,⁵⁴ especially those referring to concrete moral behavior. Itô's interpretations of *Ren* are based on pure Kogaku (classical learning 古學), that is, studies to excavate the ancient meanings, in contrast to Zhu Xi's more intellectual interpretative style. Consider the following cases in point:

Analects 1/2 reads, "The gentleman devotes his efforts to the root, for once the root is established, the Way will sprout from there. Being good as a son and obedient as a young man is, perhaps, the root of a man's character. 君子務本, 本立而道生. 孝悌也者, 其為仁之本與."⁵⁵ Zhu Xi commented on this passage, "*Ren* is the principle of love and the character of heart-mind 愛之理, 心之德."⁵⁶ Influenced by Cheng Yi 程頤 (1032-1085), Zhu Xi's interpretation contains many inconsistencies. Qian Mu 錢穆 (1895-1990) wrote,⁵⁷

[Zhu Xi] quoted from Cheng Yi's saying, "Virtue has its root, which, when established, fills and enlarges its *Dao*, from filiality and fraternity practiced at home extended to love things." This quotation purposely omits a word "birth 生," replacing it with "fills and enlarges 充大" from Mencius, for if *Ren* is substance 性體, it could not have begun to exist by being given *birth* by practicing filiality and fraternity. ... Zhu Xi said "*Ren* is Principle of love," and "principle" could not have begun to exist by being given *birth* by practicing filiality and fraternity, either. Besides, "*Dao*" differs in connotation from "principle." We can say, "The *Dao* of *Ren* is born from this" but not "The Principle of *Ren* is born from this." Both Confucius

originate. Thus, what conforms to human nature is *Dao*; whatever is otherwise does not. *Dao* exists within daily human activities and reaches all under heaven throughout myriad generations, and should not be left for a single moment." (*Chū Yō Hakki* 中庸發揮, pp. 9, 11)

⁵⁴ Cf. Qu Wanli 屈萬里, "Ren zhi guyi di lishi kaoca 仁之古義的歷史考察" in his *Shu Yong Lunxue Ji* 書備論學集 (Taipei: Kaiming shuju, 1969), pp. 254-266.

⁵⁵ D. C. Lau tr., *The Analects*, p. 3.

⁵⁶ Zhu Xi, *Lunyu jizhu*, p. 48.

⁵⁷ Qian Mu, *Kongzi yu Lunyu* 孔子與論語 in *Qian binsi Quanjī* 錢賓四全集 (Taipei: Lianqing chuban gongsi, 1998), Volume 4, esp. p. 272.

and Mencius often used “*Dao*” but seldom “principle.” Both Cheng Yi and Zhu Xi began using “principle” to explain Confucius and had to try hard to patch up the irreparable seam. We can see Zhu Xi’s effort at sewing up the distance between Confucius and Mencius, on the one hand, and the two Cheng brothers, on the other.

Qian’s view is valid and convincing. Confucius and Mencius both advocated *Ren* in terms of concrete behavior, and never took *Ren* as substance of nature. Zhu Xi’s intention of explaining everything according to his theory of *Li* as principle shared by everything is quite explicit in his explanation of Confucius’ *Ren*. Zhu Xi says nothing about *Ren* as principle of concrete behaviors.

In contrast, Itô Jinsai’s explanation of the *Analects* 1/2 clearly demonstrates his devotion to classicism.⁵⁸

I judge, saying: *Ren* is the thoroughfare of all things under heaven, what people cannot but follow in order to behave. Its root consists of the innate goodness of human nature with these Four Buds, which if we know how to expand them we will reach *Ren*. Therefore, Mencius said, “People all have what they cannot bear, with such unbearable heart to reach what they can bear, that is *Ren*.” Again he said, “The heart of compassion is the bud of *Ren*,” “Intimate concerns for the intimate parents are *Ren*. There is nothing else, expand it throughout under heaven.” Such sayings fit Youzi’s 有子 sentiment of taking filiality and fraternity as *Ren*’s root. Mencius was merely conveying the ancients’ views. The former scholar took *Ren* and *Yi* to be the principle in human nature, which contained only *Ren*, *Yi*, *Li*-decency and *Zhih*-Intelligence, these four. Where did filiality and fraternity come from? The answer could be *Ren*-substance as the root and filiality and fraternity as function, as the branch, and then such an answer seems to contradict Youzi. So, he had to say that practicing *Ren* is the root of filiality and fraternity, and speaking of nature, *Ren* is the root of filiality and fraternity. But, then, this saying puts Youzi’s original contention upside down, namely, “其為人也孝悌” and “本立而道生,” in short, filiality and fraternity are the root of *Ren*. But, then, why did Mencius take *Ren* and *Yi* (righteousness) to be what we innately have? It is because human nature is good; both *Ren* and *Yi* are our nature, which is thus described in terms of *Ren* and *Yi*. Mencius did not directly describe *Ren* and

⁵⁸ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 3.

Yi as human nature. One slight deviation here could lead to a thousand miles of error. We must keep clear-sighted.

“Former scholar” again refers to Zhu Xi. Itô’s contention, “*Ren* is the thoroughfare of all things under heaven, what people cannot but follow in order to behave,” jibes well with Confucius’ original intention of indicating *Ren* through concrete moral behaviors. Itô Jinsai thus used classical philology to target Zhu Xi. Confucius’ saying in 7/30 provides another case in point, “Is benevolence really far away? No sooner do I desire it than it is here. 仁遠乎哉? 我欲仁, 斯仁至矣.”⁵⁹ Zhu Xi commented on this, saying, “*Ren* is the virtue of the heart, not something outside.”⁶⁰ Itô Jinsai heatedly criticized this comment,⁶¹

I judge, saying: *Ren* is the great virtue of the world, yet *Ren*’s affairs are so very close by, practicing it resides in myself. Hence, “is benevolence really far away? No sooner do I desire it than it is here.” But, the former scholar took *Ren* to be principle within nature, and took cutting desire to return to the beginning to be the work of *Ren*. If this is the care, everyone has *Ren* as my body has four limbs and hundred bones, and there cannot be anyone who is not-*Ren* or has the necessity of “reaching” *Ren*. For example, take many heart-minds as wood and *Ren* as fire. The use of the wood lies in making fire, and the virtue of the heart lies in *Ren*, if the wood is accumulated yet not burned, the use of the wood would not be manifested. If one lets go of it and does not seek it, then the virtue of the heart is not manifested. Thus, the sages always said “desire benevolence 欲仁,” “seek benevolence 求仁,” but not “cut desire to return to the beginning as the work of *Ren*.” Cheng Yi had the theory of inside-outside and guest-lord that naturally fits our Teacher’s meaning of “reach 至,” and which differs greatly from taking *Ren* as nature or principle. Students would do well to take note of all this.

Itô Jinsai interprets Confucius’ “is benevolence really far away” to mean, “Its matters are extremely close by, practicing it resides in myself. 其事至近, 為之在我” What he stresses is that it is “I myself” who is conducting concrete acts; thus, Zhu Xi deviated by making it internal, as in “*Ren* is the virtue of the heart.”

⁵⁹ D. C. Lau tr., *The Analects*, p.65.

⁶⁰ Zhu Xi, *Lunyu iizhu*, p. 100.

⁶¹ *Rongo Kogi*, pp. 109-110.

In summary, Itô Jinsai started from the perspective of practical scholarship 實學, and proposed a new classicist interpretation of “meaning 意味.”⁶² In Itô's new Confucius-scholarship, Confucius' *Dao* became the *Dao* of daily inter-human living, and *Ren* then was understood as fulfilled in practical acts of filiality, fraternity, loyalty, fidelity, and the like.

The Purpose of Itô's Analects-Scholarship

What is Itô's purpose and intention (in the sense of Searle's “perlocutionary intention”) behind his reconstruction of Confucius and his *Analects*? Itô's purpose was apologetic and argumentative. His targets were two, (4:1) Buddhism and Daoism that discard and leave the mundane inter-human world behind, and (4:2) Song Neo-Confucianism with the philosophy of cosmic Principle 理 above this mundane world.

Critique of Buddhism and Taoism: Itô critiques Buddhism and Daoism at many points in his volume, *Rongo Kogi* 論語古義, attacking Buddhism. I cite only one such instance here.

Confucius' *Analects* in 18/6 reads:⁶³

Chang Ju 長沮 and Jie Ni 桀溺 were ploughing together yoked as a team. Confucius went past them and sent Zilu to ask them where the ford was.

Chang Ju said, “Who is that taking charge of the carriage?”

Zilu said, “It is Kong Qiu of Lu.”

“Then, he must be the Kong Qiu of Lu.”

“He is.”

“Then, he does not have to ask where the ford is.”

Zilu asked Jie Ni.

Jie Ni said, “Who are you?”

⁶² This is Itô's technical term. He said, “I divide our learning into two: to learn the blood vein 血脈, and to learn the meaning 意味. “Blood vein” is the gist of sagely tradition, such as the theory of *Ren* and *Yi* in Mencius; “meaning” is the meaning behind it. Meaning derives from the vein, which we must first learn. Without the vein we are ships without rudders, nights without candles, ignorant of where to stop. The vein is prior in learning, but yet meaning is harder to grasp. Why? A vein is a road; once we are on it, we will arrive, however far, but without insight we are at a loss as to where to find the meaning in the vast terrain. I once said that reading the *Analects* differs from reading the *Mencius*. We first read Mencius' vein, and we can naturally find his meaning. We first grasp the meaning in the *Analects*, and only then find its vein.” Ito Jinsai, *Go-Mô Jigi* 語孟字義, in Inoue Tetsujiro 井上哲次郎 & Kanie Yoshimaru 蟹江義丸 eds., *Nihon Rinli Kaihen* 日本倫理彙編 (Tokyo: Ikuseikai, 1901-1903), Vol. 5: B, p. 50.

⁶³ D. C. Lau tr., *The Analects*, p. 185.

“I am Zhongyou.”

“Then, you must be the disciple of Kong Qiu of Lu?”

Zilu answered, “I am.”

“Throughout the Empire men are all the same. Who is there for you to change places with? Moreover, for your own sake, would it not be better if, instead of following a Gentleman who keeps running away from men, you followed one who runs away from the world altogether?”

All the while he carried on harrowing without interruption.

Zilu went and reported what was said to Confucius.

The Master was lost in thought for a while and said, “One cannot associate with birds and beasts. Am I not a member of this human race? Who, then, is there for me to associate with? While the Way is to be found in the Empire, I will not change places with him.”

This narrative contrasts worldliness of Confucianism with otherworldly reclusive Daoists during the Spring and Autumn period (722-464 B.C.). Itô Jinsai specifically expanded his sentiments on this passage:⁶⁴

I judge, saying: Jie Ni wanted to change the world; sages do not. The former force the world with their ways. The latter govern the world with the world. The world is made of people, without whom it cannot exist. Thus, sages enjoy the world, worry about it, but never avoid it to cleanse themselves apart from it, like those, such as Chang Ju and Jie Ni did. Their ways were not the universal historical ways of the world. Buddha taught quiet self-demise, Laozi took the way of empty nothingness, thereby they thought to change the world. After two thousand odd years, however, Buddha is still incapable of effecting the demise of ruler-subject, father-son, and spousal relations of the world. Nor could Laozi revive ancient non-action. This fact shows us that our Teacher’s instruction is great, decent, correct, and persists through the ages and cannot be further added to. He also said, “These people are those who enabled the legendary Three Generations to go on.” He said again, “Govern people with people, they improve and stop.” Sages thus refuse, like this, to cut themselves off from things or fume at the world. Perhaps this is what he meant when Wei Zheng 魏徵 of the Tang dynasty said, “Sagely Five Emperors and Three Rulers changed no people but they transformed themselves.”

⁶⁴ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 271.

Itô's based this powerful argument on his interpretation of Confucius teaching as "No *Dao* outside people, no people outside *Dao*."⁶⁵ *Dao* exists right in the midst of people's daily activities; as Itô said, "Why seek *Dao* outside the secular?"⁶⁶ In Itô's world of thought there exists not a single divine recluse flying high up alone above this world. Itô thus tried to dispel the Buddhist-Daoist mist and return people to the original *Dao* of Confucius. Itô's applies Confucian orthodoxy as apologetics against other teachings he regarded as heterodox.

Critique of Song Scholars: The main target of Itô's critique was Song Neo-Confucianism, especially Zhu Xi's metaphysics articulated on Principle or *li* 理.

Zhu Xi was a great Confucian scholar who wrote detailed commentaries on most of the Classics. His thinking greatly influenced the world of thought in Asia, especially from the fourteenth century. He initiated Asia's Neo-Confucianism that promotes the *Four Books* ahead of the *Five Classics*.⁶⁷ His *Collected Commentaries on the Four Books* 四書章句集註, not only anthologized all the commentaries from the Han, Tang and Northern Song periods to unify the entire *Four Books*, but also cast out some of them and molded a unique metaphysical system centered on Principle.⁶⁸ Among the *Four Books*, he particularly stressed the importance of the *Great Learning* 大學, saying, "Learning must begin at the *Great Learning*, followed by the *Analects*, then the *Doctrine of the Mean*."⁶⁹ "I want people to read first the *Great Learning* to define the framework, then

⁶⁵ See supra note 44.

⁶⁶ See supra note 47.

⁶⁷ Uno Seiichi 宇野精一 said that the *Five Classics* were products of the medieval society. Because of the succinct brevity of the *Four Books* that appealed to the contemporaries, the latter easily replaced the former. See his "Gokyo kara Shisho e—Keigakushi Oboegaki 五經から四書へ -- 經學史覺書" in *Tôyô no Bunka do Shakai* 東洋の文化と社會, No. 1, Kyoto, 1952, pp. 1-14. Zhu Xi's *Collected Commentaries on the Four Books* rose in popularity similarly in close relation with external social, economic, and political factors. Cf. James T. C. Liu, "How Did a Neo-Confucian School Become the State Orthodoxy?" *Philosophy East and West*, 23:4 (October 1973), pp. 483-505, esp. pp. 501-504.

⁶⁸ On how creative and yet how traditional Zhu Xi was in his *Collected Commentaries on the Four Books*, see Ôtsuki Nobuyoshi 大槻信良, "Shisho shuchiu shogu ni waretaru Shushi no taido 四書集註章句現朱子態度," *Nihon Chugokugakukaiho* 日本中國學會報, 5 (1953), pp. 80-94. On how Zhu Xi unified the *Four Books* into one, see Wing-tsit Chan, "Zhu Xi's Completion of Neo-Confucianism," in *Études Song in Memoriam Étienne Balazs*, Editées par Françoise Aubin, Série II, #1 (Paris: Mouton & Co. and École Pratique de Haute Edudes, 1973), pp. 60-90.

⁶⁹ Li Qingde ed., *Zhuzi yulei* (Peking: Zhonghua shuju, 1986), 1, p. 249.

read the *Analects* to establish the basic root. After this, people should read the *Mencius* to observe its development, then read the *Doctrine of the Mean* to seek the subtleties of the ancients.⁷⁰ Again, “The *Analects*, *Mencius*, and *Doctrine of the Mean* all depend on *Great Learning* for their grand harmony.”⁷¹ Zhu Xi specifically wrote the “Appended Remark’s on the Investigation of Things” to argue for our heart-mind’s capabilities of discerning Principle and stressed the importance of exhaustively seeking Principle by following things and investigating things to attain knowledge.⁷² Zhu Xi placed particular stress *Ren*’s creativity, interpreting *Ren* as “the character of heart-mind and the principle of love 心之德, 愛之理,” stressing that this Principle is the heart-mind of the universe, the Principle that gives birth to all things. Zhu thus put aside Cheng Yi’s account of *Jen* as productive and producing on the basis of Principle, and claimed that love is born only out of Principle that is the heart-mind of the universe to give birth to the universe. It was in this way that Zhu conferred a metaphysical basis to Confucian ethics.⁷³

⁷⁰ *Chu Tzu Yü-lei*, p. 249.

⁷¹ *Chu Tzu Yü-lei*, p. 256.

⁷² Yang Rubin makes the novel claim that Zhu Xi’s idea of “investigation of things” was not just a cognitive activity but also involved concentration of mind-heart. This specific concentration and other separated concentrations are parts of the task of striving for seriousness called seriousness penetrating activity and quietude, where seriousness evokes a sudden comprehensive realization. Zhu’s experience of principle warrants the unification of transcendence and experience. What the scholars experience as principle unobstructedly penetrating things is not only an ontological affirmation in significance and in realms but also facilitates one’s free responses and management of concrete affairs. Yang says that Zhu’s sudden realization refers to a re-grasping of our primal self, where the mind-heart is a bright, empty quietude in which all principles reside and one’s nature is clear and unified. The scholar, the universe, and the Great Ultimate advance together to the Truth realm. In this world, all things that are usually incomplete, partial, processive and potential, are respectively completed. This is where “all things -- inside and out, fine and coarse -- are all achieved, together with the total substance of my mind heart is greatly effective and lucid.” See Yang, Rubin, “Gewu yu huoran guantong: Zhuzi gewu bujuan di quanshi wenti 格物與豁然貫通: 朱子‘格物補傳’的詮釋問題,” paper for Conference on Zhu Xi and East Asian Civilization, Taipei, November 16-18, 2000. Yang’s creative view differs from the usual characterization of Zhu Xi as subscribing to a mind-principle dualism. I think dualism describes the process of the mind-heart trying to discern the Principle, while Yang’s view describes the realm of sudden realization after discernment. Both views are perhaps mutually complementary.

⁷³ See Wing-tsit Chan 陳榮捷, “Lun Zhuzi zhi Renshuo 論朱子之仁說” in *Zhu xue lunji* 朱學論集 (Taipei: Xuesheng shuju, 1982, pp. 37-68, and his “Chu Hsi’s Completion of Neo-Confucianism,” pp. 73-80.

A. In contrast, Itô Jinsai claimed that *Dao* is just the *Dao* of daily human intercourse, violently disagreeing with Zhu Xi who had taken Confucius' *Dao* to be a "Normative Principle of things and events,"⁷⁴ adding that "this ultimate *Dao* is difficult to hear about."⁷⁵ Against all this, Itô Jinsai said,⁷⁶

The Song Confucians always undertook to discover what the former sages had not sought, not realizing that the sages' words pervade up and down, and are all embracing, all sufficient, leaving no undiscovered matters whatever. Why do they have to wait for later people to discover anything new for them? Mencius' theories of "goodness of nature" and "cultivation of *Qi*" "based on *Ren* and *Yi* were just to explain our Teacher's words. The former Confucian [i. e., Zhu Xi] thought them to be discoveries of what former sages did not seek, and so he also wanted to append his own theories, following Mencius, ... all of which are remnants of Buddha and Laozi, not to be found in our Confucius or Mencius. Can he be said to "transmit and not create," to be "faithful to and fond of the ancients" ? Clearly we need no further explanation about who is right and who has gone wrong.

Itô Jinsai accused Zhu Xi of being completely out of touch with Confucius and Mencius, as well as being unduly influenced by Buddha and Laozi.

Consequently, Itô Jinsai accused Zhu Xi of straying into the mysterious depths and teaching a *Dao* out of touch with daily life.⁷⁷

I judge, saying: Seeking the Way in the heights, seeking matters in the far, this is a general fault of scholars. In contrast, *Classics of Poetry* and *History* teach with things close to human situations relevant for daily use, making matters not far from us humans into the Way with words not far from the human world. And so, as we persist in adhering to Decency 禮, we become paragons of human demeanor to keep up the worldly ways. This is why our Teacher constantly discourses on these three Classics. As for Buddhism and Daoism, they leave the world and break off with the secular world to engage in only the high and far. They, therefore, do not really attain the principles 理

⁷⁴ Zhu Xi, *Lunyu jizhu*, p. 71. Commentary on 4/8.

⁷⁵ *Lunyu jizhu*, commentary on 5/27.

⁷⁶ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 94.

⁷⁷ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 104.

of the *Classics of Poetry* and *History*. Besides, although later Confucians recited the *Classic of Poetry* and read the *Classic of History*, they sought understanding in too deep, too difficult areas without knowing that they should seek it in easy ordinary situations close by. As a result, their words and deeds are often manifestly encumbered with twists and difficulties, lacking in vast, right, and unhurried composure. Isn't it true that the reputed difficulty of reading is not in reading but in reading well and right?

Itô Jinsai claimed *Dao* was “close to human situations relevant for daily use” because “the secular is *Dao*, outside the secular there is no so-called *Dao*.”⁷⁸

Itô Jinsai also targeted Zhu Xi in his comments on *Analects* 13/18, “The Governor of She said to Confucius, ‘In our village we have one ‘straight bow’. When his father stole a sheep, his son gave evidence against him. 葉公語孔子曰, ‘吾黨有直躬者, 共父攘弟, 而子證之,’”⁷⁹ Itô Jinsai criticized Zhu Xi's comment, “That father and son conceal for each other is the ultimate of heavenly principle and human sentiment.”⁸⁰ Itô Jinsai said,⁸¹

I judge, saying: An old commentary on this passage says, “Father and son conceal for each other is the ultimate of heavenly principle and human sentiments.” This is wrong, for it splits the human and the principle two. What human sentiments share in common everywhere throughout history is that which originates all Five Constants and Hundreds Processes 五常百行 of things, how could there be any heavenly Principle outside human sentiments? Let human sentiments go against one another; then, even if one could have pulled off the world's most difficult tasks, it is really done with animal heart, whose bane reaches the level of thief's *Dao*. Why? When things are done with discrimination of yes as yes, no as no without distinguishing close relations from distant, the noble from the lowly, such management is called “public/official/fair 公” acts. Now, if a father conceals for a son, or a son for a father, if it is not called “straight,” it should not be called “public/official/fair.” Still our Teacher accepted such father-son concealing for each other because this is the ultimate human sentiment, where decency exists and

⁷⁸ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 130.

⁷⁹ D. C. Lau tr., *The Analects*, p. 127.

⁸⁰ Zhu Xi, *Lunyu jizhu*, p. 146.

⁸¹ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 197.

where righteousness resides. So, the sages talk about principle 理 without saying it, talk about righteousness 義 and not public/official/fair. To leave human sentiments and warmth aside in seeking *Dao* is heresy, not the universal *Dao* of the world.

For Itô Jinsai, to split human nature from heavenly principle, for the latter to govern the former, and to leave the secular to seek *Dao*, as the Song Confucians did, was to leave Confucius' original meaning of *Dao* behind.

B. Itô Jinsai also criticizes Zhu Xi on the basis of another central Confucian notion, *Ren* or benevolence 仁. According to Wing-tsit Chan 陳榮捷 (1901-94), Zhu Xi reflected deeply on this notion for ten odd years, from about 36 or 37 years of age (1165-1166). Zhu completed his essay "On *Ren*" at about age 42 (1171), that is, about 20 years before⁸² -- which therefore can be taken as the source of his ideas in -- *Collected Commentaries* and *Questions and Answers on Four Books* (1177, published in 1190) and *Lectures at Mount Yü* 玉山講義 (1194).

The most important key to Zhu Xi's philosophy of *Ren* is his saying, "*Ren* is the character of mind-heart and the principle of love," which appeared more than ten times in his commentaries on the *Analects* and the *Mencius*. It is one of Zhu Xi's important creative ideas.⁸³ Itô Jinsai critiques this interpretation of *Ren* ruthlessly. Itô Jinsai thought that Zhu had extracted *Ren* from concrete human activities, and sublimated it into abstract Principle. Itô said,⁸⁴

The Former Confucian said, "*Ren*-benevolence and *yi*-righteousness are principles in human nature. Our nature only has *Ren*, *Yi*, *Li*-decency and *Zhi*-Intelligence, these four. Whence then filiality and fraternity?" If so, *Ren* as substance is the root, filiality and fraternity as function are the branches, this would contradict Youzi's 有子 saying, "filiality and fraternity are *Jen*'s root." So, Zhu Xi said, "Practicing *Ren* takes filiality and fraternity as its

⁸² Wing-tsit Chan, *Zhu xue lunji*, pp. 41-42.

⁸³ Yamazaki Misei 山崎美成 (1796-1856) said of *Ren* 仁 in his *Long An shoujian* 龍龕手鑑, "People's voices, the heart's virtue, love's principle 心之德, 愛之理. A Buddhist monk Zhiguang 智光 wrote the volume in 997. Chu Hsi completed the *Lun Meng jizhu* in 1177, and adopted this Buddhist phrase." However, Chan Wing-tsit's textual criticism reveals that people later added the phrase to *Long An shoujian*, showing thus that Zhu Xi hadn't adopted it (see supra note 82). Chan's assertion sounds plausible.

⁸⁴ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 3.

root, discoursing on nature takes *Ren* as the root of filiality and farternity.” ... But then, why did Mencius take *Jen* and *Yi* as our innate possession? It was because human nature is good that he took *Jen* and *Yi* as our nature. This is to identify human nature in terms of *Ren* and *Yi*, not to take *Ren* and *Yi* directly as human nature.

Itô Jinsai pointed out how Zhu Xi had strayed way from the dialogic situation in the *Analects* (and thus “contradicted Youzi”) and quoted Mencius to point out Zhu Xi’s mistakes. This reflects Itô’s strategies of attack.

Next, Itô Jinsai pointed out that Zhu Xi’s mistakes and irrelevancies came from having been influenced by Zen Buddhism.⁸⁵

After Mencius died, his *Dao* became obscure in the world, and later Confucians merely wandered in the realm of annotating words. When the Song clan arose, many great Confucian scholars appeared to promote orthodoxy and reject heresies, to wash away the disgraceful scholarship of the Han and Tang dynasties. Despite such great occurrences, there flourished also the philosophy of Zen and not a few scholars interpreted the sages’ saying with Zen ideas. The situation indeed was not auspicious. People came to treasure oneness of mind, to regard clear mirror and quiet waters as the ultimate task of self-cultivation.

Even though Itô Jinsai respected the Song Confucian scholarly efforts, he differed greatly from them for “seeking *Tao* too highly.”⁸⁶ Itô Jinsai saw they had polluted valuable Confucian notions, such as *Ren*, with Buddhism and Daoism; thus, the sages needed Itô to appear to dispel the dark clouds for the sun to appear to re-establish the classical meanings of Confucianism.

In conclusion, Itô’s hermeneutics of the *Analects* was not just a theory but also a practice, aiming to protect and promote the original classical Confucianism by attacking the wayward interpretations of Zhu Xi, who had been misled by Buddhism and Daoism.

CONCLUSION

We have investigated one major type of Classics hermeneutics in East Asia, of Confucius’s *Analects*, in particular, that is a hermeneutics as apologetics. Such a hermeneutics uses annotation or commentary on the Classics -- going back to their original classical meanings -- as a means to

⁸⁵ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 17.

⁸⁶ *Rongo Kogi*, p. 79.

clear up polluted understandings of Confucianism. Going back to the original meanings of the original texts resolves many mistakes and problems incurred by Song Neo-Confucian interpretations. Itô Jinsai pointed out how far Zhu Xi and his colleagues had departed from the original dialogical world and context of Confucius and his disciples.

Itô Jinsai used an annotative scalpel that cut back to the original meanings of the Classics, and revealed the insights of mutual harmonies among the Classics, in order to remove surgically later accretions of foreign meanings accrued to Confucian key notions such as *Dao* and *Ren*. This linguistic and contextual correction of Zhu Xi's interpretive system enabled Itô Jinsai to restore Confucius' "one" that penetrates 貫 all from Chu Hsi's mistaken notion of "comprehension 通" by returning to the original *Dao* of "loyalty and reciprocity" to govern all daily virtuous activities in the Five Processes and Hundred Ordinaries. By examining the muddled controversies of the 18th and 19th century Qing Confucians on that simple declaration of Confucius, "a single thread binding it all,"⁸⁷ we are all the more impressed with Ito's insightful interpretation of how the "one" that "penetrates all" successfully dissected and overthrew Zhu Xi's interpretive approach to the *Analects*. In this way, Itô Jinsai completed the revival of Confucius' original *Dao*.

Itô Jinsai's hermeneutic apologetics can be compared instructively to that of the Qing Confucian, Dai Zhen 戴震 (Dongyuan 東原, 1724-1777), who attacked Zhu Xi using a classicist annotative hermeneutics of the *Mencius* in a monograph titled *Textual Critical Commentary on the Mencius* 孟子字義疏證. Unfortunately, Dai Zhen was less effective than Itô Jinsai. He was unable to deliver a fatal blow to Zhu

⁸⁷ Ruan Yuan 阮元 (1764-1849) said, "Confucius' Way appears in all his daily activities, not just in learning of his teaching and sayings. Thus, when he told Zengzi to penetrate his Way 道 into one, "penetrate 貫" means actions and events.... So, if we take "penetrate 貫" as "practice of things," then the sage's Way reduces to Confucianism; if we take it as "penetrate through 通貫," then it is close to Chan Buddhism. We ask what sort of Way it is, then we get what the *Doctrine of the Mean* calls loyalty and reciprocity, virtues of the ordinary, words of the ordinary, the Way mutually involving words and acts." However, Fan Dongshu 方東樹 (1772-1851) disagreed, saying, "The phrase 'penetrating into one' combines knowing and acting, and cannot be tilted to either one.... Loyalty and reciprocity is the salt to salt 'penetrating into one', the salt penetrates and then we know it. Only upon finishing the salting can we understand its meaning, unreachable by shallow scholars. Jiao Xun 焦循 understood it to be "My Way pervades all through among people 吾道一以通之於人." He just stuck himself to loyalty and reciprocity, trailing these words to miss the real meaning." Both statements appear in Fan Dongshu, *Hanxue shandui* 漢學商兌 in his *Hanxue shichengji* 漢學師承記 (Beijing: Sanlian shuju, 1988), zhuan B (I), pp. 198 and 301.

Xi, because he never really entered Zhu's "circle of hermeneutics." Dai Zhen's methodological limitation rendered him less than successful in his apologetic attack on Zhu Xi.⁸⁸

Itô Jinsai would have met with problems like Dai Zhen's on the *Mencius*, for they both applied the tools of textual hermeneutics -- which were more suitable for word studies than for understanding the theoretical metaphysical side that is more prominent in *Mencius* than in Confucius. Be that as it may, the debates between Itô Jinsai and Zhu Xi, with the tacit "enemy" of Buddhism and Daoism in the background, add depth to our understanding of Confucianism, including Confucius, *Mencius*, Zhu Xi, and Itô Jinsai himself.

⁸⁸ See my *Mencian Hermeneutics: A History of Interpretations in China* (New Brunswick and London: Transaction Publishers, 2001), pp. 211-232.

Chapter XIII

Confucius on *li* and Montaigne on *Coustume*: A Reflection on Customary Practices and Personal Autonomy

Cecilia Wee

Confucius has often been characterized as maintaining that there is one true path ('the Way') which all humans should try to follow and attain. Thus, there would be, for him, broadly speaking, a single kind of good life for all humans, which everyone should seek to live. Michel de Montaigne, on the other hand, is sometimes seen as the moral relativist *par excellence*, who holds that what counts as the 'good' must be relative to specific cultures and societies, and there are no independent standards by which one may compare the 'good life' of one culture with that of another.

Despite this (alleged) fundamental difference between them, both have in common that their views apparently threaten, in one way or another, to exclude the possibility of personal autonomy. Thus, for example, Fingarette claims that, in Confucius's ethics:

Man is not an ultimately autonomous being who has an inner and decisive power, intrinsic to him, a power to select among real alternatives and thereby shape a life for himself. Instead, he is born as 'raw material' [that] must be civilized by education and thus become a truly human man. (Fingarette 1972:34)

Again, consider this well-known claim by Montaigne:

For in truth custom is a violent and treacherous schoolmistress. She establishes in us, little by little, stealthily, the foothold of her authority; but having by this mild and humble beginning settled and planted it with the help of time, she soon uncovers to us a furious and tyrannical face against which we no longer have the liberty of even raising our eyes. (*Essais* 1:23, Frame: 77)¹

Customs and habits may, according to Montaigne, vary greatly across space and time, but the customs and mores of a particular society at a particular time and place exert such a hold upon its members that they chart their lives unquestioningly according to these standards and practices. He concludes that 'it is a common vice...of almost all men, to fix their aim and limit by the ways to which they were born'. (*Essais* 1:49, Frame: 215) One might then claim of Montaigne that he thinks that custom exerts such a

¹ Citations from the *Essais* give book and essay numbers, followed by page numbers from the Frame edition of 1957.

strong hold on humans that they no longer have an ‘inner and decisive power to choose among real alternatives’.

This paper examines Confucius’s views on *li* (translated here, not wholly felicitously, as rites), and places it against Montaigne’s views on *coutume* (translated here, again not wholly felicitously, as ‘custom’). It suggests that, contrary to initial appearances, there are many affinities between them in respect of their views of the human good, and of how one should live. It also argues that each has room for a reasonably strong version of personal autonomy in his account. I begin by looking at Confucius’s views on the role of rites in the ethical life, before looking at Montaigne’s views on custom.²

CONFUCIUS ON RITES

Confucius placed strong emphasis on the importance of rites for the individual who wishes to live the good life. He maintains that benevolence (*jen*) is constituted by returning ‘to the observance of the rites through overcoming the self’. (*Analects* 12:1, Lau: 112) The Confucian ideal of achieving benevolence thus has as an integral part the observance of rites, such that anyone who wishes to be a benevolent person must overcome herself and return to the observance of the rites.

But what precisely is a rite? In the *Analects*, the rites discussed include those that relate to how we should act towards our parents when they are alive, when they die and when they are dead; and the wider Confucian tradition clearly specifies the ritual relations that should hold between husband and wife, father and son, commoner and minister and so on. But note that the rites mentioned by Confucius also include extremely detailed specifications, such as the linen cap to be worn for a particular ceremony and whether to bow before or after ascending the hall (*Analects* 9:3, Lau: 96).

The rites thus encompass what might be called customary practices. Importantly, Confucius holds that these rites have an ethical dimension -- they outline how one should behave to one’s elders, one’s children and others in one’s community. Indeed, these Confucian rites or customary practices delineate an entire way of living -- they provide one with a guide of *how one is to live*. In following these rites or rules of propriety, one acts

² I focus exclusively on Confucius’s own views in this paper. That is, I will not be looking at the views of immediate successors like Mengzi and Xunzi, far less the wider Confucian tradition as it has developed over the centuries.

appropriately towards others in the familial, social and state order, and lives as one should.

But in order to live as one should, it is not enough to *follow* or *perform* these rites -- rather, these rites should be *lived out*. Confucius holds that, when one sacrifices to the gods, one must sacrifice as if the gods are present. (*Analects* 3:12, Lau: 69) It is not enough to perform the sacrifice, one must *take part* in it.

Fingarette provides an interesting illustration of what this might involve using the (Western) practice of shaking hands. Consider what happens when I meet you in the street, and wave and put out a hand to shake yours. When this happens, I do not need to direct my mind consciously to my feeling of respect or good-will for you (which might indeed make rather self-conscious with you). Rather, provided I genuinely participate in the handshake, that act itself is an expression of my respect and good-will. Another example (this time not drawn from Fingarette) might be that of the courteous person who invites her guests to partake first of the food at a feast. She does not have to think of being courteous -- the spontaneous act itself is an expression of courtesy and respect. For Confucius, when one performs all customary rites and observances in the right spirit, one is attaining the Way and living as one ought to live.

We can contrast the case delineated above with a case where the person performs the handshake or invitation to eat blindly or mechanically -- these performances then are surface motions that do not really impinge on the *real* person (who may in reality be indifferent or bored when making the gestures). In such a case, that person is not doing as she ought. Or again, consider someone who is bursting with good-will and does not control herself, indiscriminately showering physical affection to the embarrassment of her acquaintance or guests. For Confucius at least, such a person would not be doing as she ought: he would think she needs to temper her brash behaviour with propriety. He states:

When there is a preponderance of native substance over acquired refinement, the result will be rudeness. When there is preponderance of acquired refinement over native substance, the result will be pedantry. Only a well-balanced admixture of these two will result in gentlemanliness. (*Analects* 6:18, Lau: 83)

It is only when the person lives a life where his native substance has been genuinely been shaped and informed by the rites that he truly becomes a gentleman.

Confucius holds that the good life consists in 'swerving not from the right path' (*Analects* 2:2, Lau: 63), and again, that the gentleman devotes himself to attaining the Way. (*Analects*: 15:32; Lau: 136) It is clear that attaining the Way must involve living one's life by and through the rites, for it is only by doing this that one becomes a gentleman.

I have looked at Confucius's views on the nature of the rite and the role that rites (ought to) play in shaping the person's life. Now we turn to Montaigne's views on the role that custom plays in shaping a person's life, to see how Montaigne's account may raise possible worries concerning the good life as advocated by Confucius.

MONTAIGNE ON CUSTOM

In his essay 'On Custom', Montaigne explores the diverse and variegated customs and practices that obtain in different societies. Among the practices that he includes are that of greeting one another by putting their finger to the ground and then raising it to heaven; of being prohibited (unless one is his wife or child) from speaking to the king without an intermediary; of sending one's blood to others as a sign of affection; of burning incense to honour fellow human beings, not just gods; and of killing one's father at a certain age as an act of piety. (*Essais*1:23, Frame: 82)

The customs that Montaigne mentions have some affinities to the rites that Confucius discusses. To begin with, they are ritual practices or observances in much the same way that the Confucian rites are. Moreover, Montaigne does not think that such customs are merely practised mechanically or blindly, without impinging upon the real person. 'It is custom that gives form to human life'. Montaigne's well-known assertion here indicates that he thinks that, in most cases, such customs come to form an integral part of the person, so that she lives out a life that is shaped by these customs. Indeed, his view is that these customs and practices are *so* internalized, and become *so* much of the person that she 'no longer [has] the liberty of raising [her] eyes' in defiance of accepted custom, and can only fix her 'aim and limit by the ways to which [she is] born'. As with Confucius, then, Montaigne's customs delineate for the individual an entire way of living -- they shape the way that one *should* live. Such customs may delineate appropriate expressions of affection and honour, as the Confucian rites delineate appropriate expressions of respect and courtesy. Again, just as obeying one's parents unconditionally is an act of piety to the Confucian child, Montaigne speaks of a society in which killing one's father at a certain age is an act of piety.³

In claiming that custom may become so internalized to the individual that she is no longer free to 'raise her eyes' in defiance of it,

³ It might be argued that Montaigne's 'coustume' is similar to, and more appropriately compared with, the notion of *su* (found in the writings, e.g., of Xunzi) than with *li*. However, as the above paragraph shows, *coustume*, as conceived by Montaigne, does play a role analogous to *li* in human lives. *Coustume* is not merely (elaborate) ritual blindly and thoughtlessly followed; it is internalized as the *right* thing to do, and so has its ethical dimension. In this respect, it is close to Confucian *li*.

Montaigne evidently thinks that the customary practices of a society can deprive its members of autonomy, in the sense that they deprive these members of the ability to envision and carve out alternative lives to those mapped by prevailing custom. This sounds uncannily similar to Fingarette's claim in respect of Confucian ethics that '[m]an is not an ultimately autonomous being who has...a power to select among real alternatives and thereby shape a life for himself'.

For Confucius, the rites delineate the right way to live -- when a person's 'native substance' has been genuinely shaped and informed by the rites, she truly becomes the gentlewoman. But Montaigne's views, as I have just delineated them, can be brought to bear on Confucius's ethics and to raise a couple of objections concerning this ethic.

First, Montaigne notes that rites, customs and practices differ wildly from culture to culture, from society to society. Yet the members of any particular society are so shaped and informed by their *own* particular rites and observances that they think *their* way of living is the right way to live, and no other. So is Confucius simply one of these arrogant persons who think that *their* way of living is the right way, and that a life shaped by *their* prescribed rites (towards parents, ministers etc.) is the good life -- and there can be no other? That is, does he indeed ignore, or unjustly exclude, the possibility that there may be other equally attainable kinds of good lives?

The second point concerns the person who lives the ethical life Confucius prescribes. Confucius maintains that the gentleman sets his heart on attaining the Way, and this involves 'returning' to the rites (i.e. immersing oneself in and internalizing these rites). Is the Confucian ethical person then someone who works unquestioningly and determinedly at internalizing these rites, whose 'aim and limit', in Montaigne's words, is fixed by these rites? If so, there may be some justice to Fingarette's claim that the Confucian ethic has no room for personal autonomy, at least in the sense that the ethical person does not shape the contours of her own life, this life being shaped by internalizing specific customs and rites directed at helping her attain the Way.

I now examine these objections, once again by locating Confucius's views in relation to Montaigne's. I examine the second objection first.

MONTAIGNE AND CONFUCIUS ON REFLECTIVE SCRUTINY AND AUTONOMY

Montaigne claims of customary practices that they can become so ingrained in a person that she is no longer able to 'raise her eyes' in defiance of custom, and envisage living in a way other than that prescribed by custom. But does he think it inevitable that the customs of a particular society exercise this effect upon its members?

As I have argued in another paper,⁴ Montaigne does not think that it is inevitable that we lose our autonomy in this sense. Note that, while Montaigne claims custom is like a schoolmistress who exerts a tyrannical grip that is very difficult to escape, he does not think it is *impossible* to escape this grip:

the principal effect of the power of custom is to...ensnare us in such a way that it is *hardly* (*a peine*) within our power to get ourselves back out of its grip and return into ourselves to reflect and reason about its ordinances. (*Essais* 1:23, Frame: 83)

Montaigne writes that we can *hardly* escape the influence of custom in order to 'return into ourselves' to rationally reflect on customary practices, suggesting that while this procedure is difficult to achieve, it is not *impossible*. Montaigne therefore maintains that it is possible to use reason to reflect on our customary practices and their acceptability.

That Montaigne would maintain this might at first seem ludicrous to those acquainted with his wider work. In his *Apology for Raymond Sebond*, and in countless other places, Montaigne is utterly dismissive of reason, arguing that it is of no use, and indeed causes considerable harm, to the human being. How then can Montaigne hold that reason can be used to free the human from the 'violent prejudice' of custom?

The answer lies in recognizing that Montaigne uses the term 'reason' (*raison*) in a variety of senses in his works.⁵ In particular, Frame points out that Montaigne makes a distinction between *raison raisonnante* ('reasoning' reason) and *raison raisonnable* (reasonable reason). (Frame 1995:203) The former is characterized by Frame as 'sheer ratiocination for its own sake, various, changeable, and irresponsible' (ibid.). It is towards this kind of reason that Montaigne expresses skepticism and ridicule. In contrast, there are many places in which Montaigne endorses the use of reasonable reason. Frame characterizes the latter as 'the reason that should prevail, and sometimes does, in the conduct of human affairs: a matter of reasonableness, of heeding the proper order of things. ... It seems to operate solely in the realm of human conduct [and] is modest where its counterpart is presumptuous, truthful where the other is deceptive'. (ibid.)⁶

It is the latter kind of reason that one can bring to bear on custom to free oneself of its power. That such reasonable reason can be used to evaluate custom is confirmed in this passage:

⁴ See Wee 2005.

⁵ Frame points out that the *Lexique de la langue des Essais* lists five such usages. (Frame 1995:203)

⁶ Montaigne's views on reason have of course been widely discussed. See, for example, Duval 1983, Frame 1995, La Charite 1995, Locher 1995, J.B. Schneewind, 1998, pp. 44-47.

Whoever wants to get rid of this violent prejudice of custom will find many things accepted with undoubting resolution, which have no support but in the hoary beard and the wrinkles of the usage that goes with them; but when this mask is torn off, and he refers things to truth and reason, he will feel his judgment as it were all upset, and nevertheless restored to a much surer status. (*Essais* 1:23, Frame: 84-5)

Montaigne allows that custom leads to the unquestioning acceptance of many practices, but holds nevertheless that one *can* refer these practices to (reasonable) reason for evaluation. While such referral may result in initial dislocation for one's judgment, one's judgment will eventually be restored to a much surer status (as it is founded on reflective reason rather than unquestioning practice). Montaigne thus thinks that humans possess the power of stepping back from their customary practices to reflect upon these practices, and subsequently endorsing, modifying or discarding them. Indeed, Montaigne thinks that this procedure is *essential* for anyone who wishes to avoid being imprisoned by the 'violent prejudice' or the 'furious' and 'tyrannical schoolmistress' that is custom. For Montaigne, the human being can reasonably choose to live in ways other than those prescribed by these customs.

The issue of what is required for an agent to be autonomous has been much discussed and contested. A discussion of the merits and drawbacks of the various kinds of criteria for human autonomy is obviously beyond the scope of this paper. This paper will instead focus on one prominent version of personal autonomy, which is centered on the requirement that an autonomous person is one who is able 'not only to scrutinize critically their first order motivations, but also to change them if they so desire'. (Dworkin 1988:16) It is usually accepted that such first order scrutiny need not be confined to one's motivations or desires, but include one's values, relations to others, and (presumably) one's practices.

Clearly, Montaigne would hold that the person is capable of this kind of autonomy, insofar as she is capable of scrutiny of, and (reasonable) reflection about, her customary practices. (Indeed, he thinks she *should* embark on such scrutiny, in order to avoid being imprisoned by custom's 'violent' prejudices.)

Confucius too may be said to hold a similar position to Montaigne's. Of course, Confucius does not specifically maintain that one can use *reason* (far less *raisonnable*) to assess one's customary practices. (He could not do so, as he likely lacked the equivalent of the Western conception of 'reason', with all its surrounding baggage).⁷ But it

⁷ The lack of an obvious distinction between reason and emotion is indicated by the common translation of *xin* as heart/mind. See also, e.g., Hansen 1992, pp. 81-3 and Wong 1991.

is evident that he endorsed something very like the reasonable reflectiveness that Montaigne endorsed. In *Analects* 9:3, he states:

A ceremonial cap of linen is what is prescribed by the rites. Today black silk is used instead. This is more frugal and I follow the majority. To prostrate oneself before ascending the steps is what is prescribed by the rites. Today one does so after having ascended them. This is casual and, though going against the majority, I follow the practice of doing so before ascending. (Lau: 96)

Confucius here does not unquestioningly internalize the rites, but steps back to reflect on the practices themselves. Thus, in finding the use of black silk more economical, he finds it reasonable to accept (with the majority) that one should depart from what the rites prescribe. In contrast, compare prostrating oneself *before* ascending the steps, to prostrating oneself only *after* one has ascended. The latter is apparently expressive of a certain uppity-ness or arrogance. Since such a modification results in a lack of respect, Confucius continues with the rite.

Note here that Confucius neither blindly follows the majority nor insists that the majority should follow the prescribed rites. Rather, what he does is to stand back and reflect reasonably on the rite itself. If it is needlessly expensive to follow strictly that rite, he recommends modifying or departing from that rite. If a modification alters the spirit or underlying intent of the rite, so that respect is no longer expressed, he recommends continued observance of the rite.

Confucius's reflective scrutiny of customary rites is but one aspect of his wider view that one should subject the way one lives to humane and reasonable reflection, and modify this if need be. As mentioned, Confucius characterizes the good life as 'Swerving not from the right path'. But finding out what the right path is, and living out that path, is no easy endeavour. The Master states that he sets his heart on learning at fifteen, but it is only at thirty that he is able to take his stand, at forty that he is free from doubt, and at seventy that he can follow his heart's desire without overstepping the line. (*Analects* 2:4, Lau: 63) The intervening years between fifteen and seventy are evidently spent reflecting on his desires, values and practices, discarding some and endorsing others before he attains serenity in old age.

That reflective scrutiny is an essential part of the good life is further confirmed by Confucius's following claim:

In a hamlet of ten households, there are bound to be those who are my equal in doing their best for others and in being trustworthy in what they say, but they are unlikely to be as eager to learn as I am. (*Analects* 5:28, Lau: 80)

Confucius's point here seems to be precisely that internalizing certain values and practices may not be enough: it is not enough to always do one's best for others and to be trustworthy with one's words. Rather, one must also be 'eager to learn'. Such learning obviously goes beyond merely learning to do one's best or be trustworthy. (In this kind of learning Confucius has, as he points out, many equals.) Instead, Confucius's eagerness to learn would likely involve his engaging in a search as to *why* (and whether) one should do one's best or be trustworthy, and how this relates to attaining the Way. Here too, it is evident that Confucius would hold reflective scrutiny to be necessary to living the truly good life.

In short, then, Confucius holds that living the ethical life indeed involves being 'trained' through the rites, or 'ingrained' with the rites -- but it also involves, *inter alia*, reflecting upon, and if necessary modifying, the ways we are being trained in. Like Montaigne, Confucius thinks that the human need not just live a life shaped by customs or rites or follow a fixed path -- and indeed *should* not do so. She *can* depart from the prescribed rites if reflection leads her to think she should.

As I have mentioned, Montaigne maintains that the process of (reasonable) reflection may result in initial dislocation for one's judgment, but that one's judgment will eventually be restored to a surer status. A similar insight was likely present also to Confucius: surely it is one's second-order reflection about one's observance of the rites -- as well as one's own desires, goals etc. -- that enables one to restore one's judgments about one's actions and beliefs to a 'surer status' and hence (as he puts it) to 'take a stand' at thirty, to be 'free from doubt' at forty, and finally, to follow one's desire without overstepping the line at seventy.

Pace the second objection, the Confucian ethical life does not involve merely internalizing the rites and unquestioningly developing oneself in a fixed direction. Scrutiny and possible modification of rites and customs is as much an integral feature of the Confucian good life, as it is of Montaigne's. Thus, the Confucian ethical person must possess this kind of autonomy.

However, there may be another sense in which the Confucian ethical person lacks autonomy. Fingarette argues that Confucian ethics does not conceive of humans as persons with the power to 'select among real alternatives and shape [their] own [lives]'. Now, one weak reading of this claim would involve that it maintains that the human lacks the autonomy to reflect on the rites (and more broadly, on one's desires etc.), and to make the requisite changes. If one reads Fingarette's claim in this, then, as I've argued, it would not be reflective of Confucius's position.⁸

⁸ The argument I give is but one in a wide array of rebuttals against Fingarette's claim that the Confucian human lacks autonomy. (See, e.g., Schwartz 1985:79-81, Wang 2002, Chong 2003) Interesting discussions of autonomy in relation to Confucianism are to be found in Shun and Wong 2004).

But Fingarette's claim could also be read more strongly as maintaining that Confucius does not take cognizance of the fact that humans have the power to choose vastly different ways of living their lives, that there can be a wide array of (equally acceptable) good lives. While the Confucian does engage in second-order reflection, such reflection may ultimately be thought to lead her (more or less) along the same broad path viz., the 'Way'. Attaining the Way, it might be argued, involves, in its broad contours, living a life that has as among its key elements giving peace to the old, having trust in one's friends and cherishing the young. (*Analects* 5:26, Lau: 80) Thus, we still have the first objection -- viz., Confucius (unlike Montaigne) fails to recognize that there may be vastly different kinds of good lives, different 'ways' which are all equally acceptable. But are Montaigne and Confucius so very different in this respect? I examine this in the next section.

CONFUCIUS AND MONTAIGNE ON GOOD LIVES

Montaigne in his various essays often highlights the vastly different customs and practices (and by implication different moral orientations) that obtain in various societies. It is often thought that he means to conclude from this that all these very different ways of living are equally acceptable, and that there are no independent standards to adjudicate between various forms of living, so that a benign acceptance is the only attitude that we can have towards other ways of life.⁹

But this cannot be Montaigne's position. As mentioned, Montaigne does think that we can apply a reflective *raison raisonnable* to our own customs and practices. One would surmise that he also thinks that we can do so with the practices of other societies. That he does think the latter can be seen, for example, in his essay 'Of Cannibals'. There, Montaigne describes the practice of strangling an enemy to death and then roasting and eating him as one of 'barbarous horror'. He thus clearly judges this custom of the Brazilian cannibals to be morally unacceptable. Importantly, he then points out that, inasmuch as this practice is unacceptable, the practice of his French compatriots of roasting a man while alive during torture is even more unacceptable. Montaigne thus applies reflective reason in assessing both the practices of the French and the Brazilian cannibals by the same yardstick, and in urging the French to be as critical of their own practices as they are of the practices of others.

Montaigne clearly does not think that all customs and practices across cultures are acceptable. In 'Of Cannibals', he writes tellingly that

there never was any opinion so disordered (*desreglee*) as to justify (*excusast*) treachery, disloyalty, tyranny, and

⁹ See, e.g., Todorov 1983

cruelty, which are our ordinary vices. (*Essais* 1:31, Frame: 155-6, emphasis mine)

Montaigne is evidently speaking here of reasonable reason. He maintains that this kind of reason can never provide an acceptable justification of treachery, disloyalty, tyranny and cruelty; no matter how 'disordered' or unruly one's application of reason is, it can never convincingly justify these vices.¹⁰ Thus, practices embodying these vices are (very often) unacceptable. On the other hand, Montaigne, in 'Of Coaches', expresses approbation of practices that embody devoutness, liberality and loyalty. (*Essais* 3:6, Frame: 694) Again, given that cruelty, treachery etc. are vices, one presumes he would consider their opposites -- compassion, sincerity, loyalty, freedom and kindness -- to be virtues. One might surmise that reason would justify as acceptable those practices that embody these traits.

Montaigne is thus not a moral relativist. He does evaluate customs and practices according to certain universal standards. This being the case, not every kind of life would count as a good life for Montaigne. A person who is cruel and treacherous, or who has internalized a tradition or set of customs embodying cruelty and treachery, does not live a good or morally acceptable life. (And indeed something like this position must be right, for one would hardly want to say that a Nazi camp commandant who tortures prisoners and sends thousands to the gas chambers lives a good life.)

On the other hand, one who is reflectively sincere and loyal, and who has thoughtfully internalized customs embodying liberality, loyalty etc. would live a good life for Montaigne. Montaigne holds that this liberality etc. may be expressed very differently in different cultures, and to that extent the lives lived may appear very different on the surface.¹¹ Moreover, I think Montaigne would allow that different cultures may emphasize one kind of value at the expense of another -- e.g. freedom at the expense of piety or vice versa. But there should be at least some underlying commonality -- or at least some family resemblance -- in the terms upon which these good lives are lived.

¹⁰ This is in fact a bit of gloss. As I point out in Wee 2005, Montaigne seems prepared to accept that cruel, treacherous etc. practices may not be intrinsically justifiable, but may be justifiable as instruments to a further good. However, Montaigne also thinks that such instrumental justification should be subjected to careful scrutiny. In most cases, he maintains, the justifications provided will turn out to be spurious. Thus, it is only in a very small number of cases that such instrumental justification turns out to be acceptable. Because of considerations of length, and because I think they make little difference to the point under discussion, I ignore this very small class of cases in this paper.

¹¹ In seeing this to be so, Montaigne may well have anticipated Rachels 1986.

We can now proceed to Confucius. For Confucius, there are presumably no morally unacceptable rites (such as rites embodying cruelty and treachery), since the Confucian rites precisely provide a guide to living an ethical life that involves trustworthiness, respect for others etc. But Confucius's reflective evaluation of the rites at *Analects* 9:3 deserves a re-visit. Recall that Confucius accepts the replacement of the linen cap with the black silk cap because it costs less but performs the same role in the ceremony, but rejects the practice of prostrating only after one has ascended the hall because it does not express the appropriate reverence and respect. For Confucius, as for Montaigne, what matters is that the *spirit* of the rites be preserved, not the actual rite itself (which is open to modification). This leaves it possible, in principle, that for Confucius, other kinds of rites, other forms of expressing the same reverence, sincerity would be acceptable. Thus, for example, kissing (or even shaking) the hand of a sovereign, providing it expresses the same reverence would be as acceptable as prostrating oneself before the sovereign. Thus, he might well accept that other lives lived in other cultures and shaped by other customs may look quite different, but would still be good lives if the underlying reverence, sincerity, etc. are there.¹²

One might argue that Montaigne is a lot more willing than Confucius to allow that different values might take precedence in different societies -- but even this claim may be open to argument. As argued, Confucius makes clear that the good life involves second order reflection on one's practices, values and beliefs. It is possible that further reflection might make evident that, say, that unconditional obedience to parents or subservience to the sovereign should not be a *sine qua non* of the good life, but should be more flexibly applied in different times and at different places.

Moreover, even if one admits this claim, Confucius and Montaigne would still be much closer than initial appearances suggest. Instead of being polar opposites with respect to the admissibility of different kinds of good lives, Confucius is more flexible than first appears, and Montaigne rather less, about the kinds of lives that would count as good lives. Their views on good lives thus converge more than first appears.

In sum, Montaigne and Confucius have certain affinities, which may be surprising given their separation in time and intellectual tradition. Both recognize the importance of customary practices in shaping and giving form to a person's life; both accept that reflection and reasonable evaluation of these practices is possible, and indeed a necessary feature of living well; neither is a moral relativist, and both hold that certain qualities are valuable and others despicable. Montaigne is perhaps rather more cognizant of the

¹² It's possible, of course, that Confucius may be less accommodating about the kinds of customs that count as acceptable expressions of a particular sentiment. (For example, it is hard to see Confucius as accepting that the killing of one's father at a certain age is an act of piety.)

variety of different kinds of lives that may be lived, but both would agree that what is important is the underlying sentiments -- which both recognize to be shaped and tempered by customary practices -- that moves these lives.¹³

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¹³ An earlier version of this paper was read at the conference on *Confucianism: Retrospect and Prospect*, held at the University of Toronto in September 2005. I would like to thank the participants for their lively and helpful comments on the paper. I would also like to thank C.L. Ten for his useful comments on the initial draft, and Hui-Chieh Loy for a helpful post-conference discussion on Confucian rites (*li*) and custom (*su*).

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Chapter XIV

Globalization and Confucianism: the Virtues of *Shu* and Generosity to Many Others

Vincent Shen

INTRODUCTION

Today when we're facing the challenge of globalization, an attempt should be made to critically identify and creatively interpret the resources in Chinese philosophy not only good for Chinese people but also for other people in the world. Globalization, basically understood as a process of deterritorialization or border-crossing, to the extent of involving all humankind on the globe as a whole, that happens now in every domain of human activities: health, technology, environment, economics, politics, education, culture, religion...etc. The deterritorialization here should be understood in a broader sense, as a process of crossing border-crossing, or going beyond oneself to multiple others, that I would coin in a neologism "strangification", or *waitui* 外推 in Chinese. Developed on linguistic, pragmatic and ontological levels, strangification is taken here as the basic strategy of meeting with differences and solving the problem of conflict in view of an optimal harmony, applicable to all kinds of differences. Chinese philosophy, as wisdom guiding Chinese people to face differences, solve conflicts and sustain the claim for optimal harmony, might still be valuable for today's human experience in time of globalization. Strangification presupposes appropriation of language and an original generosity or hospitality to multiple others. This paper will focus on a critical discussion of the Confucian virtue of *shu* and generosity to the other in Confucianism to explore their relevance for today's world in process of globalization.

GLOBALIZATION, STRANGIFICATION AND GENEROSITY TO MANY OTHERS

Institutionally speaking, the process of globalization starts with modernity but it has something going beyond modernity. Modernity has produced as basic institutions, on economic level, the ever-extending market; and on political level, the Nation-States. Beyond that, post-modernity is now in process of producing on its negative side the de-constructural critique of modernity's principles: subjectivity, representations and rationality; and on its positive side the global information society. In the process of globalization we see on the one hand the extension of market economy into global market, the global politics beyond the limit of nation-state and the concept of sovereignty, and finally

the global culture in contrast with and in dialectic against self-awakening local cultures.

Taking all these considerations into account, I would define globalization as “An historical process of deterritorialization or cross-bordering, by which human desire, human universalizability and ontological interconnectedness are to be realized on the planet as a whole, and to be concretized now as global free market, trans-national political order and cultural glocalism.”

Since globalization is a process that concerns human kind as a whole, it should have some foundation in the nature of human being. Philosophically speaking, it should be based in human desire to go always beyond and its nature longing for universality or better, its universalizing capacity. Globalization as a technological, economic and cultural process should be seen as the material implementation of this universalizing dynamism of always going beyond in human nature. For us human determined by historicity there should be no universality pure and simple but only process of universalization in time. This is to say that universality pure and simple is only an abstract ideal existing in an ever-retreating horizon. The only real historical process is the unceasingly going beyond and towards higher levels of universalization.

Anthropologically speaking, this could be traced back to the historical moment in which a human being picked up the first chopping stone and came to use utensil or instrument. In this way, human being went beyond the determinism of physical nature and established thereby a free relationship with the material world. Since then human being stepped into the stage of hominization. *Homo faber*, though able to go beyond the determination of material world by using them as instruments, still depended on them, and therefore not totally human. When human beings were able to communicate with others through language, a system of signs that concentrated human experience, revealed intelligibility of things in communicating with others, they started to exist on a new level of universalizability. Moreover, when human beings came to engage themselves in disinterested activities, such as playing, sacrificing and artistic creativities... there emerged higher level of freedom, even to the point of fusion with things and people. Just imagine human beings got easily tired after a whole day’s labor, but they would continue day and night dancing, playing and engaging in the ritual activity of sacrifice without any boredom or fatigue. This shows that human beings seemed to be more human in these free playful and creative activities.

Therefore, *homo loquutus* and *homo ludens* are more human, more universalizable and therefore more humanized than merely hominized. Born together with humanization, there is the universalizable dynamism in human nature that came to the scene of human historical process. Probably this is why philosophers East and West in the axial age, that happened between the 8th and the 2nd Centuries BCE, in the time of philosophical breakthrough, would understand reason as the most essential function of

human mind. In ancient Greek philosophy, human being was defined as “*to on logon exon*”, later translated into Latin as “*animal rationale*”, the proper function of which was *theoria*, which produced knowledge for knowledge’s own sake, in looking for the theoretically universalizable. In ancient China, the concern was more with the impartial or the universal in human praxis, the practically universalizable.

But it is clear that having the idea and tendency of universalizability is not yet the process of globalization. This needs the whole technological, institutional and historical development through modern times to implement the universalizable in form of globalization, even if that which has been implemented is merely part of the universalizable. Globalization concerns the globe or the earth all as a whole, though still in fact but a tiny star in the immense universe. The day when we’re ready not only for a global ethics, but also a universalizable ethics in term of the universe, we human would be qualified then to go beyond the global era to enter into the universal era.

Now we should consider this: globalization brings with it the contrast with localization, homogeneity in contrast with diversification. This is a moment of human history that people in the world feel so close to each other on the one hand, and so vulnerable and susceptible of conflicts of any kind on the other. Now it is the critical historical moment of opening toward other instead of keeping within self-enclosure. In responding to today’s urgent situation full of conflicts created by self-enclosure of different parts such as different disciplines, cultures, political and religious groups, etc., we humans should be more concerned with one another and the possibility of mutual enrichment. In order to overcome antagonism by appealing to effective dialogue, I have proposed in recent years “strangification” and “language appropriation” as viable strategies. The term “strangification,” a neologism that might appear strange in English, yet is much more understandable in Chinese -- *waitui* 外推, means etymologically the act of going outside of oneself to multiple others, or going outside of one’s familiarity to strangeness, to many strangers. This act presupposes the appropriation of language by which we learn to express our ideas or values in language either of others or understandable to others. In their turn, “strangification” and “language appropriation” presuppose an original generosity toward many others, without limiting oneself to the claim of reciprocity, quite often presupposed in social relationship and ethical golden rules.

Three types of strangification could be brought up here: The first is linguistic strangification, by which we translate one discourse/value or cultural expression/religious belief into discourse/value/cultural expression/religious belief claimed by other scientific, cultural or religious communities, then it has a larger or universalizable validity. Otherwise, its validity is limited only to its own world and reflection must be made on the limit of one’s own discourse/value or expression/belief.

The second is pragmatic strangification. If one discourse/value or expression/belief can be drawn out from its original social and pragmatic context and be put into other social and pragmatic contexts and is still valid, this means it is more universalizable and has larger validity than merely limited to its own context of origin.

The third is ontological strangification. A discourse/ value or expression/belief, when universalizable by a detour of experiencing Reality Itself, for example, a direct experience with Reality itself, such as other people, Nature, or even with the Ultimate Reality, would be very helpful for mutual understanding among different scientific micro-worlds (disciplines or research programs), cultural worlds, and religious worlds.

The original generosity implied in this first act of going outside of oneself should be seen as the condition *sine qua non* of all situation of reciprocal relationship. Philosophically speaking, before we can establish a sort of reciprocity, emphasized for example in Marcel Mauss' *Essai sur le don* as the principle of human society, there must be a generous act of going outside of oneself to the other, so that there can be established accordingly a relation of reciprocity. If in the classical world, golden rules are so much emphasized and reciprocity was seen as the basic principle of sociability, now in the post-modern world and the world of globalization, we need a principle more than that of reciprocity. The new principles for society and ethics that we are looking for should base themselves on original generosity and strangification as the act of going outside of oneself to many others.

CONFUCIAN *SHU* AND GENEROSITY TO MANY OTHERS

Any kind of social institution, no matter what it is, should always be lived existentially and ethically with meaningfulness by human beings. The same with the process of globalization which, developed by communication technology and implemented on economic, political and cultural levels, brings humankind into more and more systematic networks. This situation of living in networks existentially exemplifies the ontology of dynamic relationship that we find since long affirmed by Confucianism. The Confucian concept of *ren* denotes somehow the internal relationships between human being and all things existing in the universe (Heaven and earth). In reason of *ren*, human beings can be affected by and respond to one another, and by the act of *shu*, they can enlarge their existence to larger realms of existence from oneself to the other, to family, to social community, to the state, to all under heaven, now interpreted by the term globalization. The network of this dynamic relationship cannot be said to exist in form of substance, neither can it be said not to exist, as nothingness. It's always there dynamically developing, not only on the ontological level but also on the ethical level.

Basically, Confucianism will be able to contribute to this process of globalization by its way of life as a process of ethical extension, especially by Confucian virtues and values such as humanness, righteousness, wisdom,

sincerity, faithfulness...etc. In the networks developed by globalization, human beings, if they want to keep to the dignity of their life as human, should always deal with each other with sincerity and especially with the virtue of *shu*.

Going outside of oneself and generosity to many others are supposed to be the most needed virtues in the process of globalization. In Confucianism, *shu* could be seen as such a basic virtue. Although quite often translated as “altruism” (Chan: 44), or “putting oneself in other’s place” (Ames: 92), or even as “using oneself as a measure to gauge others” (Lau: 74), it’s best understood and interpreted now in term of strangification, in the sense that “he who practice *shu* knows how to strangify” (*shu zhe shan tui*) and “extend from oneself to other people” (*tui ji ji ren*).

In the *Analects*, not much was said about *shu*, though it was told by Confucius himself to be the expression to act upon till the end of one’s life.

When Zigong asked, “Is there one expression that can be acted upon till the end of one’s days?” The master replied, “There is *shu* 恕: do not impose on others what you yourself do not want” (*Analects* 15:24; Roger Ames:189)

Here *shu* was understood in the spirit of negative golden rule, “do not impose on others what you yourself do not want”. The same negative golden rule was repeated by Confucius when answering Zhonggong’s question about *ren*. (*Analects* 12:2, Roger Ames 153) From this repetition we can see a very close relationship between *ren* and *shu*, given the fact that they have the same definition. On the other hand, a positive golden rule was given as answer to the question about the concept of humanity (*ren*), also to Zigong, thus we read, “A man of humanity, wishing to establish his own character, also establishes others, wishing to be prominent himself, also helps others.” (*Analects*. 6: 28, Chan, p.31)

As we can see, both negative and positive golden rules are, in Confucian terms, based on a reciprocal basis as to the relation between self and other. With *shu*, one extends one’s existence to larger and larger circles. It is the act of going always beyond oneself to many others, from self to family, from family to community, from community to the state, and from the state to all under heaven. This is the act of “extending or strangifying from oneself to other people” (*tui ji ji ren*). A Confucian existence is an ever-expanding life based on self-cultivation. In this process, authenticity and perfection of self are in priority over dependence on others. That’s why Confucius emphasized learning for perfecting oneself. In the following sayings emphasis was put more on the side of self-perfection or self-preparation than on others:

Do not worry about not being recognized by others; worry about not having any reason for them to recognize you.” (*Analects* 14:30, Ames: 179)

Exemplary persons are distressed by their own lack of ability, not by the failure of others to acknowledge him.” (*Analects* 15.19, Ames: 188)

Exemplary persons (junzi) make demands on themselves, while petty persons make demands on others.” (*Analects* 15.21, Ames: 189)

So it seems that self-cultivation and self-perfection is more on the part of individual, while harmonious relation with others should be done in the social context. The Confucian way of life, as extending one’s existence in the context of larger and larger circles basing on the perfection of one’s self. Even if self-cultivation is in priority over others in the order of moral perfection, strangification or *shu* is always necessary in the order of ethical and political implementation. That’s why Mencius would say, “Hence one who extends his bounty can bring peace to the Four Seas; one who does not cannot bring peace even to his own family. There is just one thing in which the ancients greatly surpassed others, and that is the way they extended what they did.” (*Mencius* 1: 7, Lau: 57)

In Confucianism, the tension between self and others is to be solved in reference to golden rules, both negative and positive, based ultimately on the principle of reciprocity. In this sense, we can say that, in the Confucian world, in which human behaviors have to be regulated by *li*, even the act of going outside oneself to the other launched by *shu*, and the original generosity it implied, have to be regulated by reciprocity.

The principle of reciprocity becomes a guiding principle of social and political philosophy in the *Great Learning*. There it is called the principle of measuring square (*Jiejuzhidao* 絜矩之道). There seems to be a positive version of the principle followed by a negative version of it. They are put in the context where it is explained the extension from governing the state to making peace within all under heaven. The positive version reads,

What is meant by saying that the peace of the world depends on the order of the state is: When the ruler treats the elders with respect, then the people will be aroused towards filial piety. When the ruler treats the aged with respect, then the people will be aroused towards brotherly respect. When the ruler treats compassionately the young and the helpless, then the common people will not follow the opposite course. Therefore the ruler has a principle with which, as with a measuring square, he may regulate his conduct. (Chan: 92)

The major point here is the governance by *ren*(humanity): when the ruler governs his people by respect and humanity, people will respond with peace and harmony, in form of filial piety, brotherly respect and submissiveness. The positive reciprocity is here expressed in terms of the filial piety, brotherly respect and compassionate for the young and the helpless...etc., initiated by the ruler. On the other hand, there is also the negative version of the measure of square:

What a man dislike in his superiors, let him not show it in dealing with his inferiors. What he dislikes in those in front of him, let him not show it in preceding those who are behind; what he dislikes in those behind him, let him not show it in following those in front of him; what he dislikes in those on the right, let him not apply it to those on the left; and what he dislikes in those on the left, let him not apply it to those on the right. This is the principle of the measuring square. (Chan: 92)

As it is clear, the reciprocity here is enlarged analogically from one side to the opposite side: from superior to inferior, from inferior to superior; from right to left, from left to right; from front to behind, from behind to front, and thereby forming a cubic relationship, not merely a square, of reciprocity, though always taken in a negative sense. Within this cubic structure of reciprocal relationship, more attention have been paid to the horizontal, that is, from right to left, from left to right; from front to behind, from behind to front, than the vertical relation between superior and inferior, mentioned only once. Nevertheless, the concept of “extended reciprocity” plays a major role in this largest extension of human relation -- from the state to all under heaven.

SHU AND STRANGIFICATION: KNOW ONE’S SELF BY THE DETOUR OF KNOWING THINGS

The application of *shu* is not limited to many others as human, therefore to human individual and society only, but also to many others as things. This is what Zhu Xi understood when he said, in giving commentary on the concepts of *zhong* and *shu*, that *zhong* deals with one’s self, whereas *shu* deals with things. For Zhu Xi, *shu* deals with things and events and leads to our knowledge of them. In giving commentary on *shu* as the expression to act upon till the end of one’s life, Zhu Xi said, “Extend oneself to things, the application will never end, that’s why it can be acted upon till the end of one’s life.” (Zhu Xi: 2000) This reminds us of Zhu Xi’s idea of investigating things one after another, each thing having in itself its own principle.

This is also what Wang Fuzi meant, when he followed Zhu Xi in commenting these two concepts in the context where Confucius said there

was one leading thread penetrating through his own *dao*. For Wang Fuzi, “*Zhong* is to do one’s best; *shu* is to extend (or strangify) from oneself to others.” (Wang, Vol.6: 816)” “If one could do one’s best as to reason, then one can penetrate into all principles in the world; If one could extend one’s feeling and understand empathetically, then one would be able to penetrate into all feelings in the world.” (Ibid.). It’s a function of reason combining with feeling to extend to things and investigate them in order to achieve knowledge of them. Wang Fuzi said,

The principles are in mind, if one do one’s best as to mind, one exhausts all principles; all feelings follow human nature, if one knows human nature, one knows feeling...If one exhausts one’s principle, one would attain all feelings under heaven; If one extend one’s feeling, then one can penetrate all principles under heaven...Therefore to exhaust one’s principle and extend one’s feeling, this is how scholars learn how to investigate things to achieve knowledge. (Wang, Vol.6: 816-817)

Let’s take the case of Zhu Xi, as example. Zhu Xi’s interest in natural knowledge is very famous to the extent that he may be seen as the greatest synthesizer of Chinese natural knowledge in the 12th and 13th Centuries. This should be understood in the philosophical context of his notion of “investigation of things to extend knowledge”. For Zhu Xi, *li* or principle could be found in everything, and was worthy of investigation. According to my interpretation, the object of Zhu Xi’s investigation of things was the principle existing out there in things, which presupposed therefore certain “otherness” of things and their principles, whereas the attainment of knowledge would include knowledge of self and knowledge of others, or better said, return to oneself via the detour of many others, so that one might finally get sudden penetration into the nature of things and attain transparent self-knowledge. That is to say, investigation of things is a process of detouring that, by first going outside of one’s self to many others and by knowing many others, one could come back to one’s own self.

Zhu Xi’s interest in natural knowledge should be understood in the philosophical context of his notion of “investigation of things to extend knowledge”. As I see it, there is an implicit recognition of the principles inside the otherness of things and people. As to the extension of knowledge, it should include both knowledge about many others, either as physical things or as persons, and knowledge of one’s self. Human beings should go through the detour of knowing many others in order to return to one’s own self, even to the point of becoming transparent and enlightened.

The fact that human being is curious about things and that there is need of investigation of things presupposes the existence of many others and it is therefore not reasonable to reduce knowledge to contents totally unfolded from one’s won mind. At the first glance, the reason why human

being should approach things in order to investigate their principles consists in the fact that principles themselves are invisible but things are on the contrary equipped with material form and therefore easily visible. Therefore we should inquire about invisible principles and have access to them through the mediation of visible things. Zhu Xi said,

The investigation of things is for the purpose of inquiring their principles. The fact that there is such a thing, implies necessarily that there is such a principle. Yet, principles are invisible and hard to recognize, and things have physical form and are easily visible, therefore we should inquire about principles through things. In this way, when principles are understood through our eyes and in our mind without any tiny distance, then we can cope with things without any error. (Zhu Xi 2000. Vol 2: 409. My translation)

Nevertheless, during the process of knowing, there should be an unavoidable relation between things known and knowing subject, the knower and the known, which should not be reduced to mere psychic activities of the knowing subject. Zhu Xi was conscious of this and said,

What we call knowing is in my mind, whereas what we call principles are in things and events. From myself here to know things over there, there must be the relation of subject and object, and in reading the Scriptures, we should not interpret that by this. If we interpret the 'investigation of things' merely as 'contact with things', then there is still something we do not understand about the ultimate truth. Everyone has contact with things, but some would contact them without investigating them, or investigate them carelessly without investigating it to the ultimate degree, therefore even if they are in contact with things, still they do not understand their principles. They do not know the reason why, the ought-to-be, of things. If you say that once we have contact with things and all principles are thereby exhausted, this is too easy to be possible. (Zhu Xi 2000. Vol.5: 1969. My translation)

Since the relation between subject and object is not to be reduced, there should be first an act of going outside of oneself from the subject's part in order to have contact with things as object; yet, if there is only contact with things without investigating their principles, the objective of attaining knowledge could not be achieved. Since principles need to be inquired in order to enter into our realm of knowledge, then in regards to things unknown and not-yet-knowing subject, they must be sort of "the

other” or imbued with some otherness before getting themselves known. In this sense, principle could be seen as kind of the other. In short, we can call “things” as the “real others” or the “horizontal others”, to which we should first go outside of ourselves in order to keep in contact with them. As to “principles”, they can be seen as kind of “ideal others” or “vertical others”, at which we should make effort to arrive through going beyond all kinds of particularity, materiality and concreteness in order to achieve universality, ideality and abstractness. These should have different layers or degrees that’s why we should go from the shallow to the deep, from the superficial to the core, from the low to the high.

For Zhu Xi, we human should always go beyond ourselves and move towards the other, to investigate things and to inquire about their principles. In this way, we will be able to return to ourselves with self-understanding and thereby enlighten our own true selfhood. The vision that one can return to one’s self through the detour of many others and achieve self-understanding through inquiring about many thing’s principles, that one could eventually attain sudden enlightenment by investigating one thing after another, presupposes that between principles of things and principles of mind there must be co-naturality, interrelatedness and responsiveness, which, though cannot be discussed here short of space, should be seen as basic presuppositions of the compatibility, complementarity and communicability among things and between things and self. Philosophically speaking, these are basic presuppositions of Zhu Xi’s philosophy. It is probably because of these basic presuppositions that Zhu Xi’s tendency to reduce difference for the interest of unity is much stronger than his tendency to respect difference in itself or even to let others be themselves.

CONFUCIAN GENEROSITY TO MANY OTHERS

Now, how about Confucian virtue of generosity? In general, generosity could be understood in two senses: either as liberality or as magnanimity. When we look for Confucian virtue of generosity in the sense of liberality or generosity as to the giving or sharing of one’s material goods, we might first think of Zilu. When assisting Confucius with Yan Hui, asked by Confucius, as to what they would like most to do, Zilu said, “I would like to share my horses and carriages, my clothing and furs, with my friend, and if they damage them, to bear them no ill will.” (*Analects* 5.26, Ames 102) This shows Zilu has a virtue of liberality. Even if it concerns the sharing, not the unconditional giving, nevertheless express his non-possessiveness and generous sharing with many others in the sense of friends. Zilu didn’t say “share with any other in general,” but “share with my friends,” who were equal one with another and reciprocal in being good to each other. So it seems that Zilu cherished more friendship than material goods. Friendship in sharing one’s own material goods, this is friendship in

strong sense. According to Aristotle, friendship is also a kind of virtue. Zilu therefore showed his generosity in the context of friendship in a strong sense.

But Zilu's generosity in terms of liberality as to his own material goods, even his ambition to govern well a state of thousand chariots, were not highly evaluated under Confucius eyes, in comparison with those of others. This was the case when Zilu, Zengxi, Ranyou and Gongxi hua were asked by Confucius about how would they do if someone did recognize their true selves, among all the answers, Confucius would say only "I'm with Zengxi." -- That's to say Confucius was more in praise of Zengxi's free life style in union with Heaven and earth: "At the end of spring, with the spring clothes having already been finished, I would like, says Zengxi, in the company of five or six young men or six or seven children, to cleanse ourselves in the Yi River, to revel in the cool breezes at the Altar for Rain, and then return home singing." (*Analects* 11:26, Ames 150)

From this we can see Confucius put emphasis on the existential feeling as a whole and the spiritual horizon that comes closer to the rhythm of nature. This shows the cosmic breath of Confucius mind in the sense of magnanimity. In general Confucius would emphasize generosity that is genuine, and blame the false liberality. That's probably the meaning of Confucius' blame of Wei Shengao by saying "Who said that Wei Shengao is upright? When someone begged vinegar from him, he in turn begged it from his neighbors and then presented it to the person who has asked him for it." (*Analects* 5.24, Ames 101)

Indeed, Confucius mind was so great that, his virtue of generosity is not limited to liberality, but much closer to what Aristotle said as "magnanimity." On the one hand, Confucius did not care much about the gain or lose in material goods, his spiritual horizon was much lofty than any desire for fortune and position, as shown when he said, "To eat coarse food, drink plain water, and pillow oneself on a bent arm -- there is pleasure to be found in these things. But wealth and position gained through inappropriate means -- these are to me like floating clouds." (*Analects* 7:16, Ames 114) His own ambition was much higher, which, according to his own words, is "to bring peace and contentment to the aged, to share relationship of trust and confidence with my friends, and to love and protect the young." (*Analects* 5:26, Ames 102) This means what Confucius would most like to do is the existential comfort of all people at all ages, which might come from the demand of universalizing the virtue of humanness.

We should point out here that Confucius understand also generosity in the sense of reciprocity. He said, when answering to Zizhang's question about *ren*, "One who can practice five things wherever he may be is a man of humanity...Earnestness, liberality, truthfulness, diligence, and generosity." As we can see among these five virtues, *kuan* (liberality) and *hui* (generosity) are related to the virtue of being generous, although all five are related to reciprocal virtues, as Confucius himself explain, "If one is earnest, one will not be treated with disrespect; If one is liberal, one will

win the heart of all, If one is trustful, one will be trusted. If one is diligent, one will be successful,. And if one is generous, one will be able to enjoy the service of others.” (*Analects* 17:6, Chan 46-247) Note that Confucius said all these in the context of consequence, that you’ll not be treated with disrespect, will win the heart of all, will be trusted, will be successful, will be able to enjoy the service of others etc. This shows us Confucius considered moral matters from the consequentialist, not only from the intentionalist point of view. But, liberality and generosity in Confucian sense, as to the consequences they invite, still stand on reciprocity.

We can understand Confucian virtues in twos senses, “relational virtues” defined as harmonization of relationship; and “aptitudinal virtue” defined as excellence in one’s natural ability. Reciprocity is the basis on which was built Confucian relational virtues and social relationship in general. It is clear that all relational virtues refer to others and response from others, relation which is to be measure by reciprocity. This is much clearer when we come to other relational virtues, such as those in the five essential relationships, consisting always in the harmonization of human relationship, whether it concerns relation between husband and wife, or parents and children, or brothers and sisters, or friends and lovers, or individual and society. These are not to be seen merely as biological or social relationship, on the contrary, they are to be realized as ethically meaningful relationship. The meaning of good relationship, such as piety, fidelity, scurrility, royalty,...etc., could be interpreted differently according to the custom of the times, but its essence as the harmonization of relationship stays always as valid now and forever.

The process of harmonization of relationship is a process of enlargement from reciprocity to universalizability. Reciprocity is essential for human relationship according to Confucianism. Just as the way Confucius responded to Zaiwu, one of his disciples, who proposed two arguments, one based upon the necessity of maintaining social order, the other based upon the circle of natural process, against the maintenance of a funeral rites. But Confucius answered him by the argument of human reciprocity, that, in the earliest time of our childhood, we were taken care of by our parents, and this was the reason why we observe those rites in response to the love of our parents for us. The form of these ritual practices could be changed according to the demand of times, but the essence of reciprocity in human relationship remains.

But the good human relationship comes to its fulfillment when enlarged from reciprocity to universalizability. That’s why Confucius, when asked by Zilu concerning how a exemplary person behaves, answered first by the cultivation of oneself for one’s dignity, then cultivation of oneself for the happiness of other's, finally cultivation oneself for the happiness of all the people. From reciprocity to universalizability, this means that we should transcend the limit of special relationship to universalizable relationship, even to the point of seeing people within four seas as brothers. Which means humankind could treat other fellowmen, with no regard of his

family, profession, company, race and nation, but just with Jen, a universalizing love, only because he is a member of the humankind. And with the act of *Shu*, one can go out side of one's self through language appropriation and strangify from one's self to the other, simply because he is human. This is the way by which Confucianism enlarges the harmonization of human relationship, the fully unfolding of which is the process of formation of virtuous life, not merely a life of observing absolutized obligations.

CONCLUSION

From philosophical point of view, the process of globalization should be seen as an historical process of realizing the ever-universalizing human nature going beyond boards of any kind. The dynamism behind this is human intelligence and desire, their unversalizability and perfectibility, developed since humankind's humanization with language and culture, further in a self-aware way after the philosophical breakthrough. In modernity, human has been searching for the resource in his own subjectivity and the rational construction of this world by way of representations. But now, in entering the process of globalization, we need a new ethics fundamentally based on the generosity to the other through unceasing strangification. Without globalization, human universalizability to a higher level will not be possibly implemented. But globalization itself should pay respect to and bring its resources from different cultural traditions. It should be an invitation, not an imposition. In this context, Confucian concept of *shu* and virtue of generosity will be a resource of inspiration, even if they have some limit as to their emphasis on reciprocity and need further support from an original generosity. If human being is not ready for further strangification and greater generosity to many others, he will not be ready, not even worthy, of a real globalization, not to say entering in a higher form of universalization in terms of the universe or all under heaven, as Confucians would say.

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THE COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH IN VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

PURPOSE

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Studies in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

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